

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

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*Thursday, November 12, 1987/Kartika 21,  
1909 (Saka)*  
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*The Lok Sabha met at  
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

**Construction of National Highways  
by Private Sector Organisations**

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\*81. SHRIMATI BASAVA-

RAJESWARI :

SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 2673 on 20 November, 1986 regarding toll linked Highway construction projects and state :

(a) whether some of the private sector organisations have since expressed their willingness to Government to take up the construction of high traffic density National Highways in the country ;

(b) if so, the details of such private sector organisations and whether Government now propose to assign them the task to construct National Highways ; and

(c) if so, the terms and conditions of the agreement and details of the National Highways likely to be constructed by such organisations ?

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THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE  
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI  
MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : I would like to know from the Hon. Minister about the policy of the Government: Whether they want to encourage private sector or not ? If so, what steps the Government has taken so far to encourage the private sector and whether the Government policy is made known to the public, Sir ?

PROF MADHU DANDAVATE : Public wil support the public sector and private people will support the private sector.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, we in the Surface Transport Ministry are also facing a severe constraint of resources, In 1947 there were 21,000 kms of national highways and of todate it is 32,000 kms. The requirement is actually 56,000 kms which will actually mean an additional requirement of Rs. 6,000 crores which is phenomenal and very very high. Therefore, other avenues were examined. It was felt that may be the private sector should be told to see if they have any interest in developing the national highways.

Sir, several offers were invited. In July 1985, the Ministry invited offers and wrote to the State Governments to probe whether the private sector would be interested in developing State highways also.

A number of schemes were announced. These were that the source of funds for the private entrepreneurs should be from their own resources, that they will be allowed to fix tariffs according to their commercial judgment but subject to the interests of the users being protected to the existence of toll-free facility and various other stipulations were put down in this offer. There was a

response but there were so many conditions attached to it. It did not seem as if the idea would be to implement. Therefore, it is felt that due to the lack of enthusiasm shown by the private sector maybe this proposal is not going to see the light of day. However, we are still open to a dialogue and we will respond to it as and when proposals are received.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned, as I have said earlier, the Ministry had invited offers and also the State Governments had been informed in the month of July 1985.

**SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI :** Sir, I would like to know whether it has come to the notice of the Government that FICCI had pointed out that the entry of private sector in selected areas of highway operations is necessary in the context of more than doubling the 66,000 kms of existing highways by the end of century, which would cost Rs. 45,300 crores. If so, whether the Government is considering to include the private sector in the operation of selected highways.

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :** It was with a view to probe the possibilities of the private sector involving themselves in the construction of national highways. This whole proposal was processed in the first place. As I said, we have not received any encouraging response in the sense that a number of conditions have been attached to the response that we have received. But we are still open for a dialogue.

**SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU :** Sir, as regards the national highways are concerned, the roads are in a poor condition. They are hopeless. In this regard, funds are being allocated to each and every State by the Centre. Supervision is being given to the States. More funds are not allocated each and every year. The same funds are allocated every year, in the same ratio. Because of the escalation in prices, we have to increase the allotment. We are not doing it. For example, we allot Rs. 2 crores in a year and the next year also the allotment is the same amount of Rs 2 crores. Because of the escalation of prices and overhead charges, we have to increase the amount of allocation for each and every State.

Now, I want to say something about the attitude of the Central Government with regard to the surface transport. They want to takeover the national highways under the supervision of the Central Government. I came to know this from the Hon. Minister, Rajesh Pilot. I want to know whether any amendment is being brought for taking over of the national highways under the direct supervision of the Central Government or whether any new legislation is being brought or whether you are actually consulting all the States with regard to taking over of the national highways under one umbrella.

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :** This question pertains to the funding of national highways development by the private sector. I would require separate notice for this.

[Translation]

**SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply to the question has perplexed me. Has the hon. Minister realised that road construction work is not being done properly under the supervision of the Government as a result of which the Government propose to assign this work to some private parties. Through this work the contractors are earning lakhs of rupees. In my opinion the Ministry of Railways and PWD are not infamous. When the Government itself cannot complete the construction work of these highways, will it be possible to complete it by assigning it to the private sector? Has the Government realised that our work is not being done properly?

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :** There is no question of the work not being done properly. We are facing financial constraints.

[English]

**SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL :** Sir, the hon. Minister admitted that the conditions of the national highways are very bad. In order to improve the conditions of the national highways and to bring them to the standard of the specifications of the national highways that had been laid down, no doubt they require a lot of funds. The constraint of resources is the major bottleneck for the development of these national highways.

Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister that when the resources are not available in adequate quantity, why not we have some national highways linked with toll, that is to have toll-based national highways and collect the toll from whoever wants to use those highways? It is possible for the Government to collect a lot of resources by this method. There is one organisation in the Ministry called the Indian Roads Construction Corporation which deals mostly with the construction of road works in foreign countries. When other Corporations are inviting the deposits and mobilising resources and funds which are required for their purpose, why not they examine the possibilities of raising resources by inviting deposits in the name of Indian Roads Construction Corporation? And with those resources they can develop the roads. With the amount collected by way of toll, they can develop national highways. Most of the roads, although they are national highways, are worse than the district roads. These are single lane roads; they are not yet double lane and in order to make them double lane, huge funds are required. I would like to know, whether they are prepared to consider this proposal? The Hon. Minister said that the response of the private sector is not very encouraging but my own feeling is that adequate publicity has not been given to it. They might have written to the State Government. But why not make one more attempt to induce the private sector.

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :** Sir, I have not admitted that the condition of some National Highways is bad. The condition of some national highways could be better. Now, as far as the suggestions of Hon. Member are concerned, they are very constructive suggestions and all his suggestions will be taken note of.

**Death of Children due to health and Under-Nourishment Problems**

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\*82. **SHRI KRISHNA SINGH :**  
**SHRI BANWARILAL PUROHIT :**

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the recent World Health

Organisation study warning that children in third World countries would continue to die of health and undernourishment problems ;

(b) if so, what is the precise assessment of the World Health Organisation about children in India; and

(c) how far Government's assessment agrees with it ?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE) :** (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

**Statement**

The Report has observed that the Infant Mortality Rate has come down from 124 per thousand live births in 1980 to 104 per thousand live births in 1984. In this respect, the wide regional variations in the Infant Mortality Rates have also been pointed out. The report also dwells on the prevalence of severe malnutrition in about 8.5% of the children, incidence of Goitre and iodine related diseases, nutritional blindness and anaemia. While on the topic of maternal nutritional status, the report also refers to iron deficiency anaemia. The report while pointing out these deficiencies has also positively commented upon the decline in the prevalence of severe malnutrition from 1976 onwards, and, also the increase in the calorie intake in the poorest income groups between 1975-80, due to the positive interventions employed by the Government. The integrated approach adopted for the maternal care and child development by the Government in its overall strategy for Maternal and Child Health is referred to and, the report recommends effective measures for the coordination of the various programmes under this strategy. The report is of the view that while country possesses enough resources—technical, financial and manpower for successful eradications of severe forms of nutritional deficiency, there is need to equitably distribute and optimally utilise these resources for bringing about an around improvement in the nutritional status of women and children, so as to improve the physical quality of living. Government of India are aware of these problems and issues