

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## LOK SABHA

Monday, March 1, 1993, Phalguna 10,  
1914 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at  
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Question Number 81:

Shri Manikrao Hodlya Gavit - not present

Shri Chitta Basu - not present

Q. No. 82: Shrimati Pratibha  
Devisingh Patil - not present

Shri Srikanta Jena - not present.

Q. No. 83: Shri Mrutyunjaya Nayak - not  
present

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM NAIK: I would like to know  
whether the hon. Members have informed  
you about their absence. *(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Have they in-  
formed you in writing that they will not be  
able to come? *(Interruptions)*

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Power Tariff Farm Sector

\*84. SHRI KESHRI LAL:  
SHRI JANARDAN MISRA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased  
to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have  
recently advised the State Governments to  
review the rates of power for agricultural  
sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the  
reasons therefor; and

(c) the reaction of the State  
Governments thereto?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE  
MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P. V.  
RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) to (c). With a view  
to improving the financial condition of State  
Electricity Boards, it was resolved by the  
State Ministers Conference in their meeting  
held on 6.9.1991 that State Electricity Boards  
should function on sound commercial prin-  
ciples by advocating a minimum agricultural  
tariff. The subsequent Conference of State  
Power Ministers held on 4.4. 1992 passed a  
resolution adopting the minimum agricul-  
tural tariff as 50 paise per unit. This decision  
was also included in the Action Plan adopted  
by the Conference of State Power Minis-  
ters held on the 8th and 9th January, 1993.  
Some States have already implemented  
this decision.

[Translation]

SHRI JANARDAN MISRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is power shortage in rural areas, particularly in Uttar Pradesh where farmers do not get power for even 8 hours in a day. Lump sum amount was being charged till now. Recently there was a proposal of changing a minimum agricultural tariff 50 paise per unit. But now, it is being raised to 80 paise. The farmers are already facing hardship. Now the increase in tariff will further increase their hardships. So, in view of this, does the government propose to continue the earlier system of lumpsum charges, instead of increasing the rates of electricity for the farmers in rural areas? Besides is there is any proposal to hand over such electricity boards, which are running in losses to the private sector?

[English]

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the proposed increase is 50 paise and not 80 paise as has been mentioned by the hon. Member. As has already been submitted by me in my answer, this increase, is the minimum tariff suggested to make the electricity boards commercially viable. It is a consensus decision taken by all the state Electricity Ministers and it is for each State to implement it, or find some other ways to make their electricity boards economically or commercially viable.

As regards the second part of the question, whether there is any proposal to hand over the electricity boards to private sector, in view of the fact that electricity boards are run in losses, I would like to inform the hon. Member that there is no such proposal under the consideration of the Government at the moment.

[Translation]

SHRI JANARDAN MISRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had asked whether the scheme would be implemented for Uttar Pradesh as well, but the hon. Minister gave no reply in this regard. My second supplementary is that in view of unproductive rates of electricity

whether the Government will consider to reduce the tariff further? If so, the time by which it would be done and if not, the reasons therefor?

[English]

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have already mentioned, it is for the State Governments to decide whether to adopt this minimum tariff or to reduce it further. The Government of India has nothing to say in this matter.

SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, presently there is so much of increase in the theft of electricity all over the country. Even in States like Maharashtra where people are supposed to be more disciplined, in rural areas and even in the villages, direct supply is taken and lot of thefts are taking place.

I would like to know from the Minister whether they are going to advise the State Electricity Boards to adopt stringent measures for controlling the thefts and also to give harsh punishment to those people indulging in such acts.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is well known that the T&D losses, that is, Transmission and Distribution losses in this country which include theft and other commercial and technical losses on an average comes to around 23 per cent. In some States it is higher and in some States it is less.

In the recent Power Ministers' Conference while finalising the Action Plan, we have suggested that the State Governments should take effective steps to reduce these losses, at least 5 by one per cent every year, in the Eighth Five Year Plan. Each State Government has also been advised to strengthen their Vigilance Organizations and bring the culprits to book.

SHRI SODHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Most of these agricultural electricity connections pertain to the farmers. The Government is investing nearly Rs. 35,000

per hectare through major and medium irrigation projects, to provide irrigation facilities. In this particular instance, the farmers on their own are sinking borewells or dug wells and they are taking electrical connections. If you fix 50 paise per unit, it will become unremunerative for the agriculture. In view of this fact, by increasing the plant load factor, in addition to reduction the transmission losses, the State Electricity Boards can function properly. I would like to know whether the Government will review its decision and take a decision not to enhance it by more than 20 paise per unit.

**SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I may inform the hon. Member that no such decision has been taken by the Government.

**SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE:** You are putting pressure on the State Governments.

**SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU:** No, we are only advising them.

**SHRI P.C. CHACKO:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, unfortunately, an impression is being created that because of low agricultural tariff, the Electricity Boards are working at a loss. Almost all the Electricity Boards in this country are in the red. That may be due to various other reasons. The present rate of 50 paise per unit is more than the actual cost of production, of power. As the hon. Minister has said, it is the State Governments which are charging this high rate. But the Power Ministers' Conference has discussed this issue. It is very unfair. At least, the small and marginal farmers should not be charged more than 20 paise per unit.

So, will the Government of India direct the Power Ministers and the State Governments to reconsider this issue?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question has already been replied to more than once.

**SHRI P.C. CHACKO:** This decision was taken by the State Governments but this issue was discussed at the Centre. It can

be reviewed again in the interest of the farmers.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Minister, you can give the same reply, if you like.

**SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU:** It is for the State Governments to re-view it, if they want to.

[Translation]

**SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, when an electricity connection is provided to the farmers, it is a sort of one sided agreement. On the one hand, the Government proposes to increase the electricity tariff while on the other hand, the farmers do not even get minimum electricity for which they pay the minimum charge. I would like to know from the hon. Minister through you whether this agreement will be made bilateral and from when this proposed rate of 50 paise per unit is going to be implemented in Uttar Pradesh?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The reply has already been given.

(Interruptions)

**SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:** There is president's Rule in Uttar Pradesh and the hon. Minister is looking after the work there. At present there is no Government and the Centre is looking after the administration.

[English]

**MR. SPEAKER:** Will there be a regular supply of electricity to the farmers; that is the first part of the question.

**SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU:** The electricity is supplied regularly; but the number of hours of supply for each State is different. I can give the figures to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

**SHRI RAJVEER SINGH:** I mean to say

that the hon. Minister should assure whether uninterrupted electricity supply can be provided for 24 hours a day or not. Why are you raising the electricity tariff?

[English]

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: In UP the supply is 14 hours per day. That is the information received by us from the U.P. Government

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: These figures are totally wrong. (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was not replied.

[English]

SHRI ANIL BASU: Kindly allow more supplementaries on this. This is very important one.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: There should be a half an hour discussion on this Sir. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Question No.85, Prof. Malini Bhattacharaya.

### Doordarshan Commercial and Programming Policy

\*85. SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARAYA:

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are losing revenue due to inability to revamp Doordarshan commercial and programme policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there are any plans to revamp Doordarshan commercial and programme policy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). While there is no proposal to revamp the commercial policy of Doordarshan a revised fixed point chart providing for additional slots for entertainment programmes has already been adopted by Doordarshan from 1st January, 1993.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: My question relates to these additional slots which have been provided for entertainment programmes. Ever since Doordarshan started facing competition from foreign television network like CNN and Star TV, the fear of losing revenue, because advertisers might be attracted more by these foreign networks, has been in the Government's mind. Therefore the Government appointed the Mahalik Committee which submitted its recommendations. Some of the main recommendations of the Mahalik Committee were, enhancement of entertainment slots and liberalisation of advertising policy. The recommendations have not been fully implemented so far. But even before the implementation of the recommendations, it seems that the Government has taken it for granted that advertisers cannot be attracted without there being programmes which lead towards gross consumerism. We find that Doordarshan is sliding in its programmes towards this gross consumerism and mindless imitation of the West like Pop-show, Fashion-show and Designer clothes programmes which have nothing to do with the reality of our life.

My question is, what steps are the Government taking to ensure a proper use of revenue to enhance the quality of programmes and to ensure that the intelligence and the cultural values of the large majority of our people are not abused.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: The question refers to the Mahalik Committee primarily. The Mahalik Committee, as has been pointed