

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

### LOK SABHA

Wednesday, September 11, 1996/Bhadra 20, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at One Minute  
Past Eleven of the Clock

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Before initiating the question hour, I request you that if you agree, there should be not more than Six Supplementaries in every question. If there is a rare case, we will see it. I want that you get chance to ask supplementaries on maximum questions.

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Six Supplementary questions could be enough, if I am included in that!...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Those Six Supplementary questions should be allowed from all sides of the House, I think...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You should not doubt it.

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

#### LPG Consumption

\*541. SHRI O.P. JINDAL :  
SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have estimated the quantity of annual LPG consumption in the country;

(b) if so, the estimated total quantity of LPG required for commercial and domestic consumption during the year in the country;

(c) whether LPG produced from indigenous sources is insufficient to meet the LPG requirement of the country and LPG is imported from abroad also;

(d) if so, the quantity of LPG supplied from indigenous sources and imported separately, during 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96; and

(e) the amount of subsidy given by the Government per cylinder on the imported and indigenous gas ?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total estimated quantity of LPG to be supplied to the consumers of the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies during the year 1996-97 is 4232 TMT. No separate estimation of the LPG requirement for commercial consumption is made which is supplied in both packed and bulk.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The indigenous production of LPG in 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96 was 2699 TMT, 2858 TMT and 3246 TMT respectively, whereas the imports for the same years were 410 TMT, 592 TMT and 683 TMT respectively.

(e) The estimated subsidy on a domestic LPG cylinder of 14.2 kg is Rs. 62.55 at present.

[*Translation*]

SHRI O.P. JINDAL : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my first supplementary is that keeping in view the increasing demand of LPG, by what time we will be able to produce maximum LPG to fulfil our requirements so that we may not have to import it. What measures government is taking in this direction ? What steps the government is taking in the next two years so that we may be able to remove its shortage by producing LPG in the country itself.

[*English*]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, as on 1.4.1996, the demand is 4232 TMT. The indigenous production is 3107 TMT and the import is 1195 TMT. The hon. Member has asked as to when will we be able to be self-sufficient. The present indigenous capacity is 3.1 million metric tonnes. It will be increased to 6.87 million metric tonnes by the year 2001 AD. BY 2001, we will be self-sufficient.

[*Translation*]

SHRI O.P. JINDAL : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my second question is this, what steps the government is taking for the people living in villages particularly the poor people of backward caste who have either no LPG or feeling shortage of it ? Whether the poor people are not entitled for it ? Can't quota not fixed for them ? The influential persons managed to get LPG and the man who has no means, field, land, does not get. Quota of LPG should be fixed for them. You should give special attention in this direction because our Prime Minister is more sympathetic towards the poor.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Your question has finished.

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, we have planned for marketing of LPG in the rural areas. I have already stated about the improved availability in the country. It is planned to introduce LPG in the rural areas also. Initially, LPG would be introduced in the rural areas adjoining the major cities and villages with a large population, where opening of new distributorships has been planned by the oil industry from 1996-97 onwards so that after saturation of LPGs demand in the urban areas, LPG is introduced in the adjoining rural areas.

Further, oil companies have also been instructed to study the feasibility and viability of new LPG distributorships in towns with a population of 10,000 and above, including adjoining villages falling within a radius of 15 kilometres.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in reply to the question, the government has stated that the Government gives subsidy of Rs. 62 and 55 paise on a cylinder. As per newspapers report there are 2.50 crore LPG consumers in the country who mostly live in cities. We would like to know from the government the number of humble farmers and the poor out of those who have got LPG connections. This government talk of farmers, the poor and the Prime Minister also says that he is a humble farmer. The government should tell how may humble farmers and poor there are out of this 2.50 crore consumers. The government is spending Rs. 62.55 paise per cylinder for the upper middle class and the rich people. They have capacity to spend money then what is the justification for it ? In this poor country when only 2 per cent people have got LPG connection then what is the justification of giving Rs. 62.55 paise as assistance from the exchequer ? We would like to know from the government if there is no justification for it, then whether the government is ready to end this subsidy or not ? If not then what is the reason ?

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, the hon. Member has mentioned that the hon. Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, is a farmer. It is definitely so. I am proud to say that I am also a farmer. I belong to the farmer's community...*(Interruptions)*. We are proud to say it.

He wanted to know the percentage level of the farmer's community or the low salaried people, that is, low income groups. Out of 2,57,00,000 connections given, the poorer sector gets only 3.8 per cent.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : What is its justification ? ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

Sir, I seek your protection.

[Translation]

The percentage of poor people who get LPG is three percent and the rest LPG has gone to 97 per cent rich people. This government call itself a government of poor and says that they are the government for the protection of the interests of the farmers. Then what is the justification of giving subsidy of Rs. 62.55 on a cylinder? We had asked the question of justification. And you are replying what is its justification ? What is the reason that the poor people are bearing the burden ? There are 2.50 crore connections. The government had itself told that there are 297 lakh connections. The subsidy is Rs. 62.55 paise on one cylinder. Now you can calculate that every year Rs. 1300-Rs. 1400 crore are being given from government exchequer to the rich people. The United Front government calls itself a government of poor and farmers who have only 3 percent connection. What is its justification. This we want to know ?...*(Interruptions)*

The subsidy may be discontinued, it may be discontinued for all...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please let him reply.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the hon. Minister reply, I would like to raise a point of order.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There is no point of order in Question Hour. You can have only clarifications.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : One point of order can be raised in the question hour. Today is a day for reply by the Prime Minister. You can see today's question list. The Prime Minister comes in the House to reply only one day out of five days.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : There is no point of order in a question hour. You can ask clarification if there is any.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : You regard it clarification.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : O.K., you can ask.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Today is a Prime Minister's day for giving reply...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I have said that there is no point of order in Question Hour. If she wants some clarifications, let her have it.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The Prime Minister comes in the House only one day out of five days and he is absent today. I would like to ask whether he has taken permission to remain absent otherwise it is a contempt of the House that he is absent on the day when the Prime Minister has to reply. This is my clarification.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Other Ministers are there to reply on his behalf.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : No, he can not remain absent without permission. If he has not taken permission then it is a contempt of the House. Every Minister who wants to remain absent, takes prior permission from you...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : It is a collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. Let him reply.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The Prime Minister cannot remain absent without taking permission from you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No permission was taken from me...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The presence of the Prime Minister is necessary.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Anyway let him reply. He is competent to reply.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Has he taken permission from you for absence in the House ? If he has not taken permission then he cannot remain absent...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. Let me have my say.

[Translation]

Today is the Prime Minister's day. He should be here. But what is the reason that he could not come. The Minister will tell and also reply to the question.

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, it is well within the ambit of my portfolio. The Prime Minister may be having lot of preoccupations. I am here to take care of the situation...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You cannot use the words 'may be'.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Sir, we are not satisfied with his answer that he may be having lot of pressure of work...*(interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If you have got any information about the programme of the Prime Minister, you may inform the House.

*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Jenaji, you tell.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : House should be given priority.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now the matter ends as he has come.

[Translation]

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : It is nowhere convention in the world that the Prime Minister present himself to reply to the question.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Today is his day...*(Interruptions)* You advise him. Today is his day...*(Interruptions)* We do not demand that he should come five days. But when one day out of five days is Prime Minister's day then he should be here...*(Interruptions)* Today is his day. Please tell him that today is his day.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down for a minute.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Question hour is the own time of Members...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down. Let me have my say.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Why are you not sitting down ? Please sit down. Sushmaji, please sit down.

[Translation]

And such convention is there in any country or not.

[English]

Please sit down.

[Translation]

And in any country the convention is there or not. It is in India.

[English]

That's all.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Why do you not listen to me ? Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is competent to reply. You need not help him.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : Sir, I have nothing to add to this. The Prime Minister was on his way to the Parliament House. The Minister in charge of Petroleum Ministry was replying to the supplementary that was asked.

Sir, we were also in the Opposition and on many occasions, the Prime Minister was not present in the House even during the Question Hour. But never in the past, was this type of an uproar made for the absence of the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. This has never happened in the past. It is unfortunate that a senior Member is raising this issue.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : I am surprised that the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is saying this. The Prime Minister is always there in the House whenever there is Prime Minister's day and if he has to go, he takes prior permission for it. I am surprised at the knowledge of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : I am sorry, had...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : I am sorry for your knowledge as the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs.

[Translation]

When there is day for the Prime Minister, he remains in the House.

[English]

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : You may be new in the House but I am not.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : You may be new in this House. I was a Member of the Upper House also.

[Translation]

DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA : What is written here, this requires from him...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let us close this issue now.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA : Sir, this has never happened in the past...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, please listen to the reply.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, the hon. Member Shri Nitish Kumar has just now asked as to why the prices of LPG have been subsidised...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : This is not required anywhere...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now please close this issue.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, if there is any consensus, if there is any unanimous consensus about the withdrawal of the subsidy, I think the government would be glad enough to consider the same thing.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, it was not the decision of the House; it was the decision of the Government. The Prime Minister is here. Kindly request him to answer this question as to why LPG prices have been subsidised...(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU : If there is any consensus on this...(Interruptions) what about the BJP Members ? Let us have a consensus...(Interruptions) If we could arrive at a consensus, the Prime Minister is here and he is competent to decide it on the floor of the House itself...(Interruptions)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : No, no, I am not talking about the BJP or the Janata or any other Party...*(Interruptions)* I am talking on behalf of the poor people of this country...*(Interruptions)* The Government is providing a subsidy of Rs. 52/- per LPG cylinder. Why is the subsidy being given to the upper sections of the society ? What is this ? ...*(Interruptions)* The Government is giving subsidy to the upper sections of the society. The Prime Minister is here and he should respond to this question...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Nitishji is opposing the subsidy which the government is giving on LPG. In this very House when the government raised the price of LPG some days back, Nitishji was protesting why the prices have been increased. It means Nitishji at that time...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You are wrong. At that time...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

Sir, I am on a point of clarification...*(Interruptions)* Sir, he is misleading the House. When the Prime Minister was replying to the debate on 'Rise of petroleum products', I raised this issue at that time also...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Sit down Nitishji. It is right.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Nitishji...*(Interruptions)* why subsidy was given. I would like to know from the government that the LPG gas which was distributed in the rural areas is very less in number...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have allowed him only.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: The Government is telling three percent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Government that you are giving subsidy on the LPG whereas 98 percent people are not getting any fuel. What are you doing in this respect ? The present situation is such that people are not getting wood and there is no other mean for fuel. Besides, I would like to ask whether you want to divide rural and urban areas and fix quota for rural areas that so much percentage will go to the rural areas and so much percentage to urban areas ?

[English]

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, so far as subsidy is concerned, there is no discrimination between the rural and the urban areas.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, would like to say to the government...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The hon. Minister has given reply. Please sit down.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The House will appreciate that since there is no alternative to the domestic gas, the common people, the middle class people, the urban people and the weaker section people use LPG.

[Translation]

The rich use domestic gas. The poor dose not get it.

[English]

I do not want to mention this discrimination. I would like the House to recall that during the Congress Government, the excise duty was reduced from 60 per cent to 30 per cent so as to give subsidy to the domestic gas because of the larger interests of the common people. There are certain areas, like the Defence, where you cannot curtail your Budget. Similarly, you have to give subsidy to the fertilisers. You cannot withdraw subsidy from the domestic gas, as the interests of the common people are involved in it. I would request you to give more and more opportunities to the rural areas also.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, I welcome the suggestion of hon. Kumari Mamata. As it is, the subsidy on LPG has been reduced from Rs. 69.70 in 1995-96 to Rs. 62.5 in 1996-97. We are gradually reducing the subsidy. I welcome her suggestion. The matter is of concern for all of us. We will definitely take into account her suggestion.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member, Shri Nitish Kumar while explaining about the LPG supply mentioned a very vital point. He said that about 97 per cent of the people, who have LPG connections, are the rich people. By saying so, a wrong message has been given to the country as if those who are using the LPG are necessarily the rich people. I would rather say that they are the helpless people. I do not know the percentage of the rich people who are having the LPG connections. The Government must be knowing it. The fact is that it has been supplied to the common people, particularly to those who are staying in the cities and have no other alternative source of cooking gas. My only worry is, so much of gas is being wasted. We should utilise all the gas available and provide it to all, whether they are 'kisans', urban or rural people. We should not have this discrimination. We have

to find out the ways as to how best we can supply LPG to all the people. For that purpose, as hon. Kumari Mamata has mentioned, why should we not reduce the excise duty on it so that the common people can get the advantage? The impression that only the rich people are using it should be removed altogether. The common people are getting its advantage. If 'kisans' are not given this facility, they should also be given this facility but that does not necessarily mean that those who are having this facility are the rich people. I would like to know the percentage of the rich people who are having the LPG connections.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Sir, I can only say that about 3.8 per cent of the people living below poverty line are enjoying this facility.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Next questions.

...(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You had already agreed to have only six supplementary questions.

[Translation]

Six supplementaries have been asked. Now the next question.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have just agreed for six supplementaries.

#### National Council for Science and Technology

\*542 PROF. \*P.J. KURIEN : Will the MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Council of Science and Technology is popularising science and technology;

(b) if so, the details of the work being done;

(c) the achievement so far in this regard;

(d) whether such councils have also been set up in the States; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, State-wise.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) to (e) National Council for Science & Technology Communication is popularising Science & Technology through a host of programmes. These programmes include developing, adapting and promoting diverse communication methodologies to popularise S&T in the country and inculcating scientific temper among the people. The

programmes include projects involving large number of common people, for example, the Bharat Jan Gyan Vigyan Jatha-1992, ECLIPSE 1995 programme; and the National Children's Science Congress. Through these programmes, it has been possible to reach large sections of society to create awareness. National Council for Science & Technology Communication executes its programmes in different States through State Science & Technology Departments and also through over one hundred Non-Government Organisations spread across the country. States also have their own State Science & Technology Councils who perform diverse functions including Science Popularisation.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I thank the hon. Minister for the Statement.

One of the main functions of the National Council for Science and Technology Communication is to inculcate scientific temper and scientific outlook among the people. Our Constitution provides that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop scientific temper. But unfortunately now in this country the scientific temper and scientific outlook are on the decline. (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No side talks please.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : You are the people who fabricate... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Why does he unnecessarily interfere ?

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : You know that the Marxists are dogmatic people, superstitious people... (Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO : They are unnecessarily provoking Prof. Kurien. Why do they provoke him?... (Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : I will stick to my question if they do not interfere. You please control him... (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Yes, please, Prof. Kurien.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Unfortunately this scientific temper and outlook are on the decline in the country. Even the scientists are not out of this. Of course, superstitions among the political leaders are on the increase. But it is clearly mentioned in the Constitution that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop scientific outlook and a scientific temper. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government to devise programmes which will enable the people to develop a scientific outlook. I have gone through the programmes which have been chalked out by the National Council for Science and Technology Communication. The hon. Minister has given it in the Statement. They are mainly aimed at creating awareness and spreading science and technology.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You please ask the question.