

[Shri Janak Kumar Gupta]

He said that he wanted to work for the progress of the country. He made possible the task which appeared impossible. He obtained first hand information by visiting the huts of the Adivasis and he is making all efforts to remove their poverty. He has anxiety towards the problems of the people of the country, similarly he has love for these people as well. I am fully confident that he would provide more funds for solving their problems and for their upliftment.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, only he can enjoy the scenic beauty of the hills, who does not cause damage to them. Rawat Sahib has moved the Resolution for the development of hill areas; we would like to live in the deep woods and it would be better if the city dwellers do not cause any damage to the hills. But the people living in the cities have destroyed the forests. The hon. Planning Minister should give serious thought to their problems and apply his cool mind. The people living in cities have played with the lives of the people living in the hill areas. Rawatji, all the mountains are the abode of gods. Badrinath temple is in the mountains. Dehradun, Nainital all these places are abode of gods, but ever since the people of cities started visiting these places, they constructed roads there and destroyed the forests. The people living in the hill areas used to be very strong, but Rawatji, you are no longer that much strong. After moving in motors and cars on Delhi roads, you have lost your vigour and vitality. The people of cities cannot be so strong as the people of desert areas who walk on foot in the deserts. What is the condition of our hill stations today? What sort of hill stations—Mahabaleshwar and Ootacamund are there these days? You can have a look at Darjeeling near Calcutta. You can see Mount Abu in Rajasthan, what has happened there? The rich people have constructed their bungalows there. They have denuded the forests of all their vegetation. Forests have been destroyed by them... (Interruptions)... These people living in the cities have not done any good to us.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You should address the chair.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : Sir, All these members, speak collectively. I therefore, seek your protection. I am speaking under your protection. This thing has come to my mind. If nobody had caused any damage to the mountains or the forests, this condition would not have developed there. Paper mills have been set up there and thousands of areas of land has been denuded of the trees and vegetation. Such a scheme has been formulated by you. What sort of plans do you want for these areas? Fortunately, our Minister for Science and Technology is sitting here. All of us should give serious thought to this problem. The people of our Rajasthan, who live in the desert areas, are so strong and sturdy that nobody can compete with them. Even the football players cannot beat them in any competition. If we have to defend the Himalayas against China, only the people living in the mountains can do that. Only they can face them and not Rawatji. Therefore, new methods and new techniques should be adopted there. Industries should be set up there. Projects of Science and Technology should be undertaken there. I have been observing your planning for the last 38 years. Many plans have been implemented and despite spending a huge amount during First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Plans, desired development in the hill areas has not taken place...

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time for Private Members Resolution is over. This discussion will continue next time. Mr. Daga will continue.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Price of colour T.V. sets

[English]

DR. CHINTA MOHAN (Triupati) : At the time of the ASIAD in November 1982, we had imported 90,000 television kits. At that time we had given 400 licences out of which 50 manufacturers are at present manufacturing colour TV

sets now a days in our country. Actually 60,000 TV sets are manufactured per year in India, but the TV manufacturers in their false reports are saying that they are manufacturing two million TV sets. That is only on paper.

Coming to Unstarred Question No 216 of 24th July, 1985, the Minister in his Statement had said that he had taken an undertaking from the TV manufacturers of India. He also said that some of the TV manufacturers are violating the rules. The Minister also had stated that he had given a notice of inquiry to the MRTTP Commission.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister when he has written a letter to the MRTTP Commission. And if the TV manufacturers are violating the rules, what action has been taken by the Government and the Ministry against the TV manufacturers.

The Minister in his Statement had said that six manufacturers had come forward to sell the TV sets through Super Bazars and the Cooperative Societies. I would like to know who are those six manufacturers and who have come forward to give the TV sets through cooperative societies and through the Super Bazars and at what prices.

The Hon. Minister had said that he had taken an undertaking from the TV manufacturers. I would like to read the undertaking which the hon. Minister had taken from the TV manufacturers on a non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 2/- . The statement is like that :

"We have applied for import license for components and parts required for the manufacture of colour TV sets under the scheme evolved by the Government. We undertake the ex-factory price of colour TV sets will not exceed Rs. 5,200 for an ordinary set and for electronic tuner it will be Rs. 5,600. Based on the prices we will take undertaking from the dealers that the ultimate consumer will get colour TV manufactured by us at a price not more than Rs. 7,500."

They had also committed that the dealers will sell colour TV set with electronic tuner at not more than Rs. 8,000/-. They had committed in their agreement. This price is inclusive of guarantee and warrantee and the sales-tax is to be paid for sales in Delhi. For sales in States outside Delhi, the amount of sales-tax will be adjusted accordingly, according to the local rates. They also said :

"We undertake that any violation of this undertaking by the manufacturers shall be liable to action, including action under the Import Control Regulations."

But as you said in your unstarred question that they have violated the rules, I would like to know what is the action that is going to be taken by you ?

Also the late Prime Minister in her Statement on 14th April, 1984 had said :

"Based on the reductions in the customs and excise-duties, the Government had estimated that colour television sets of 51 centimetres may be available for around Rs. 5,000/-. Some such sets are now being marketed at around Rs 5,200 exclusive of local taxes."

But they are selling it at minimum price of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 now.

If you have at least minimum regard and respect to that statement, if you think the statement is factually correct, I want to know what is the action you are going to take against these TV manufacturers.

At this juncture I would like to bring to your notice that out of 90,000 television kits you have done the distribution to some of the firms like this :

Bharat Television Ltd.

Bangalore 2,627 kits

[Shri Chinta Mohan]

High Veen Electronics 2,034
Bush India Ltd.

Bombay 829 plus 940 kits

Cosmic Company 100 kits

Western Electronics (P) Ltd.

1,371 plus 3,680 kits

Beltek 5,486 plus 1,580 kits

Nelco. 96 kits

Have you at any time bothered to know from the TV manufacturers whether they have sold to consumers at a reasonable price ?

I would like to say that in my constituency and in other parts of India TV manufacturers are selling in different rates starting from Rs. 10,000 and upto Rs. 15,000.

I would like to quote some examples for your information, Sir, and for the information of the House :—

Mr. K. R. Nagarajan, with Bill No. 67, dated 22.1.85 purchased Dyanora CTV from M/s Apollo Electronics, Tirupati, my constituency, for Rs. 10,000.

Shri E. Sree Ramachandra of Visakha-
patnam of my State purchased from Needs
Electronics, a Dyanra CTV for Rs. 15,000
with Bill No. 42 on 26.11.84.

Another Shri Venkataswamy of
Secunderabad purchased a Dynaora CTV
from J.P. Electronics, Secunderabad, with
Bill No. 308 on 10.8.83 for Rs. 10,000.

Shri G. Nagarajan of Jamshedpur
purchased a Televista CTV with Bill No.
194 on 20.1.85 for Rs. 10,000.

Shrimati P. Shakuntamma of Ananta-
pur purchased Crown CTV from Gemini
Radio Centre with Bill No. 173 on 24.11.84
for Rs. 10,500.

The Minister in his reply said that
these people will sell for Rs. 5,000 to Rs.

5,500 etc. These people are actually
violating the rules of the Government. So,
what is the action that you are going to
take ?

In your reply to the Unstarred Question,
you have said that you have given notice
of enquiry to MRTP Commission. I would
like to know as to when you have written
letter to the MRTP Commission. Recently
I went to the MRIP Commission and they
told me that no such letter was received
by them till that day. They said that some
voluntary organisation,—‘VOICE’ or some
such organisation,—has written them a
letter stating all these facts.

I would like to say that you have
committed in your reply to the Unstarred
Question that you yourself have com-
plained to the MRTP Commission but
they clearly told me that no such letter
was received by them from Government
or from the Ministry or from the Minister.
This is what they said.

I would like to say that all these things
were done with the connivance of the TV
manufacturers. Some of the bureaucrats
and people in the Ministry have connived
with TV manufacturers and the TV manu-
facturers were allowed to increase their
prices. I do not know why the Ministry
is not able to curb these practices. Sir,
in spite of the promise given by the late
Prime Minister and also the undertaking
taken from the TV manufacturers, this
Ministry is not able to come forward and
curb these malpractices of the TV manu-
facturers. I would like to say at this
juncture that it is a failure of the Govern-
ment; it is a failure of the Ministry that
they have not been able to curb these
practices. I say, it is total failure of the
Government. I would now like to suggest
some ways by which you can prevent them
from raising the prices in this fashion.

I would like to suggest to you that we
should announce the TV set rates parti-
cularly through TV programmes once in a
month and also through All India Radio
and newspaper agencies. Some of the
newspaper agencies are giving the reports,
but they are totally false. Also sale of

TV sets through Super Bazar and through other Government agencies will be possible. They cannot sell them at increased prices.

The third point I would like to make is that if you have not written any letter to the MRTP Commission about bogus TV manufacturers, I request you to write at least now to the MRTP Commission and see that something is done to the consumers particularly. If the manufacturers are found guilty, their licences should be cancelled immediately.

Finally, I would like to say that the consumers who have purchased the TV sets for more than Rs. 10,000 or Rs. 15,000, should be paid back the excess amount charged from them. Then only justice will be done to those people.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, SPACE AND ELECTRONICS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : Sir, at the time of ASIAD we wanted to provide colour TV sets to the viewers and so we allowed the TV sets to be imported in India. Objection was taken to the importation of TV sets at that time. So, we allowed the kits to be imported. The kits were imported by ETTD Corporation, with the approval of the Department of Electronics, which carries on trade with electronic gadgets, components, materials and things like that. Those kits were given to the manufacturers of TV. At that time the Government wanted that the TV sets should be sold to the consumers at reasonable prices. So an agreement was entered into between the Government on the one hand and the manufacturers—please mark this word 'manufacturers'—on the other hand that the TV sets would be sold at the fixed prices—Rs. 7500 or Rs. 8000 or something like that, Rs. 7500 for one kind, viz, with turret tuner, and Rs. 8000 for another kind, viz, with electronic tuner. The kits were distributed to the manufacturers. They manufactured the TV sets and they sold them also in the market through the dealers. We received complaints from

some of the purchasers and we investigated into the allegations which were levelled against the dealers, not manufacturers, and we found that in a very ingenious manner this condition was not observed by the dealers. They sold the set at a particular price which was fixed, but they had said that for warranty of an extended period they would charge something more than what was really allowed. They charged about Rs. 1000 in some cases, and about Rs. 1500 in some other cases for the extended warranty period. Here, probably they had taken advice from those who are well-versed in matters relating to law and all those things and they had overcome the conditions which were given there. For extended period, they would be charging service charge for the sets. Otherwise, they were just collecting the prices which were fixed under the agreement. Here, what is to be realised and understood is that the agreement was between the Government on the one hand and the manufacturer on the other, not between the Government and the dealers. That was our difficulty. We could not have entered into an agreement with the dealers. We entered into an agreement with the manufacturers. We asked the manufacturers that they were bound by the condition and it was necessary for them to see that the sets were sold at the fixed prices in the market. We asked them to take undertakings from the dealers and compel the dealers to sell the sets at the fixed prices. Well, we received the reply from their Association and they said, it was difficult for them to control the entire market. The stand taken by them and by others also was that they could not enter into an agreement with the dealers. Some say, they could not enforce it. The difficulty which was faced by the Government was that the agreement was not binding on the dealers.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : For manufacturers, it is difficult to implement the agreement. But it is easy to loot the public.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN : We find that in the agreement, dealer is also included,

SHRI SHIVRAJ V PATIL : But that agreement was not signed by the dealers. It was an agreement signed by the manufacturers.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN : The manufacturers gave an undertaking that they would look after the dealers also.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : So, we asked the manufacturers. We could not take action against the dealers. We could take action against the manufacturers.

Now, that is being done here in a very ingenious, or in a very smart manner. Somebody is trying to violate the agreement and somebody is trying to exploit the situation and exploit the consumers.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN : Everybody is smarter than the Government :

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : So, Sir, what we tried to do was, we informed the manufacturers, that you should have to take action against them and we would also take action against them. We got some answer but it was not really very convincing. Then the consumers also wrote to us. A consumers' organisation filed an application with MRTP Commission and MRTPC is looking into it. Even the MRTP Act has to be examined very carefully so as to see that the action can be taken against them. Otherwise, there is no point in going against them and not getting any orders against them. So, it has to be very carefully seen. We have to see what are the provisions under which an application can be filed with the MRTP authority so as to see that this kind of thing does not happen.

So, the matter is now pending with the MRTP authority and they are investigating into it. As a matter of fact, MRTP Commission is a quasi judicial authority and after the judgement is given, action can be taken against them. That is the position.

As far as the Government is concerned, if any action has to be taken, it has to be taken within the four corners of the law.

If it is not taken within the four corners of the law, it can be challenged in the appellate court and it can be set aside. That is one of the points and the Government is accountable to the Members also. Any body can stand up here and say as to how we could take action.

A suggestion was made, why don't you cancel the licences given to the manufacturers. Supposing, we cancel the licences given to the manufacturers without investigating into all these matters, immediately he would go to the court of law and get the order of injunction. And then, the whole scheme of ours will be frustrated.

So, in order not to get frustrated in such matters, we are taking action and we shall take action to see that this thing does not happen. That is one aspect of it. This is legal aspect of it.

But then our anxiety is not only to take action. Our anxiety is to see that these goods are made available at reasonable prices to the consumers.

We are not interested in penalising and, if it is necessary, it is our duty to penalise also and we will do that.

But more than that, our duty is to see that the goods are made available at reasonably acceptable prices to the consumers.

Therefore, we took some steps. The steps that the Government has taken in this respect are to give licences to a number of people and I can give you the number of licences which the Government has given.

In organised sector, the number of letters of intent issued is 174 and the capacity which is expected to be established is 69 lakhs.

We waited on them for some time to turn these letters of intent into licences and to start production. They did not do that. We did not wait further. We said that we would cancel their letters of intent and then we cancelled them.

32 letters of intent were cancelled and the capacity under these 32 licences of letters of intent was 20 lakhs.

The industrial licences issued were 42 and the capacity established is 7 lakhs. (Interruptions)

Units reported for production is only 15 and the capacity established is 6.5 lakhs.

For small-scale units, approvals were given to as many as 794 small-scale industries. After waiting for a pretty long time, 149 approvals were cancelled. Units reported for production is hardly 60.

So, what we are trying is to allow as many people as are interested in production, to produce these goods so that they are available in the market and the market turns into a buyers market from the sellers market.

But this has not happened. The manufacturers told us that the material and the components and the capital goods which are required for this purpose are to be imported from outside and they have to pay very huge Customs duty on these articles. What did we do again? We reduced duties also.

I am giving the details of our action step by step. First, we allowed the import of the sets. Then we allowed the import of the kits. Then we gave the licences and removed the upper limit. We gave them the concessions in the Customs duties and our intention was that the prices should come down.

If the prices do not come down even after this, we shall have to take some administrative measures to see that the prices come down. What administrative measures can be taken, will be decided at an appropriate time by the Government.

We as a Government have a duty towards the consumers as well as we as a Government have a duty towards the industry also. Because the interest of both the consumers and industry have to be protected. We have to protect and balance the interests of the two. What we have to do

as a Government is the "social engineering" as they call it, and in doing it, some time is taken. Some people try to be very smart and try to hoodwink and try to take undue advantage. We have not said that the people have not taken undue advantage. We have said that the people have taken undue advantage. And whatever can be done by the Department within the framework of the law and within the ambit of administrative powers available to us, we have done and we will do it.

We do not disagree with you when you say that some people have not brought down the prices. We shall try to see that the prices will come down and, for your information, I would like to say that from our Corporations and others, we have taken such steps as to make the TV sets available at Rs 5,600 also.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : Where ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Any number of TV sets that you want, I can give you; you may come tomorrow morning and I will give the TV sets from our Corporation ... (Interruptions)

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN : What about other places? You are bothered only about Delhi.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : At other places also we will do. What I am saying is this. If you want any number of colour TVs, they can be given. I have told them that, if any Member of Parliament wants or if any outsider wants, it should be readily available. My intention in telling you is this. We have taken steps to see that the prices come down. Our intention is to see that the prices come down and the consumers do not suffer. But at the same time we are not saying that some people have not acted smartly in this matter. They have. Some people have tried their best to reduce the prices, and some manufactures of TV have really reduced the prices. We cannot forget that thing also. And if some people have acted smartly, we will not neglect to proceed against them.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No discussion. Now only questions. Mr. Ajoy Biswas. Put your question only. This is Half-an Hour Discussion.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS (Tripura West) : What is the priority for the country ? Is it drinking water or is it colour TV ? Evidently, it is drinking water.

The Government gave concessions to the TV manufacturers in the last Budget, but the manufacturers have not passed on the duty concession granted to them to the consumers. That is the problem. Government assured on the floor of Parliament that they would provide colour TV at a cost of Rs. 5,500/-, and the Chairman, ETTDC, also said that they would be able to provide colour TV of 20 inches size in the Delhi market for Rs. 5,500/-.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Come to your question.

SHRI AJOY BISWAS : My question is this. In the course of his reply the hon. Minister has said that the Government have no control over the dealers because they have entered into agreement with manufacturers only. But the manufacturers have control over the dealers, and it is the dealers who do this. So, it is clear that there is a breach of contract on the part of the manufacturers. My question is this. What is the cost per kit supplied by the ETTDC to the manufacturers ? I also want to know whether Government have made any assessment about the cost of assembly of the parts of colour TV by the manufacturers, whether the Corporation has committed itself to provide complete kits for three lakh sets in the current year to the manufacturers, whether the Government have placed bulk orders for import of colour TV tubes on a number of manufacturers of West Germany, France and Korea, whether the manufacturers are reluctant to offtake the colour TV tubes from the Corporation and huge colour TV

18.00 hrs.

tubes lying in the ET & T warehouse because they are not off taken to maintain the market. Whether it is a fact or not ?

My last question is whether the Government have decided to import colour TV

kits from abroad and what is the total amount of foreign exchange involved by this import ?

MR. CHAIRMAN ; Really speaking only one question is allowed. So please be brief.

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamluk) : I shall be very brief Sir. I will take only two or three minutes.

If you go to different places of our country, you will see that the public places are flooded with the advertisement of the TV manufacturers. You will sometimes see that the advertisements are more good-looking than the programmes broadcast by the TV centres ?

Sir, at present almost the whole country is well set for a TV net work. Therefore, the demand for TV sets have also gone up. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether they have studied in depth the market position of our country and what is the estimated monthly demand of the colour TV sets in our country. At the same time, what is the capacity of the manufacturers of country to produce the TV sets on a monthly basis. Our market price is dependent upon the demand and supply theory at least in our country. Therefore, we must study the demand and supply question of TV sets. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether they have studied this or not.

Secondly Sir, Government should look after the quality of the TV sets. Whether they have got any machinery to look into this question or not, I want to know. I would also like to know whether the quality of different colour TV sets are guaranteed or not. Some sort of monitoring cell should be there to look to these matters. Whether Government have set up these cells or not, I want to know.

Lastly, think of the poor villagers of our country. They should have some opportunity for viewing the TV programmes. They have no purchasing power. In the earlier days when radio was introduced, there were some community kits. Sir, I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether they have gone to the

question of community viewing of TV schemes in our country. For this scheme, the Central Government may contribute 50% and State Government will contribute the other 50%, in that process they can do it. I want to know whether they have gone to this question or not.

SHRI SOMNATH RATH (Aska) : Certainly the TV media is very popular. It depicts the heart and culture of us and educates the children, agriculturists.

The Hon'ble Minister has replied in the original question that the manufacturers have been given all facilities, like issuing industrial approval liberally and reduction of customs duty as well as excise duty. So, at the cost of the revenue and the public exchequer, the manufacturers are manufacturing these colour TV sets. The Hon'ble Minister has replied that there is agreement between the Government and manufacturers, but not with the dealer and so the Government is helpless. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether there is vicarious liability or not. The manufacturers have appointed the dealers. So, if any illegality is committed by the dealer who is an agent of the manufacturer, both the manufacturer and the dealer are responsible. It is not that the Government is helpless and the manufacturer can hoodwink the government and at the cost of the revenue and public exchequer.

Secondly, it seems that a high-power committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Electronics Department. What is the report of that committee? As stated, is the Government think of producing a colour TV set which should be within the reach of the common man and having quality test. Mere cost would not do because spurious parts may be used to produce a cheaper set. So two things are necessary—quality as well as cost. It should be of the best quality and the cost also should be cheaper and within the reach of the common man.

Thirdly, the hon. Minister has stated that the law is wanting. If the law is wanting, cannot the Government get the will to frame a new law? So it is not that the Government is

helpless and the manufacturers are getting all the advantages at the cost of the public. The intention of the Government is that the media should work for the benefit of the commonman.

As such, may I request the Minister to reply what specific steps is he going to take in this connection?

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balsore) : Kits were imported for manufacturing color TV sets. May I know from the hon. Minister how many such kits were supplied to the manufacturers to manufacturing colour TV sets?

It is a fact that it has been brought to the notice of the Government that a large number of such imported kits are sold in black market; if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Is it also a fact that the price of colour TV sets abroad has come down by 15% and for which, as my hon. colleague, Mr Somnath Rath has said, the Government thought of cutting down the duty on imported components used for black and white as well as colour TV sets? So when the manufacturer and also the dealer are not showing any interest and are trying to hoodwink the Government and are not carrying out the wishes of the Government, would the Government think of importing color TV sets? If so, I want to know when the colour TV sets will be available and what would be the price in the open market of the colour TV set imported?

The Trade and Technology Corporation is going to produce the kits for colour TV sets. This Electronic Corporation is a public sector undertaking. So, may I know how many kits would be produced by this Corporation annually and what would be the demand of the country? Whether the indigenous production of colour TV kits will be sufficient so that we are not required to import such kits from abroad? What would be the demand of such kits by the end of Seventh Five Year Plan period? Whether it is a fact that the Government is thinking to import colour T.V. sets and the manufacturers are objecting to it? If so, what are the reasons? The actual licence

[Shri Chintamani Jena]

holders who are manufacturing these colour T.V sets are telling that they can produce one lakh sets per month whereas in the month of January they produced only 50,000 sets. So, may I know what would be the demand of the country of colour T.V. sets within the next two-three years and what will be the production by the manufactures to whom the licences have been issued.

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN : Sir, I want to seek a clarification. It is quite obvious that Government failed to curb rise in TV prices. I would like to ask the hon. Minister why the Minister has not written a letter to the MRTP Commission? Secondly you have distributed some of the imported sets. Can the Minister say have they been distributed properly and at the rate fixed by them as they are they actual manufacturers and not the dealers?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, I have about thirty questions with me. The first question was about the priority of the Government of India. It is a big question. I may take some time to explain what is the priority of the Government of India but the time will not be available to me. So, very briefly I would like say that the priority of the Government of India is education, health, agriculture, industry and then other priorities come. You probably know that even before we became Independent the emphasis was laid on education and TV is one of the means of education. In the other House we have passed a Bill empowering the Government to start open University and the TV sets will be used not only to entertain the people but also to educate them. The TV will be the media which will help the country to integrate. A man sitting in Kerala will be able to see what is the landscape in Assam and what kind of culture is there; what kind of people live there even without going there. That will help in national integration. In the modern age TV has become a source of information. We are informing the agriculturist by showing so many agricultural programmes on T.V. We are informing the artisans by showing the programmes on T.V. So, T.V. is not a means of enter-

tainment alone. TV. has become a very. Very powerful instrument of informal education—education which will be available not only to the children but also to the adults and from that point of view, I would say that we would not object to introducing TV on an increasing scale in the country.

Now, I was asked what will be the cost of kits and what was the cost of kits that were supplied? Now, the cost of kits that were supplied was Rs. 3650/-. The question was asked as to whether the Corporation is going to produce de luxe model. Well, it depends on the need and requirement and demand of those things. The models which are cheap will be produced. The models which may be sold at higher prices may also be produced. But for your information and for the information of the hon. Members, I would like to say that E.T. & T. has produced a model which is available for Rs. 1200 also. It is a black and white small set which is available and you can ask me for it and we can give you that set tomorrow or within a day or two. So, the point I was trying to make was that we have brought down the prices of the TV sets. The black and white TV set is available for Rs. 1200 only.

A question was asked whether the bulk orders are given for the kits and the TV tubes. When you purchase the tubes in bulk through the Corporations, they are available at prices which are acceptable to the manufacturers, we are purchasing them in bulk and we are giving them to the manufacturers so that in that also there can be a reduction of prices. Then, the question was asked as to whether the manufacturers are reluctant to take the TV tubes. There was a time, about 1-1/2 years or 2 years ago, there was some sort of reluctance. But at present as far as my information goes, there is no reluctance to take the TV tubes. Now, for the question as to what was the foreign exchange involved, it is a very difficult question. I am not in a position to tell you what actually will be foreign exchange involved in this. It is in proportion to the demand and supply. But the exact amount is not readily available. I will not be able to give that information now. I have to

collect it from the Commerce Ministry and other Departments.

Now, a very good question was asked as to what the market position in the country is. I should say that there are differing information given to us. The consumers' stand is that the TV sets are not easily available in the market at acceptable prices. The manufacturers' stand is that the market is flooded with the TV sets and the Government of India's stand is that TVs are available in the market but the market is not flooded with TVs and I think because TV sets are not available in abundance, the prices are at a little higher level. They will be available and we shall have to produce them more so that they are available in the market and for that production is to be stepped up.

Now, a question was asked as to what the demand of the TV sets is. This is a question for which some exercise has been done, but I must admit that the differing figures are given to me by the Department and by others and regarding some of the figures I am myself not very much convinced. They say that it is in the vicinity of 4 million sets by the end of 1990. According to me, because of the fact that the satellite is available, the high-power and low-power transmitters have been set up and people living in the rural areas and villages are also wanting to have TV sets, the demand is going to be much more than that.

I would not be in a position to give exact scientific figures as to the demand, but the official figure which is given in the vicinity of 4 million sets by the end of 1990.

I do agree that it is not enough to see that the prices of the TV sets are reduced, but at the same time, it would also be necessary to see that quality sets are produced. If the TV sets are produced on a large scale, and if they are taken to the far away places, where the maintenance facilities are not easily available and if they do not work properly, people are likely to get frustrated and disappointed. Our

attempt is to see that the quality is maintained, and to do that, we have provided certain organisations at four or five different places in the country on a large scale. At the same time, the manufacturers are also asked to have some quality control equipments so that they test the TV sets with those equipments and ensure that better quality sets are available to the people. We are attempting to see that quality control is maintained properly. But I am not going to give any false hopes to the House. This is an industry which is coming up and this is an industry to which a very great boost has been given because of satellite in the outer space and because of the facilities of low-power and high-power transmitters which we have provided. That is why the demand has gone up, the manufacturing capacity is being established and we are in the processing of establishing this industry and we will pay full attention to the quality also.

A very good question was asked, "The people in the villages would like to see the television, is the Government was going to provide sets to them." On the one hand, I have a question about our priority, and on the other hand, whether we were going to provide TV sets to the villages. Certainly, we are trying to provide sets to the villages also. The Government has decided to provide certain community TV sets to the people in the villages. It is a small number, but we are providing these sets. We have also asked the State Governments to provide TV sets and certain State Governments have accepted to provide TV sets to the Gram Panchayats and societies in the villages, so that people can take advantage of that. As I have informed this august House, the prices have come down to Rs. 1200 per set and this is a price which can certainly be acceptable to the middle class people coming from the villages. This kind of sets will be available and our attempt would be to see that something more substantial is done in this respect also.

I was told that there was a vicarious liability on all those things. I find it very difficult to understand the principle of

[Shri Shivraj V. Patil]

vicarious responsibility and all that. The principle of vicarious liability is available under torts and not under civil law. But these are legal matters on which I would not argue on the floor of this House, whether the vicarious liability is there and whether we can file a suit against them. These are legal matters

There is a High Power Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Department and this Committee meets and takes account of the production, distribution and pricing of the TV sets. Attempts are being made by this Committee to see that at reasonable and acceptable prices the TV sets are sold. I think, the Committee has been successful in seeing that the prices are brought down, but we are not fully satisfied with the coming down of the prices ; still more attempts would certainly be made by us. A question was asked about cheap TV and I have answered, I have informed the members about the quality aspect also.

Then a question was asked whether we are going to bring a new legislation for controlling the manufacturers. You all know as to how much time it takes to frame a Bill, to bring it here, to pass it here and then send it to the other House. We would like to make use of the existing laws and rules. If it is absolutely necessary to change some law and if that issue becomes so big, then the question of changing or modifying a law arises. We do not think that that is the position now. We would like to use other methods of producing more TV sets. This, we have already done by removing the upper limit on production and producing TV sets on a large scale.

About the kits also, I have already informed the House that 89,466 kits were given at the time of Asiad. At that time there were some complaints that the kits were sold in the black market. But at this time, i.e. at present, there are no complaints about the kits being sold in the black market because they are easily available.

Regarding the question as to whether the duties would be reduced or not, I have

already informed this hon. House that we have given concessions in the Customs duty on a very large scale. Customs duty on capital goods, on the components and on the material has been reduced. So, without consulting the Government I am not in a position to answer whether it can be done. As things stand today, it is rather difficult for us to give more concessions because we have already given them, as far as the duties are concerned. I think the duties were reduced by about 40 per cent. Just think of it ! We attempted to see that the prices also come down by 40 per cent and I am happy to inform that the prices have come down, though not exactly by 40 per cent, to near about 40 per cent and that is really helpful.

A question was asked whether Government would import the TV. When it was necessary, we did import the TV. But I have outlined what the policy of the Government is. First we imported the TV, then we imported the kits and now we are trying to manufacture the TV sets here. So, our emphasis would be on manufacturing the TV sets in the country and not on importing them.

A question was asked as to what would be the price of the imported TV. Well, it is very difficult to say exactly what the imported TV's price would be. It depends on the model and so many other things.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : What about the production of TV sets by ETTDC ?

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : I think ETTDC is not a kit producing organisation. It is a trading organisation. It gets the kits and gives them to the traders.

Regarding capacity, we have some capacity established and our intention would be to establish more and help the country.

16.28 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 19, 1985|
Sravana 28, 1907 (Saka)*