

19.09 hrs.

Title: Discussion on points arising out of the answer given by the Minister of Power on 14.03.2002 to Starred Question No. 164 regarding "Power Theft".

सभापति महोदय : अब अगला आइटम 20 हॉफ एन ऑवर डिसकशन लिया जाएगा।

श्री नरेश पुगलिया (चन्द्रपुर) : सभापति जी, आपने हॉफ एन ऑवर डिसकशन के लिए परमीशन दी है, इसलिए मैं आपका शुक्रिया अदा करता हूँ और आपसे और सदन से अपेक्षा भी रखता हूँ कि प्रश्न काल में जिस महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न का रिप्लाई नहीं मिलता, उसको आप हॉफ एन ऑवर के लिए चेंबर से इजाजत देते हैं और 5.30 बजे उस पर डिसकशन रखा जाता है लेकिन कई बार महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न को आखिर में लेकर उस प्रश्न का महत्व और उसकी गंभीरता कम कर दी जाती है। इसलिए आपके माध्यम से मेरी सरकार से अपील है कि इसका समय बदल दिया जाये। कॉलिंग अटेंशन की तरह इसको भी क्वेश्चन ऑवर के बाद लिया जाये। (व्यवधान)

सभापति महोदय : वह सभा की सहमति से होता है। आप विाय पर बोलिए।

श्री नरेश पुगलिया : पावर का विाय हमारे देश के लिए बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विाय है। महाराष्ट्र राज्य बिजली उत्पादन में हमेशा से आगे रहा है, इसीलिए माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने दोनों मंत्रियों - मंत्री व राज्य मंत्री - को महाराष्ट्र राज्य से लिया है।

महोदय, मैं एक बात सत्ता पक्ष से कहना चाहूंगा। वे हमेशा कहते हैं कि बिजली के क्षेत्र में पिछले 50 सालों में क्या प्रगति हुई और बिजली उत्पादन में देश ने कुछ प्रगति नहीं की। मैं आपके माध्यम से उनको बताना चाहता हूँ कि 1947 में जब देश आजाद हुआ था, तो उस समय 854 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा होती थी और आज हम 1,03,134 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा करते हैं। इस कुल उत्पादन में से 25,574 मेगावाट बिजली हाइड्रो पावर से, 73,273 मेगावाट बिजली थर्मल पावर से, 2,860 मेगावाट बिजली न्युक्लियर पावर से और विन्ड पावर से 1,426 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा करते हैं। इसके बावजूद भी आने वाले दस सालों में, हमारी 11वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के आ जाने के बाद यानि सन् 2012 तक हमें एक लाख मेगावाट बिजली की आवश्यकता होगी और इतनी बिजली पैदा करने, ट्रांसमिशन व इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर के लिए 8 लाख करोड़ रुपए की आवश्यकता होगी। हमने नौवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में 40 हजार मेगावाट बिजली पैदा करने का टारगेट रखा था और हम केवल 2800 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा कर सके, क्योंकि फाइनेंशियल क्राइसिस था। सदन में हम जिस माइक से बोल रहे हैं, अगर बिजली न हो, तो हम संसद में अपने विचार भी नहीं रख सकते हैं। कृषि का क्षेत्र हो, उद्योग का क्षेत्र हो या साइंस एंड टेक्नोलॉजी का क्षेत्र हो, हर क्षेत्र में बिजली का अपना महत्व है। यह विभाग बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण विभाग है, लेकिन केन्द्रीय सरकार ने इस विभाग के महत्व को गम्भीरता से न लेते हुए, पिछले तीन-चार सालों में इसे एक कमजोर विभाग बना दिया है। एक सर्वे के अनुसार देश में सन् 2012 तक एक लाख मेगावाट बिजली की आवश्यकता होगी, जिसमें से 60 प्रतिशत हम थर्मल पावर से और 40 प्रतिशत हाइड्रो पावर से जनरेट करने का उद्देश्य है। देश में खास तौर से एनटीपीसी द्वारा बिजली उत्पादन का जाल बिछा हुआ है, लेकिन एनटीपीसी को भी मजबूत करने की आवश्यकता है। मैं यह बात इसलिए कह रहा हूँ क्योंकि इसके द्वारा राज्य सरकारों को जो बिजली दी जाती है, उसका पैसा उनको प्राप्त नहीं होता है। इस समय एनटीपीसी को 22 हजार करोड़ रुपए राज्य सरकारों से लेना है और कोल इंडिया या सिस्टर कन्सर्न्ड से जो कोल लिया जाता है, पावर स्टेशन द्वारा पैसा न देने की वजह से तकलीफ उठानी पड़ती है। मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि राज्य सरकार बिजली पर सब्सिडी देती है, लेकिन अगर केश पेंमेंट पर बिजली ली जाती, तो यह समस्या न पैदा होती। जैसे-जैसे हम बिजली का उत्पादन बढ़ाते जा रहे हैं, वैसे-वैसे बिजली की खपत भी बढ़ती जा रही है।

महोदय, मेरे निर्वाचन क्षेत्र चन्द्रपुर में एशिया का सबसे बड़ा थर्मल पावर स्टेशन है, जहां 2340 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा होती है। इसका उद्घाटन सन् 1984 में श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी द्वारा किया गया था। मैं यह सुझाव देना चाहता हूँ कि जिस स्थान पर कोल की उपलब्धता है, वहीं पर पावर स्टेशन होना चाहिए।

मंत्री जी, आप बिहार से आते हैं। अब आपका वह कोल वाला ऐरिया अलग चला गया है लेकिन जहां कोल है वहां पावर स्टेशन नहीं होते हैं। इसलिए हम आपसे कहना चाहेंगे कि आने वाले समय में मंत्री जी इस चीज का भी ध्यान रखें कि जहां कोल है वहीं पावर स्टेशन हो, क्योंकि अगर कम से कम दाम में बिजली बनती है तो देश में जो महंगाई बढ़ रही है - चाहे कृषि के क्षेत्र में, अनाज में या कपड़े में हो। जहां भी महंगाई बढ़ती है उसका सीधा संबंध पावर से होता है। जब पावर महंगी होगी तो चोरी भी बढ़ जाती है। खास कर जितने केप्टिव पावर प्लांट है, जो बड़ी इंडस्ट्रीज़ ने, कोल इंडस्ट्रीज़ ने लगाए हैं, उनमें बिजली आज भी एक रुपए दस पैसे-20 पैसे मेगावाट से बनती है, लेकिन हमारे स्टेट के जो पावर प्लांट बिजली के हैं, उनकी उत्पादन कास्ट तीन रुपए से ऊपर जाने की वजह से वह चार-पांच रुपए के ऊपर बिजली हमारी इंडस्ट्रीज़ को, डोमेस्टिक यूज़ में देते हैं। इसलिए मेरा कहने का मुख्य तात्पर्य यह है कि अगर आपको बिजली की चोरी रोकनी है तो कम से कम दाम में आपको उपभोक्ताओं तक पहुंचानी होगी।

महोदय, आज भी देश में डेढ़ लाख मेगावाट की केपेसिटी हमारे हाईड्रो पावर प्रोजेक्ट की हो सकती है, जिसका हमने सिर्फ 17 प्रतिशत उपयोग किया है। खास कर आपका जो पीएलएफ है, प्लांट लोड फेक्टर में भी आपको थोड़ा ध्यान देना होगा। आज ओवरऑल सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट का 72 प्रतिशत है, लेकिन स्टेट गवर्नमेंट का आज भी 65 प्रतिशत होने की वजह से ओवरऑल प्रतिशत उसका 68.4 पीएलएफ आ रहा है। इसमें भी आपको सुधार करना होगा। ट्रांसमिशन एंड डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन लासेस में मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि इसमें आज भी 26.45 प्रतिशत आपके ट्रांसमिशन एंड डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन लासेस है। आपने उस दिन इस प्रश्न के उत्तर में कहा था कि किसान बिजली की चोरी करते हैं। (व्यवधान)

विद्युत मंत्री (श्री सुरेश प्रभु) : शायद आपको गलतफहमी हुई है, मैंने कहा था कि किसान चोरी करते हैं, इसकी वजह से समस्या है, यह बात सही नहीं है।

श्री नरेश पुगलिया : अगर आपने ऐसा नहीं कहा तो मैं आपका स्वागत करता हूँ। इस देश के किसान बिजली की चोरी नहीं करते, लेकिन वे अपनी राज्य सरकारों से अपेक्षा करते हैं कि कम से कम दाम में उन्हें बिजली मिले। आज किसानों की हालत यह हो गई है कि बिजली के दाम दिन-प्रति-दिन बढ़ते जा रहे हैं। राज्य सरकारों को भी सोचना चाहिए कि अगर बिजली हम किसानों को कंसेशनल रेट में देते हैं तो उस पावर प्लांट की सब्सिडी भी, चाहे वह स्टेट इलेक्ट्रीसिटी बोर्ड की हो या सेंट्रल की हो, उन्हें केश पेंमेंट उसी साल में करना चाहिए। उसी प्रकार से केप्टिव पावर प्लांट के लिए जो परमीशन देने की बात है, उसे मैं दोहराना चाहूंगा। जितनी भी आपकी बड़ी इंडस्ट्रीज़ हैं - स्टील, सीमेंट और पेपर। इन इंडस्ट्रीज़ में अगर वे अपने केप्टिव पावर प्लांट लगाना चाहते हैं। मैं आपको सीमेंट इंडस्ट्री का उदाहरण देना चाहूंगा। मेरे जिले में चार सीमेंट के बड़े प्लांट हैं। एल एंड टी सीमेंट प्लांट तीन करोड़ रुपए प्रतिमाह घाटे में चल रहा है, लेकिन जो बिजली उत्पादन करता है, उसमें बिजली का उनका 46 मेगावाट का जो अपना केप्टिव पावर प्लांट है, उसमें साढ़े चार करोड़ पर मंथ कमाता है। तीन करोड़ सीमेंट में लॉस देने के बाद भी बिजली में जब साढ़े चार करोड़ की बचत होती है तो उसे डेढ़ करोड़ रुपया बिजली के कारण प्रॉफिट में आता है।

महोदय, देश में राज्य सरकारों की या बिजली बोर्ड की इजाजत लिए बगैर डायरेक्ट इंडस्ट्री को केप्टिव पावर लगाने की आपको इजाजत देनी चाहिए ताकि हमारे एनटीपीसी या स्टेट इलेक्ट्रीसिटी बोर्ड से जो बिजली उत्पादित होती है वह किसानों को और डोमेस्टिक यूज़ करने वालों को हम डायरेक्ट दे सकें। उसी तरह से पावर के बारे में आपने कौन-कौन से प्रीकोशंस लिए हैं, इस बारे में मैं आपसे जानकारी चाहूंगा, क्योंकि इसमें जो प्रोब्लम आती हैं - मीटर टेम्परिंग के कारण भी होती है, डिफेक्टिव मीटर के कारण और रीडिंग में जो गड़बड़ होती है, उसके कारण भी होती हैं। मैं महाराष्ट्र का उदाहरण देना चाहूंगा। अकेले महाराष्ट्र में एक करोड़ 28 लाख उपभोक्ता हैं। इनमें एक करोड़ 16 लाख ऐसे उपभोक्ता हैं, जिन्हें कम दाम में बिजली सप्लाई की जाती है और उन्हें उसकी सब्सिडी दी जाती है। उसी के कारण

सस्ती बिजली जिसे भी दी जाती है, वह थोड़ा उसका फालतू खर्च भी करता है। अगर इसमें हमने किसानों को फ्री या कम रेट में बिजली दी तो मीटरिंग सिस्टम आपको कम्पलसरी करना होगा ताकि हमने इसमें पावर सप्लाई कितना कंज्यूम किया है और उसे हमने कितनी सब्सिडी दी, इसका ब्यौरा भी हमें मिल सके।

कारण और रीडिंग में जो गड़बड़ होती है, उसके कारण भी होती हैं। मैं महाराष्ट्र का उदाहरण देना चाहूंगा। अकेले महाराष्ट्र में एक करोड़ 28 लाख उपभोक्ता हैं। इनमें एक करोड़ 16 लाख ऐसे उपभोक्ता हैं, जिन्हें कम दाम में बिजली सप्लाई की जाती है और उन्हें उसकी सब्सिडी दी जाती है। उसी के कारण सस्ती बिजली जिसे भी दी जाती है, वह थोड़ा उसका फालतू खर्च भी करता है। अगर इसमें हमने किसानों को फ्री या कम रेट में बिजली दी तो मीटरिंग सिस्टम आपको कम्पलसरी करना होगा ताकि हमने इसमें पावर सप्लाई कितना कंज्यूम किया है और उसे हमने कितनी सब्सिडी दी, इसका ब्यौरा भी हमें मिल सके।

इसलिए मीटर आपको कम्पलसरी करना चाहिए। इसमें आपकी महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने एनएससीबी में विजिलेंस स्कॉड पावर की चोरी को रोकने के लिए बनाया। हम जानना चाहते हैं कि इस प्रकार की पावर की चोरी को रोकने के लिए आपकी क्या योजना है?

दूसरा, आजकल बिजली की चोरी को रोकने के लिए जो कानून हैं उनका जनता के मन में डर नहीं है। उत्तरी भारत में बिजली की चोरी बड़े पैमाने पर होती है जहां पर लोग हुक लगाकर सीधे ही बिजली लेते हैं। इस बारे में आप कोई कायदा बनाए जिससे जनता के दिल में इस चोरी के प्रति डर पैदा हो। बिजली की चोरी के साथ-साथ तकनीकी, कमर्शियल और अन-वांटेड नुकसान जो आपका हो रहा है उसको चैक करने के लिए आपने क्या प्रावधान किया है, वह भी हम जानना चाहते हैं। इसमें

"The technical losses are due to energy dissipation in the conductors and equipment usually in the system of transmission and distribution of power. The magnitude of energy dissipation depends largely on

the design of lines, pattern of loading and type of loads, etc. It is not possible to eliminate such internal losses in a system altogether."

इन सब चीजों के लिए भी 15 से 18 प्रतिशत आपको नुकसान होता है। इसमें सुधार के लिए आप क्या कोशिश कर रहे हैं। इन सुधारों के लिए महाराष्ट्र इलैक्ट्रिसिटी बोर्ड को 9 हजार करोड़ रुपये की आवश्यकता है तो पूरे देश में टैक्नीकल और कमर्शियल नुकसान को रोकने के लिए जो पैसा लगने वाला है, उसका भी प्रबंध आपको करना चाहिए। ऐसा करते समय फाइनेंशियल पावर कोरपोरेशन आपकी जो है उसके माध्यम से आपने किन-किन राज्यों को कितना-कितना पैसा दिया है वह बताएं। उसमें आपको ब्याज के रेट में भी कमी लानी पड़ेगी। पावर-कोरपोरेशन और फाइनेंशियल कोरपोरेशन को जब तक आप मजबूत नहीं करते और राज्यों को वित्तीय सहायता नहीं देते, तब तक आने वाले दस सालों में 2012 तक जो एक लाख मैगावाट बिजली ज्यादा लगने वाली है, उसके लिए आपको कोशिश करनी होगी।

अंत में मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि जो नये पावर प्लांट प्राइवेट सैक्टर में आ रहे हैं जैसे महाराष्ट्र में आप एनरॉन के माध्यम से आप एक पावर प्रोजेक्ट लाए। बिजली देने का एग्रीमेंट 1.67 पैसे में किया लेकिन बाद में एग्रीमेंट में क्लॉज चेंज किया जिससे बिजली पांच रुपये से सात रुपये दिये जाने की बात होने लगी। वहां की जनता ने इसका विरोध किया और एनरॉन को प्रोजेक्ट बंद करना पड़ा। केन्द्रीय सरकार जब किसी चीज की गारंटी लेती है तो एग्रीमेंट करते हुए इस प्रकार की सावधानी बरते जिससे भविष्य में जनता को नुकसान न हो। एनटीपीसी जब 2.20 पैसे में बिजली बना सकती है तो जो लोग प्राइवेट सैक्टर में बाहर से आ रहे हैं वे हमारी ही जमीन, पैसा और श्रम का प्रयोग करके अगर इस देश में बिजली पांच से सात रुपये में देने को कहते हैं तो इसको भी आपको रोकना होगा।

हम लोग स्टैंडिंग कमेटी के साथ नेवेली निग्लाइट में गये थे। वहां उन्होंने हमें बताया कि वे 70 पैसे प्रति यूनिट बिजली बनाते हैं और एक रुपया पांच पैसे में राज्य सरकार को देते हैं। उसका कारण उन्होंने बताया कि वहीं उसका पावर-प्लांट है और वहीं उसका री-मैटीरियल है। चन्द्रपुर में भी जो हमारा थर्मल पावर स्टेशन है वह 8 करोड़ रुपये की प्रतिदिन बिजली बनाता है। वैस्टर्न कोल-फील्ड के बारे में हमने नियम 377 के तहत सवाल उठाया था। उसके खिलाफ एनएससीबी का थर्मल पावर स्टेशन हाई-कोर्ट में भी इस सिलसिले में गया है। इसलिए जो भी पावर स्टेशन को कोयला सप्लाई होता है वह बढ़िया क्वालिटी का कोयला हो। सन 1986 में जब मैं राज्य सभा में आया था तो कोल और पावर मिनिस्ट्री एक थी। अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी को कहना चाहता हूँ कि अगर कोल और पावर मिनिस्ट्री एक साथ हों। उस पावर में लगने वाला कोल अच्छी क्वालिटी का मिल सकता है। यदि हमारे मंत्री श्री सुरेश प्रभु जी के पास दोनों डिपार्टमेंट आ जाएं तो मेरे ख्याल में इनके डिपार्टमेंट का काम बड़ी चुस्ती के साथ होगा। मुझे उम्मीद है कि इस विषय में केन्द्र सरकार और राज्य सरकार गम्भीरता से सोचेगी और खास तौर पर इंडस्ट्री में कैपटिव पावर प्लांट लगाने के लिए जो एनओसी लेना पड़ता है, उसके बारे में मंत्री जी, राज्य सरकार और स्टेट इलैक्ट्रिसिटी बोर्ड उस कंडिशन को खत्म करेंगे। ज्यादा से ज्यादा कैपटिव पावर प्लांट देश में लगे, इसके लिए कोशिश की जाए। महाराष्ट्र जैसे राज्य को आज 9 हजार करोड़ रुपए की आवश्यकता है। अन्य राज्यों की जरूरत को मिला कर कितने हजार करोड़ रुपए चाहिए और आने वाले दस साल के लिए इस बारे में क्या प्लानिंग की है, इसकी यहां जानकारी दी जाए। बिजली की चोरी को रोकने के लिए कौन-कौन से कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं, हमें इसकी भी जानकारी दी जाए। आपने बोलने का मौका दिया, मैं इसके लिए आपका आभारी हूँ।

डॉ. नीतीश सेनगुप्ता : जब तक आप लोग चोरी को चोरी नहीं कहेंगे और ट्रांसमिशन और डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन लॉस कह कर मामले को छुपाते रहेंगे तब तक यह प्रॉब्लम सॉल्व नहीं होगी।

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): I am not making a speech on power generation. I thought about the power theft. I am putting the question.

I am confined to two aspects. There are two aspects. One is power theft and the other is transmission losses. These two are the major reasons for the shortage of electricity, to some extent, and not fully.

As far as power theft is concerned, there was recently an inspection in the Kerala Electricity Board. If I am correct, theft costing about Rs.4 crore has been detected for the last so many number of years. I think on detection of these crimes, some officials of the Electricity Board were also involved. The Government ordered for prosecution. Now, we know we are facing a very acute shortage of power. Even the Central share is not at all given to the States because of the arrears of payment. Due to arrears of payment, I am told that they have stopped giving power from the Central pool. That also has created much difficulty to the States.

Theft also is detected. In my State peculiarly a former Minister is also convicted for theft, and the conviction was

upheld by the Kerala High Court. It is now pending before the Supreme Court on certain questions of law. That gentleman is now an MLA. He was formerly a Minister. He has been convicted for this very offence. I think the Minister is also aware of it.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (ADOOR): That is a different case. That is not a theft case. He is making a political speech.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : No, you are wrong. I tell you he was convicted for sale of power to Karnataka without the knowledge of KSE Board. What do you mean? You be seated. I can also charge. It was upheld by the Kerala High Court.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: You are misleading the House.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : You are misleading. When that is a fact, why do you unnecessarily intervene in certain matters?

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : Why are you quoting here the former Minister of Kerala? He is not here.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : I have not mentioned his name. Now there is a charge-sheet. Extensive trial was conducted. The trial court found him guilty. He went in appeal before the Kerala High Court on the charge of selling power to the State of Karnataka without the knowledge of the State Government. That was the charge.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : That is regarding some tariff rate. This is a different case.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : No. What is he after all?

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH : We are discussing power theft.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : That is why I am telling. This is nothing but power theft.

The conviction was upheld in the Kerala High Court. Now, it is pending before the Supreme Court for final decision. I am not raising this point for any political gain but only to bring out the fact that power theft has become very widespread. I am saying this only for that purpose and not for defaming anybody. I am not saying that a particular Power Minister was corrupt. There is no corruption charge against him. The charge is only that he sold it to Karnataka without the knowledge of the State Government. He did not sell it for any personal gain. The sale was not for a personal gain but it was found to be an offence and he was convicted.

Power theft has become very widespread now. It is not only in Kerala but everywhere there is power theft. The Electricity Boards are also in one way or the other connected with the offence. There is an Electricity Regulatory Board constituted in more or less every State. They have started functioning also but the Regulatory Boards are helpless. So, we will have to revamp the Regulatory Boards and make the law more stringent. If it is made more effective, I think, we can go a long way in preventing power theft. So, I would request the hon. Minister to see that power theft does not take place in the transmission and distribution losses. We are losing a huge amount because of transmission and distribution losses. The transmission loss is the highest in India whereas in other countries it is very negligible.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA : It is not loss; it is theft but it is recorded as loss. What is the transmission loss in Delhi? I think, it is about 60 per cent.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : The question is how to prevent the theft. It is a loss to the State also. So, I would request the hon. Minister to see that these two evils in power transmission and distribution are prevented; and save the country from further losses.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY (NARASARAOPET): Sir, I have been a Power Minister in Andhra Pradesh. In 1982, when I looked into the 'theft' – according to my friend from West Bengal, losses are not there – it was 17 per cent. They used to call it transmission losses at that time. Now, it is 34 per cent.

My good friend Shri Suresh Prabhu is an academic-type of a Minister. I know him from the time he was the Minister of Environment and Forests. He studies issues in depth. I would like him to study why in this country power generation has become a costly affair. When the NTPC is producing power for Rs.2.29, you are spending Rs.3 crore to Rs.4 crore per megawatt. The day this Parliament passed the Bill handing over power generation to private people, they came from abroad and also from within India. They tried to produce power and they charged the farmer heavily. In spite of that they have not been able to produce power the way it used to be produced by the Electricity Boards previously. The Electricity Boards discontinued power generation relying on the private people and the private people have ditched this country in power generation.

It is not only the rate but also the quantity of production. This is my opinion. That is why, I request him to study it, do a kind of research over this, and rectify the country's situation.

Sir, the hon. Minister, my friend, came to Andhra Pradesh. He was mentioning that power reforms have changed the whole thing. I know his compulsions in Hyderabad when he comes to the State. I do not like him also to criticise any Government, especially in Andhra Pradesh as he will be in problem. But let him study Andhra Pradesh as an example. Why has it gone down that way? Even now the Chairman of GENCO in the Electricity Board, wants to allow him to get the loan from other countries or from the REC and generate the power at the lower rate, instead of allowing that private company, to charge at the rate of Rs. 4/- or Rs. 5/- which is unreasonable. I do not know why the hon. Minister was guilty in accepting that farmers are stealing the power. It is a fact. It is not because of anything else. Some farmers have done it because we are not able to supply it legally. When you are not able to supply, they have the links and they steal the power. You have driven them to that end. But yet it is a theft. So, all these malpractices, maladministration, malplanning has led to this power situation in the country. That is my personal opinion.

Sir, I saw that a target of 50,000 mega watt is fixed in the Tenth Plan in the Planning Commission's Report. Perhaps you might have given the figures or they might have done it. From where are they going to get the money? But you can do it, provided you hand over to the States.

Sir, my good friend, Shri Naresh Puglia has done an in-depth study. He was telling about captive generation.

Sir, in Andhra Pradesh, I allowed captive power generation. Now, they are generating power. They are getting power from the NTPC for Rs. 1/- per unit or Rs. 2/- per unit, which you have given, taking the wheeling charges of 16 paise per unit. That power is being sold back to the Government at the rate of Rs. 2.50 per unit. So, all these anomalies are there.

Sir, I have only one request to the hon. Minister. He can appoint a Technical Committee or he can take responsibility and head the technicians to study the present situation. Why has this present situation arisen in the country? It is our own, man-made thing and it is not because of anything else. It is because of more political interference at the State level. This is my opinion.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA : If the plant load factor in our average electricity plants can be raised to the level of say, the BSES plants, the Tata plants or the NTPC plants, this country will have no power problem.

श्री सुरेश प्रभु : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपको इस बात के लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहूंगा कि आपने इस विषय पर आज इस सदन में हमारे मित्र श्री नरेश पुगलिया जी के माध्यम चर्चा करने का मौका दिया और मुझे इस विषय में कुछ विचार यहां रखने का मौका दिया।

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Sir, all the Members present here are from non-Hindi speaking areas. So, I request the hon. Minister to speak in English. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, I am really thankful to you as well as the other Members for giving this opportunity and in the process also allowing me and giving me an opportunity to express my views on the subject.

Sir, I also thank Shri Naresh Puglia. Though the subject matter is pertaining to power sector theft, he virtually conducted an overall survey of the entire power industry. He really offered holistic solutions to power sector problems for which I am really thankful to him.

Sir, while I will address all the issues that arose during the discussion, let me first focus on the power theft, which is a very major issue. One estimate says that a loss that India suffers as a result of power theft is in excess of Rs. 20,000 crore. This is again a guess estimate.

In any case, the loss suffered by power sector theft is much in excess of this. How this figure has been ascertained? It is, as I said, a guess work because, unfortunately, we have a system today whereby once the power is generated, it has to be transmitted to long distance. So, it has to be transformed to a higher voltage. Then from there, it is transmitted. Then, it has to be again brought down by step-down transformer and then it is transmitted and then distributed. Sir, fortunately, you yourself have been a Power Minister in Bihar, so, you are aware of these issues, technically, and commercially also. Because of this, the entire process of sequence of events ultimately results into consumption of power. There is no system which really keeps an account of this. So, absence of energy accounting is one of the root causes of the power sector problems and that is also giving rise to power sector theft. When we do not have a system of accounting, we really do not know what is the extent of loss. Therefore, I said that the guess estimate is Rs.20,000 crore, but the loss could be very very high. This is a major problem. If this Rs.20,000 crore loss continues for the next 15 years, the amount of money that we will be losing will be more than Rs. three to four lakh crore. That would be the amount of loss. And how much money we need for one lakh MW? As you yourself said, it is Rs. seven to eight lakh crore. So, when these Rs. three to four lakh crore can be saved, the

money that will be required to finance the power sector projects is available within the system. But we are not able to do it because power theft is a major issue which really needs to be tackled.

How do we tackle this issue? I think we really need to take a multi-pronged strategy. We need to have administrative measures, we need to have legal measures, we need to have technical measures, we need to have social measures, we need to have political measures, as Shri Janardhana Reddy was saying, and we also need to have mindset change because these are the issues which will involve people's mindset change as well as attitudinal change on the part of the employees. So, all these seven-eight issues are really required to be dealt with, and I am very happy to say that the Government of India now has a programme to deal with each of these issues.

But I must tell you that this issue is, really speaking, a State issue. All the electricity business is in the hands of the States, particularly distribution. Theft is a problem which is associated with distribution and, therefore, it is an issue which needs to be tackled by the respective State Governments. But in view of the fact that the State Electricity Boards which control the distribution in the States, are in such a financial bankruptcy, the Central Government has come out with a programme which I shall explain to you.

First, we have launched a programme called Accelerated Power Reforms Development Programme which actually targets the power theft issue. How? We are dealing with it at the six-level intervention strategy. First, all the consumers in the country will be having meters. Where the power is consumed, meters will be there. As I have said, absence of records is a cause of the problem. Once we have proper meters, we will know where the power is consumed.

The second level of intervention is the distribution feeder. The distribution feeder is the last phase of power generation, transmission and distribution but the first point at which there is an interface between the utility and the consumer. So, at all distribution feeders, we shall try to put a software whereby power supplied from the distribution feeder to the consumer is properly accounted for.

Then, there are about 400 and odd power Circles in India. Each of the Circles will be converted into a business unit and a profit centre so that we really know that in each of the Circles where actually the theft is indulging, who is stealing the power and what is the extent of loss that we are suffering per Circle. Rather than talking about power sector theft of Rs.20-25 thousand crore as a problem at the national level, we want to localise it. Rather than globalising it and not solving it, we want to localise it and actually attempt to solve it. This is the action we have taken. So, the third level is of distribution Circles.

The fourth level is the Electricity Boards where we have also tried to bring in changes, including the past dues which you mentioned. The Montek Singh Ahluwalia Committee Report is already under implementation. The Cabinet has approved it. So, that is the fourth layer.

The fifth level is the State Government and the sixth level is the Central Government, which we all are talking about it. The problem lies in every village where you correctly said that there is a power theft, including farmers and others, those who are stealing it. I do not want to generalise it by saying that all farmers are stealing electricity. That will be a wrong statement. It would also not be a correct statement to say that farmers are not stealing electricity. But the point is, I never generalise it and say that all farmers are stealing electricity. In fact, as my hon. friend, Dr. Sengupta, the former Secretary, Government of India also mentioned, what is theft? Commercial transmission and distribution losses contain a huge portion which is theft. And why it is called as a theft?

It is because we do not have energy accounting. So, what we show as agricultural consumption, which involves a lot of money, is not properly accounted for and it is transferred to agricultural consumption. So, the poor farmers take the blame for theft whereas the farmers do not get the electricity. Therefore, the farmers cannot be blamed for that. That is not the point. The point is that unless we localise the action, the action really will not lead to results. So, the Government of India have decided to take this as an administrative action.

So, the first measure, as I said, is the administrative one in the form of Accelerated Power and Reform Development Programme. How much money will be needed for this? The estimate is, what we will need is more than Rs. 40,000 crore for the whole country. Fortunately, for the first time, in India's history, we appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Rao who is at present the acting Chairman of the CEA and a Member, Grid Operations. We set up this Committee which hon. Member Shri Janardhan Reddy wanted us to set up. That Committee has produced six manuals of a very high quality. Each of these manuals is in implementation stage and we are actually implementing it. So, these administrative measures are under implementation and this amount of Rs. 40,000 crore has been accepted even by the Planning Commission. As you have noticed, in this present Budget, my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance, Shri Yashwant Sinha increased the allocation for distribution reform to Rs. 3,500 crore. One-and-a-half to two years back, there was no amount available. It became Rs. 1,000 crore and to Rs. 1,500 crore and now an amount of Rs. 3,500 crore has been provided in the Budget. I am sure, in the next course of few years this entire amount that is required for distribution reform will be available and we will take care of that.

The second measure that is required is legal. Thefts can be controlled if there is a deterrent available. There has to be a punishment. People must be really scared that 'if I indulge in power theft I will be arrested and I will be subjected to severe punishment'. To introduce that provision, the Electricity Bill, 2001 has been brought in which is currently being debated by the Standing Committee. This contains very stringent measures. Therefore, I would request you to use your good offices and request the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Energy to consider this Bill quickly and it can be brought before Parliament. So, legal measures are also being taken.

The third measure is the technical measure. You will recall that a problem that we are facing today in power sector and particularly theft, was also a problem which was associated with the telecom sector. Telecommunication lines were also tampered, people were indulging in thefts. But that has gone because of technology. Technology does not allow the telephone lines to be tampered any more because it is just not possible. We need to introduce the same thing here and, therefore, technological solutions are really necessary. I personally went and talked to NASSCOM which is the apex organisation of the entire I.T. software companies and they have agreed to find a solution. A Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Managing Director of INFOSYS which is one of the finest technological companies of the country and a report from them is expected any day now. We are already in the process of implementation of that. So, the third one, as I said, is the technological one. We have taken administrative and legal actions. This is the technological thing.

The fourth measure is social. We really need to draw a campaign that indulging in power theft is anti-social. We say that taking dowry is bad; we say that if you are beating your wife, you cannot say it publicly that you are beating your wife; you cannot say it even in Parliament though you are protected. It is because you are scared of the social stigma that is associated with such a thing. If you can create a social atmosphere wherein socially a person who is indulging in power theft will be condemned, I am sure it can stop. It has become a practice in Mumbai where a neighbour says : 'You have not paid your electricity Bill!' and it becomes a matter of shame; whereas in Delhi your neighbour will say 'Are you paying electricity Bill?' It also becomes a reality. This is the social stigma that should be associated with this and, therefore, this also is a sort of agitation that we really need to call.

The fifth one is political measure. When we talk about power sector, it is not only about thefts but about power sector generally, all of us must unite. Therefore, I welcome the initiative of the Congress Party. I welcome the initiative of Left Parties. I welcome the initiative of almost all the political parties which are represented here including the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar. All the Parties have agreed to indulge into power sector changes and reform and they are already saying that they will introduce them.

I welcome the Resolution which was passed in the Congress Chief Ministers' meet in Guwahati in which all the Congress Chief Ministers have decided to pursue this one. I really welcome it. The Left Front which is ruling in West Bengal is also supporting this. Therefore, political action also is necessary which is now evident; and we really need to hasten and process in doing it.

The next is awareness. Unless you create this feeling, as I said the social stigma, it will be difficult. People must realise that indulging in power sector theft is actually pre-empting a brighter future for them because eventually the entire country will be drowned in darkness.

If you want to prevent that, awareness has to be created. Sir, I am happy to share with the hon. House that 2,065 road shows were organised by my Ministry in which we went from district to district and we really created awareness. This is an unprecedented action taken by any Government organisation or for that matter, anybody in India, which the Government of India, my Ministry has done in the course of last three months. I would like to increase it but the State Governments must also increase it. It is to bring about an attitudinal change in the minds of the employees.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA : It is not possible without the connivance of the employees.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Yes, it is not possible without the connivance of the officials. In fact, he has stolen words out of my mouth. I was going to say that it is not possible without that. Therefore, attitudinal change is necessary. For the first time, we have prepared a training policy for the entire power sector.

Sir, I am very happy to inform the House that the National Power Training Institute, which used to train about hundreds of people, has this year trained more than 14,000 people in that short period of time because I have told them that training is a very important issue and we must train all the employees in the power sector over a period of time. My target is that in the course of next ten years, through the franchise, we will train each and every employee of the power sector. We will also train the opinion-makers because the State Power Training Institute has also trained the opinion-makers. Sir, training is an important issue which really needs to be taken care of in the multi-pronged strategy which we are working on.

Sir, I would like to share with the House that I have already circulated to you six-point intervention strategy prepared

by CEA, but particularly regarding the distribution reform which is targeting power thefts, I would like to share it with the hon. House that if you direct me, I will circulate it to all the hon. Members so that they will also know what action the Government of India is taking.

Shri N. Janardhana Reddy, one of the most respected Members of the House, the former Power Minister and the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has also said that we really need to look into that issue. I can assure you that all these issues are not only being investigated but also acted upon. On each of the issue not only Committees have been set, but the Committees' Reports have been received and are under implementation.

Sir, I am very happy that the person presently sitting in the Chair, hon. Chairman, Sir, you have been taking so much of interest in it in your capacity as an hon. Member of the House and as an hon. Member of the Consultative Committee on Energy and we have also benefited immensely from your expertise, knowledge and advice. Sir, you have also been watching what we are trying to do, but I would like to share it with everybody.

Sir, if you permit, I would like to refer to two or three points, though not pertaining to theft, which have been raised by hon. Member from my State, who happens to be a good friend of mine and a very respected man. Sir, he has talked about captive power plants. The new Electricity Bill is freeing generation totally. So, we have proposed to the Parliament that generation of power should be free from licensing. There should not be any licence. Sir, he mentioned about transmission and distribution loss and how much of it is really there. Transmission and distribution losses, really speaking, are like theft and dacoity losses because most of the losses that are associated are not technical. We call them commercial losses and 'commercial losses' is a good camouflaging name for thefts in the power sector. Therefore, we really need to look at transmission and distribution losses as a part of the same process. This programme, that we have launched, is also aimed at rectifying it.

Sir, the hon. Member has said that we really need to look at pit-head power stations. I agree with him. This is the policy of the Government also. Now, we want to set up power stations where the coal is available and that is what we are doing. We are also looking at many of these issues.

DR. NITISH SENGUPTA : We wish you complete success. This is for a noble cause.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Thank you, Sir, I take the best wishes as energy to complete the task which has now been highlighted by you.

Sir, I thank you for giving me time to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House now stands adjourn to meet tomorrow

at 11a.m.

19.54 hrs.

**The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock
on Thursday, May 16, 2002/Vaisakha 26, 1924 (Saka).**
