

Government will consider this proposal so that the State Government or the National Highways Authority which is looking into the repairs and maintenance works of the national highway is capable of repairing the highways; whether the funds will be released before the end of the financial year.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I would like to inform the House, through you, Sir, that we have taken a decision because we have been getting complaints and queries that the funds are not being released in time. I have taken a decision on an experimental basis. I take the whole Ministry to the State Governments. As an experiment, I myself have taken my Secretary, Joint Secretary, Director (Roads), (Bridges) to Karnataka. We took the decision. We sat in front of the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and ordered that all the funds which are available for the projects should be sanctioned; the funds which are available should be released. Now it is for the State Governments to see how quickly they release the funds, use the funds properly.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNENDRA KAUR (DEEPA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry that I have a sore throat. Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon. Minister that the construction of national highway from Delhi to Agra is going on but why the construction of link road between Mathura and Jaipur via Bharatpur has not been taken up. I have written several letters to hon. Minister in this regard but have received the same reply everytime that information will be sent after inquiry into the matter. But I feel that no inquiry has been conducted so far as I have received no reply to that effect. I would like to tell the hon. Minister through you that all the trucks running between Mathura and

Jaipur are passing through Bharatpur. This road is not smooth and thus prone to accidents. So I request the hon. Minister to make provision for immediate construction of national highway from Jaipur to Mathura via Bharatpur.

[*English*]

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I would like to inform the hon. Member that an agreement was signed with the Overseas Economic Corporation, Japan in January, 1992 for the loan amount of 4855 million yens for the project to forelaning of the Mathura-Agra section. I have no plans for the hon. Member's request as yet. Subject to the availability of funds, we can consider whether the funds must be made available to it.

L.D.P.T. System

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*405. SHRI SYED
SHAHABUDDIN:
SHRI D. VENKATESH-
WARA RAO:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have made a study of the working of the long distance public telephones system in rural areas;

(b) if so, the main findings and conclusions thereof;

(c) whether the Multi-Access Rural Radio System has been found functioning satisfactorily in the rural areas;

(d) the proposed outlay on providing telephone connections to all gram panchayats and many villages during the Eighth Five Year Plan;

(e) the number of panchayat villages and other villages covered by March 31, 1994 and the villages which remain uncovered; and

(f) the total expenditure incurred so far under the scheme with break-up by capital investment and recurring expenses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) The Government has not made any detailed study in this respect. However, a sample study on the working of Multi-Access Rural Radio Systems was carried out by the Economic Research Unit of the Department.

(b) The main findings of sample study by Economic Research Unit are listed in the attached Statement.

(c) The performance of some of the older generation of Multi-Access Rural Radio Systems working in rural areas has not been fully satisfactory.

(d) An outlay of Rs. 4050 crores has been provided in Eighth Five Year Plan for connecting all Gram Panchayats and additionally 1.5 lakh villages.

(e) (i) Panchayat villages covered	1,31,245
(ii) No. of other villages covered	8,079
(iii) Villages remaining uncovered	4,41,378

(f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The main findings of the study are:

- (i) Technical snag in the equipment supplied, resulting in break down of the system or in erratic performance.
- (ii) Inadequate organisational/infrastructural support resulting in poor maintenance of the system.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the sample survey, the sample study on the working of the Multi-Access Rural Radio Systems carried out by the Economic Research Unit of the Department itself has revealed technical snags, erratic performance, break-down of the system, inadequate organisation, inadequate infrastructural support and poor maintenance. I really wonder what more it could say! Therefore, my question to the hon. Minister is this. I would like to know when the sample survey has exposed such basic defects and lacuna why he has not ordered a detailed study. That is my first question. I would like to know whether he is going to have a study, a detailed study very soon.

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: This MARR System is based on 2/15 Equipment and it is a wireless system which works on Very High Frequency (VHF). Only two companies were manufacturing this initially. One is MACE in Andhra Pradesh and the other is ARM, Hyderabad.

MR. SPEAKER: The simple question is, it is not working properly. Would you inquire into it in more detail? That is the question.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: I would like to know whether you are going to have a detailed study. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: As already mentioned in the reply, the sets produced by MACE have been found to be defective. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: It is in a mess.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: They have been asked to come up with the latest model. They have already submitted the samples and they have been approved. The other one is working well. Wherever MACE product has been installed, there have been complaints and they are being looked into. In fact, after the submission of the report, it has been decided to test centrally from the base station all the faults that are detected and recorded in the parent exchange. It has been proposed to evolve the practice of group maintenance for rectification of these faults. This group maintenance will be headed by a JTO and assisted by a number of telephone mechanics. It has also been proposed to provide stamped cards to agents duly addressed to the Incharge, Maintenance of these telephones. They are able to inform the Incharge of Faults by using cards through post. The idea is to have a team of technically qualified people to look after these telephones in a central place as the PT's. They are spread over in a number of villages. From the base exchange, connections are given to ten to twelve villages. At the base exchange, a team of officers will be kept ready to go to the village with transport from wherever any complaint is received.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: This is not done.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: It has to be done. It is supposed to be done.

Secondly, the person incharge of telephones in rural areas is also given some cards which are pre-paid so that he can post the card to the base station on receiving the complaint and the person incharge can proceed to the village. Some of our villages are in very remote areas and are very far off, even twenty to thirty kilometres away from the base station. They have to go there and repair the phones and come back. Efforts are being made. I am aware of the faults particularly in the rural telephone sector. We are trying to rectify this.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: It appears that after the sample study, the Minister has moved to corrective action and, therefore, perhaps, he does not consider that a detailed survey is necessary. My second Supplementary is that under the Eighth Five Year Plan, of which two years have already passed, we had a target to connect all gram panchayats and additionally 1.5 lakh villages. Now from a rough calculation that I have made, it appears that as of now only two out of nine designated villages have been connected.

We know how badly they have been connected. My question is that even assuming that at the beginning of the Eighth Five Year Plan not a single village was connected, two out of nine villages having been connected in three years, can the Minister assure us that in the two years that remain he will be able to cover seven out of nine villages which remain to be connected?

MR. SPEAKER: The numbers are a little confusing.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: They are not confusing, Sir; they are very clear.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us go to the exact number of villages.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: I will make it clear; please give me half a minute, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: That is all right, the Minister will give the reply.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: It is very clear.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Sir, there are 5,80,702 villages in our country as per 1991 Census. Out of this, 1,39,324 villages have been covered with telephone facilities. Some of them are panchayat villages, some of them are non-panchayat villages. All the 2,36,218 panchayat villages are expected to be covered by 1995. But due to paucity of funds and due to lack of equipment this programme is likely to spill over to next year also, upto 1996.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN: By how much? Will he cover even half of the villages?

MR. SPEAKER: He said paucity of funds is one of the reasons for this.

SHRY SHED SHAHABUDDIN: Whatever be his reasons, he should admit that he is not able to connect all the villages and that he shall not be able to meet plan target.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, it seems even the well intentioned Minister is merely complicating the problem. He says that if there is any trouble at telephoning, they can inform via the post office. If it is to be

informed via the post office, the information may never reach them. There is a kind of practice that in the urban areas or elsewhere, the VIP telephones are contacted everyday in the morning to find out whether the telephone is in order. Will it be possible for the department to do so in respect of all the panchayat headquarters? That is part A of my question. The second is, is it possible to say, despite the quality of the technology introduced in these panchayat villages, that any difficulty which is noted would be cured within a fixed period of time as it is sometimes promised in different metros of the country? If so, by which time he proposes to correct this?

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the suggestion given by the hon. Membe is very good and probably, we could pass it on to the level down below.

MR. SPEAKER: Please read it as "that many VIPs living in all the villages."

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Even if there is no VIP, there is absolutely no difficulty in contacting the panchayat telephone, once in a while, to find out whether it is working or not.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: They should contact the telephone at the panchayat headquarters everyday to find out whether it is working or not.

MR. SPEAKER: He is on a different thing; this question is totally on a different issue.

SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: I am again on the question of equipment. With regard to this 2/15 multiple-access radio equipment, the Minister has agreed that the first design of MACE has been

found faulty. I would like to ask whether there has been a design snag and if so whether rectification has been carried out or if the basic equipment cannot be rectified, will he order replacement of all the sets manufactured by MACE of Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Sir, we have requested MACE to come up with new equipment. They have already come up with new equipment and that has been tested and found suitable. As regards the units already supplied in the first phase, they have agreed to repair those units; some of them have been repaired. If they cannot be repaired, they will be replaced.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in respect of the figures given and functioning of MARR system in rural areas, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that whether he is in a position to conduct an inquiry into this matter by some impartial agency other than his department. Telephones are really not working in that area.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in respect of the figures given and functioning of MARR system in rural areas, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that whether he is in a position to conduct an inquiry into this matter by some impartial agency other than his department. Telephones are really not working in that area. Sometimes the battery is not available and sometimes other equipments are not available with them. This reveals the hollowness of his statement that telephones are working in every village. Only installation of poles will not work. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that whether the telephones installed in rural areas are really in

working condition. Put aside the matter of rural areas but in metropolitan cities like Bareilly, after several assurances to set up a telephone Exchange having the capacity of ten thousand lines has not yet installed. If you wish to install telephones in rural areas but the machines installed in cities will not function then how one will be able to send information at district centres. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that will he make this telephone system running smoothly.

[English]

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Sir, regarding the first question, we have already given an assurance that action will be taken to repair these telephones. But if the hon. Member has any specific instance where only towers have been put up without installing the equipment, we will definitely get the phone installed.

DR. R. MALLU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to from the hon. Minister what are the guidelines for selecting the villages for giving radio telephones.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member wants to know what are the guidelines.

DR. R. MALLU: I have been given to understand that in my constituency villages adjacent to the national highway have been provided with these telephones instead of the remote villages.

MR. SPEAKER: You have asked the question. Please sit down now and get the reply.

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Sir, the criterion is that they should be sensitive border areas, tribal and hilly areas and industrial growth centres.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, today telephone system is being developed for villages in the country. I would like to tell that I had been a member of Parliament since 1991. Telephone installed at my house is still out of order. I have written several times for it. It is said that telephones of VIPs are repaired immediately but I would like to say that after a long correspondence with the officials of the department my telephone is still out of order. They have several excuses like battery is not available with them or sometimes some other equipment is not available. I request the hon. Minister to conduct an inquiry into the case of telephone installation in the cities of Mirzapur, Sonbhadra and Banaras etc. in Uttar Pradesh. Inquiry should be conducted by some private agency or someone other than a person of Telephone Department to find out that why my telephone or telephones in the area are not working. I would like to say that inquiry should be conducted in my case.

[English]

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have noted the complaint of the hon. Member.

MR. SPEAKER: That is all right; you have replied to him.

[Translation]

SHRI LAXMI NARAIN MANI TRIPATHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, telephones are being installed in rural areas but reality is that you do not have skilled persons to repair them. At one place there is single person for this work and at another place there may be ten and thus most of the telephones are not in working condition. I would like to know from the

hon. Minister as to whether he is planning to double the number of skilled persons for repairing telephones in those districts where these are lying out of order for a long period. And if it is so then by what time it will be done?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have enough manpower for this purpose?

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: We do not have enough manpower for this purpose.

MR. SPEAKER: If you do not have, what will you do to have it?

SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: We are trying to increase the staff strength wherever necessary.

Cochin Shipyard

*407. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of ships built annually in Cochin Shipyard;

(b) whether the ship-building activity in the Shipyard has come to a halt since 1992;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to resume the ship-building activity in the Shipyard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (d). A *Statement* is laid on the Table of Lok Sabha.