

MR. CHAIRMAN : No...

(Interruptions)

What is there ? I have called Mr. Virdhi Chander Jain.

17.32 hrs.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Allocation of Funds for extension of T.V. Network

[Translation]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer) : Mr. Chairman, during the year 1984-85, T.V. centres were established on war footing at important places, district headquarters and important cities in the country and we had expected that T.V. network would spread throughout India and the entire country would be covered during the Seventh Five Year Plan and not a single village would be deprived of the facility of Doordarshan. But only an amount of Rs. 700 crores has been provided in the Seventh Five Year Plan, which is quite inadequate. According to the reply which has been furnished in response to my question, border areas of districts of Barmer and Jaisalmer would definitely be benefited, but the border districts of Jodhpur, Ganganagar and Bikaner will not be covered by it. I am very much pained to see how expansion programme of Doordarshan has received a setback in the Plan. I want to lay special emphasis on border districts, because these districts are near the border of Pakistan and as a result T.V. programmes of Pakistan can be viewed on T.V. in the districts of Barmer, Jaisalmer, Ganganagar and Bikaner. At present especially in Barmer, district only ten per cent of the population is able to get the benefit of Doordarshan. In the districts of Jaisalmer, Ganganagar, Jodhpur and Bikaner, only 10 per cent, 25 per cent, 20 per cent and 15 per cent population respectively has been covered, whereas 70 per cent of population in the remaining country has been

covered by T.V. network. This situation in border areas is deplorable. Barmer and Jaisalmer districts are being taken up during the Seventh Plan, but I want that districts of Jodhpur, Bikaner and Ganganagar may also be included in this programme. I also want that all the divisional headquarters—Jaipur, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Kota and Udaipur—should be linked with the T.V. network. All the divisional headquarters in the country should be linked with the high power transmission. Efforts should be made to link district headquarters of the border area with high power transmission as well so that all the districts in the border areas can avail of this facility. In this connection I would like to ask two questions. First, what is the capacity of the proposed high power transmitter to be installed in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts and how much area and population will be covered by it and what will be its range? Will it be able to cover all the districts and cities? If not, whether one more high power transmitter of ten kw. capacity will be installed to cover all the villages and towns? Second, when will Doordarshan facility be provided through the high power transmitter in Barmer and Jaisalmer districts? May I know whether there is any programme to provide facility of Doordarshan within one year by working on war footing? Will priority be given to border areas over other areas in the matter of providing T.V. facilities? The border areas are the sentinels of the country. We will have to raise the morale of the people living there and acquaint them with the progress of the country. The programmes of the Pakistani Television viewed on our border areas. Can we also not cover Pakistan's border areas so as to counter their propaganda? Will you include Jodhpur, Bikaner and Ganganagar districts in the Seventh Five Year Plan so as to provide the facility of Doordarshan to the people? Will the Central Government make provision of Rs. 1500 crores in place of Rs. 700 crores so as to provide the facility of Doordarshan to all the districts and the divisional headquarters?

Besides, I would like to know the percentage of the population as well as the area that is being covered by the Door-

darshan network in Rajasthan and what percentage of the population will be covered by it in the Seventh Five Year Plan?

Doordarshan is an important medium of education as well as recreation. Therefore, it is essential to expand it. In the Indira Gandhi University, established by the Government, education should be imparted through Doordarshan. Kindly elucidate your policy in this respect.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V. N. GADGIL) : Before I reply to the specific points raised by the hon. Member, I would like to give a general picture of Doordarshan and give certain information in a general way.

As I stated earlier, we have three types of transmitters. One is, what is called, low-powered transmitter. It is of one hundred watts. Its normal range is about twentyfive to thirty Kilometres. Then another is one kilo-watt high-powered transmitter. Its range is about 60 kilomitters. The third one is ten kilo-watt high-powered transmitter whose normal range is about 120 kilomitters. During the Sixth Plan certain amount was sanctioned and certain projections were made. As the House is aware, under the direction of our late Prime Minister, a special plan was made and in 1984 we achieved something unique which no other country has achieved. 116 transmitters all over India—one per day—were commissioned. The whole country will appreciate the effort of our administrators and our engineers who are mainly responsible for this achievement.

Naturally the expectations have increased now. And everywhere you go, people ask for TV which is fair-enough. Now the picture that emerges is this : After the completion of the Sixth Plan projects—still some are under implementation—roughly speaking, seventy per cent of the population will be covered.

The Planning Commission has sanctioned Rs. 700 crores for Door Darshan

as such, which includes not only expansion in the sense of more transmitters, but also studio equipment, replacements and all the rest of it.

I shall presently give the figures of how much money will be available for expansion of transmitters proper.

So, the total amount is Rs. 700 crores. We had asked for much more. But the Planning Commission has sanctioned Rs. 700 crores because, in the scheme of things, other things like Power, Irrigation and so on get higher priority. Naturally we did not get as much as we expected or as we asked for.

Now, what are the criteria which we have applied ? The criteria which we have applied are these. The first one is population. Because, the whole object of TV is to reach the maximum number of people. It is obvious therefore that it will not be correct to have transmitters in areas where the population is very little. The second consideration which we are now giving—and which earlier also to some extent we were giving—is regarding boarder areas. I shall presently give you the figure of how much we have done in this regard. But the main criterion—and I am sure the House will agree with me—should be population. If the signal is available and there is nobody to receive, it is no putting up a transmitter there. Even today when we say that seventy per cent of the population will be covered when all the Sixth Plan projects are completed, it means that signal is available for seventy per cent of the population. So, what is required is adequate number of sets. On a rough calculation there are about 50 lakhs of TV sets in India today. If you take the average of 10 viewers per set and also make allowance for the fact that some are not registered with P&T Department, then, roughly speaking, about 700 crores of people today watch TV or can watch TV. For them signal is available. 70 per cent. means 54 crores. But there are not enough number of sets. And, with the production of 20 lakhs of sets per year which expected, in the next

[Shri V. N. Gadgil]

five year the people who will be actually able to see TV will increase. But the signal—I repeat it—is today available for 65 per cent. But when all the remaining Sixth Plan projects are completed, it will increase to about seventy per cent, of the population.

Now, with regard to the Border Areas, we have taken care to cover as much Border areas as possible. there are places like Amritsar and Bhatinda. Jammu and Pooch will be coming up shortly and Dwarka is there in the Sixth Plan itself. So, it is not as if border areas are ignored. It is not so. there, we have applied this test that, along with population, the fact that it is a border area, must get consideration.

Now, with regard to the present position, there are 174 Transmitters which are in operation today. Out of which, 42 are high power transmitters—whether one k.w. or 10 k.W. Then, 132 are low power transmitters. Coverage today, as I said, is 65% of the population. Some are under implementation in the Sixth Plan. When they are implemented, there will be 191 transmitters covering a population of 70%. By the end of the Seventh Plan, with the amount that is sanctioned to us, the total number of transmitters will increase to 372 and 80% of the population will be covered.

Now, I will come to Rajasthan proper. Now the hon. Member has mentioned six places. First fact that is required to be stated is, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Kota, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Ganganagar—all of them—have today low power transmitters. So, it is not as it is an uncovered area. They have low power transmitters. As far as the first three places are concerned, namely Barmer, Jaisalmer and Kota, 10 k.m. high power transmitters will come in the Seventh Plan. They are proposed in the Seventh Plan.

I would like to point out to the hon. Member that Rajasthan is the only State,

exception is Madhya Pradesh, which will have three high power transmitters of 10 k.w. in the Seventh Plan. So, we have shown consideration for Rajasthan for the simple reason that the lowest coverage in India today population-wise are Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Therefore, we have decided to show certain considerations to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The figures for Madhya Pradesh, I do not have just now. But, for Rajasthan, we have decided to give three high power transmitters and a number of low power transmitters in the Seventh Plan. Actually, today, there is only one high power transmitter, i.e. in Jaipur. There are 12 low power transmitters in Rajasthan today. It will get 13 more low power transmitters in the Seventh Plan. So, you will have for Rajasthan, 3 high power transmitters, i.e. 10 k.w. and 13 low power transmitters. With the result, the coverage populationwise will increase in Rajasthan from 43.8% which is the present figure to 62.3%. There will be nearly 20% increase in coverage. That is the consideration we have shown to Rajasthan.

Then, I would like to point out—I am not making a debating point—one thing. The population that will be covered by the high-power transmitters which we are proposing in the Seventh Plan—Jaisalmer and Barmer—will be like this. In Barmer, the population that will be covered will be 20.59 lakhs and Jaisalmer, it will be 3.71 lakhs. The area covered in both the cases will be roughly 40,000 sq. kms. Madam—Chairperson, the point that I want to make is, see the consideration we have shown because it is a border area. Each high power transmitter costs about Rs. 4 crores. Now, for a population of less than 4 lakhs, we are going to spend Rs. 4 crores. Jaisalmer population that will be covered will be 3.7 lakhs. Even then, we are proposing a project setting Rs. 4 crores.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum) :
Why are you spending so much amount ?

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : It is because, it is a border area. That is why,

[Shri Harish Rawat]

thanks. I would like to extend my thanks to the hon. Minister on his behalf also. While doing so, there are some doubts in my mind which I would like to place before you. You have said that all the border areas are being covered and high power transmitters have been set up there. No one can object to it. This is a matter of pleasure. These transmitters have been installed in the western border because T.V. signals from Pakistan are received there. Similarly, such transmitters have been installed in North-East section also because T.V. signals from Bangla Desh are received there. May the people of hill area of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh pray to God that China may get the inspiration to instal a high power transmitter in the border area of Tibet, particularly where the border is adjoining India. So, that our government may think of expansion of Doordarshan in the hill areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in the same way as it is thinking in the case of border areas of north-eastern areas and in the areas of the western borders. It is proposed to provide facility of Doordarshan to about 80 per cent population of the country by the end of this Plan and out of the six districts of hill areas of Uttar Pradesh, 95 per cent population, may be covered. I know the number of transmitters being installed in the six hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, which was conveyed to me in reply to my question. But even then only 32 per cent population will be covered. And 10 per cent population will not be able to view programmes on T.V. due to weak signal or the picture will be very dim. I would like to request on behalf of the people of that region that priority to these areas should be given in the same way as has been given to the areas of north-east and western border. The hill areas of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, which are on the border, should also be accorded priority in the same way. Otherwise the people living there will feel neglected. I have heard you praising the Himalayas

and the Ganga, which originate from the Himalayas. You are much impressed by the Himalayas from where the rivers Ganga and Yamuna originate. If something is done for the people living there then they will be grateful to you...

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. There are two more Members who have to ask questions.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : I will finish in two minutes, Madam. If you want, I will include Karnataka hills also.

[Translation]

I would like to know whether same criterion will be adopted for all the border areas. Will the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir also be covered in the Seventh Plan as is being done in the case of north-east and western border. There are tribal areas in our region. Forty per cent tribal population lives in hill areas like Munsiri, Dharchula and Joshimath of Uttar Pradesh. In your policy statement you have stated that priority will be given to the tribal area. These are the areas where even low power transmitters are not being installed. I would like to know whether low power transmitter would be installed in such areas where tribal population exceeds 30 per cent of the population.

18.00 hrs.

My third question is that by the end of this Plan, 30 per cent population in Almora and Pithoragarh will not be covered under Doordarshan. Taking into consideration the problem of the people there, whether low power transmitters will be set up in Idihat, Bering, Bageshwar, Munsiri, Dharchula and Manila or not ?

[English]

SHRI R.P. DAS (Krishnagar): Madam, the Minister has told us the amount that has been spent on the TV network, in the Sixth Plan and the amount that will be spent in the Seventh

Plan. Madam, I am not much concerned about the money spent on the TV network. I am rather concerned about the TV programmes and how it reaches the people. The TV programme has already come under heavy criticism all over the country.

Although TV is very much popular among the TV viewers, it is not because of the programme of the TV, but because of its unique audio visual appeal to the viewers. Therefore, we have to consider as to how the national programme and the news coverage has been shown in the TV.

If you take the case of national programme, the serials of Hum Log and Yeh Jo Hai Jindagi, you will be surprised to find that these serials are very poor in its planning and it has, therefore in the meantime become drab, colourless, common place and hackneyed. If you take the case of news coverage you will find the coverage of Shri Rajiv Gandhi all the way. The Doordarshan has become a Rajiv Darshan. People are so much annoyed and indignant about the Rajiv Darshan.

I would like, in this connection, to refer to one editorial appearing in the Deccan Herald dated 9th December. It reads :

“Was it Doordharshan’s intention to cover all the three generations ? One cannot help sympathising with this outburst. People have paid good money for living-room entertainment, and naturally feel indignant if they are forced to see “Chacha Nehru”, “Priyadarshini Indu” and “Our beloved Prime Minister, all in one night, that too...”

Apart from the costs involved, it is not fair or proper that 132 TV transmitters should beam this image-building stuff to audiences who have little or no choice in the matter ...”

Therefore, In view of this, I would like to put some questions to the Minister

whether the National Programme in its entirety be recast and the National Programme would really be National in character ? When will West Bengal have its own primary service originating in the State and also in the language of the State ? Whether the second channel will be available before the end of this year ? Whether it is a fact that National Programme particularly.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why don’t you put questions ? Why are you reading ?

SHRI R.P. DAS : Particularly the Programmes in Hindi have faced some serious challenge at several stations of the South ? If so, whether it is because of the fact that the Doordarshan has turned into a Hindi Pracharini Sabha in the name of national integration ; and if not, the reasons thereof.

Till the primary service is available to all the States, will the regional programme find its proper place in the national programme for a considerable length of time in the evening ?

These are the questions I want to ask the hon Minister.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) : Madam Chairman, I would like to say to the hon. Minister through you that just as you had created records in the Fourth Plan, you should keep it up in the following years also. It is not understood how a department shows good performance in the beginning and then sluggishness sets in. The level of the performance should always remain the same.

Madam, there is a saying—Where there is a will, there is a way. The hon. Minister has the will as well as the strength. I would, therefore, like to know when a transmitter will be installed in Pali, which was visited by our Prime Minister and which is a big city. The population of the district is 15 lakhs and it is the biggest district. I would like to know the specific date when this transmitter will be installed there and whether this transmitter will be of low power or high power ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V.N. GADGIL) : I do not wish to be technical but the notice is given under Rule 55 which says 'answers to which need elucidation on matters of facts'. Therefore, I shall confine myself to statement of facts.

As far as my young friend there is concerned, I too would like to thank Mr. Virdhi Chandra Jain for raising this question and giving me an opportunity to explain what we are doing and what we propose to do in future. One more thing I would like to clarify is : that although I do not contest that signal from Pakistan or from other countries is coming, sometimes it is a bit exaggerated. If my young friend comes to me, I will show him a map and that map indicates where signals from other countries are received from and it is not such a very large area as it is made out.

Now the question is asked—when will the transmitters be available and when will they be commissioned? There are two units—the Bharat Electronics and the Gujarat Electronics Corporation. These are the two public sector undertakings which manufacture these transmitters. Now they have told us that the minimum lead time from the date the order is placed with them is between 18 to 24 months. So we can start commissioning only after the transmitters are available to us. So what we can do is that we can synchronise the programme of construction of the buildings which also takes 18 months by which time the transmitters are also available and then we can start commissioning. So that is the lead time required.

My friend, Mr. Daga wanted to know when Pali will get it. I cannot give any out of the way consideration for Pali although I agree that it has produced geniuses like Mr. Daga, but I cannot on that ground give preference.

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : What is the maximum time you require?

SHRI V.N. GADGIL : As I said, if the transmitter is available, there is no problem. But transmitters will start coming from 18 to 24 months of the date of our placing the order.

Now, with regard to the points raised by Mr. Das, I want to say that even by Marxist standards of relevance. I find his questions have no relevance to the notice given in the matter. The notice says :

"Allocation of funds for extension of T.V. Network." The proper question for seeking answer should have been in respect of allocation. Therefore, I do not propose to reply. I will reply to him on some other occasion if such a question is raised. I can give him an effective reply but this is not relevant in the present context.

But I want to make mention of two things. First, as a matter of policy I want to state that we cannot think of second channel except in four metropolitan cities unless almost the whole population is covered by one channel. It is only after that we can think of second channel. The only exception we have made is in respect of these four metropolitan cities—Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi—for which I have already indicated when the second channel will start. As regards the point regarding programmes in Calcutta, I have repeatedly said in this House that our policy is that in non-Hindi States all the low powered transmitters should be able to receive programmes in local language. For example, Madam Chairman, in your State Karnataka the Kannad programme from Bangalore should be available all over Karnataka. To provide for this we have proposed two things in the Seventh Plan, that is, either it should be done by micro-wave link or by an additional transponder in the Second INSAT, viz., INSAT 1 C which is expected to be launched in July next year. When either of these two facilities is available then it will be possible till 8.40 in the evening the programme in the local language would be made available to the local population. This is the concept we have evolved and we will try to implement it in the Seventh Plan.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, the House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11 A.M. 18.13 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned
still Eleven of the Clock on
Thursday, December 12, 1985/
Agrahayana 21, 1907 (Saka).*