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Title: Difficulties being experienced by the people availing services of Air India.

SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN (KOZHIKODE): Hon. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I had the opportunity to highlight the plight of travellers using Air India from stations across Kerala during the Winter Session of 2009 in this august House. Between these 12 months, the action of the Air India has further worsened. In the last few months alone, more than 300 services were cancelled and in the current winter schedule the figure has crossed 400 from the three airports of Kerala alone. All these flights are bound for the Gulf sector which had been over booked and highly profitable. These destinations include Doha, Bahrain, Muscat, Dubai, Sharjah, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, etc. There were instances when the carrier had not bothered to inform the passengers about its cancellation resulting in huge loss to the travellers including their job. By such actions, perhaps, Air India is forgetting the motto of service it requires to extend to the travellers. The pricing structure of Gulf sector is highly exorbitant and therefore is one of the major revenue generation sector the company. In fact many rival carriers are operating with greater facilities and even considering increasing their flights.

Today, most of the passengers are depending Sri Lankan Airlines for travelling to Gulf countries. Besides, there is also cancellation of even domestic flights. The classic examples are Chennai-Calicut-Chennai, Delhi-Calicut-Mangalore-Delhi and Trivandrum-Bangalore-Chennai-Trivandrum flights connecting Kerala. This is having a cascading effect with the result that many private airlines are increasing their fares.

I wish to ask this. Today we speak of pumping Government money to the Company. But what is the net result of this help? Unfortunately, even today's newspapers carry how the passengers are suffering at the hands of Air India even in Delhi for the last one week. What really has affected this Company? Why the private carriers are successful when the oldest company with its vast expertise and avenues still is not surviving and also not meeting the demands of the country?

I have only one request to make. I once again urge the hon. Minister of Civil Aviation to wake up and do something good for the people as well as to bring some responsibility on Air India though unfortunately the earlier assurances were never met.