

On 8th January, 1995, approximately 1588 families were moved from these villages to the relief camps and since then a large number of families have returned to these villages and at present about 245 families are residing in relief camps. These families are now being shifted to semi-permanent relief camps near Allavaran and Peruru till the blow-out is finally controlled and well capped.

Senior officers from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas including the Secretary and myself visited the site to review the progress of ONGC's operations to control the blow-out and to cap the well. As directed by me, ONGC have been providing compensation, health-care and relief in consultation with the District Administration. In this regard, a Press Release was also issued on 29.1.1995 at the conclusion of my visit to Andhra Pradesh. The Hon'ble Speaker of Andhra Pradesh Assembly, along with MPs and other MLAs have also visited the blow-out site.

It is to be noted that incidents of blow-out are not uncommon in the oil exploration industry. All over the world, while drilling there have been several severe blow-outs during the history of hydrocarbon exploration.

The detailed action plan to quench the fire is proceeding as per the detailed plan drawn up by ONGC's Crisis Management Group which is backed by M/s. Neil Adams Fire Fighters Inc. All efforts are being made to control the fire... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not allowed in this House.

17.47 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL  
OF CABLE TELEVISION NETWORKS  
(REGULATION) ORDINANCE  
AND  
CABLE TELEVISION NETWORKS (REGULATION) BILL

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: We shall take up items 21 and 22 together. There is a Statutory Resolution. Is there anybody who wants to move it?

*[Translation]*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move: "That this House

disapproves of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) ordinance, 1995 (Ordinance No. 3 of 1995) promulgated by the President on the 17th January, 1995."

*[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to regulate the operation of cable television networks in the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this Bill provides the following:

First, the registration of cable operators. Secondly the obligation to ensure that the programmes conform to the programme and advertising codes to be notified by the Central Government. Thirdly, Sir, the obligation to retransmit at least two Doordarshan channels, of the choice of the cable operator. Fourthly, obligation to use only such equipments for the cable television network which conforms to the Bureau of Indian Standards' specifications. Fifthly, penalties for violation of the obligations. Sixthly, designation of competent authority having powers to sanction, prosecution and to issue restraint orders in public interest to prohibit the cable operators from carrying out any particular programme. And seventhly, the other incidental and consequential provisions.

Sir, the Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications. The Standing Committee on Communications submitted its Report on 27th August, 1993. Based on the recommendations of the Standing Committee and the suggestions made by the cable operators, certain amendments to the Bill were considered essential. In the meantime, Sir, a development took place, viz., the reported attempts being made by certain big companies to buy out smaller cable operators so that they have exclusive control over a large area.

It was therefore, decided to operationalise the cable law immediately through the promulgation of an ordinance so as to provide a sense of security to the small cable operators, ensure adherence to the various codes and to empower appropriate authorities to prescribe the carriage of undesirable programmes or channels. The President, accordingly, promulgated the Cable Television Network Regulation Ordinance 1994 on the 29th of September 1994.

The Ordinance and the rules framed thereunder

provide for registration of cable operators at the Head Post Offices after paying a nominal fee of Rs. 58, adherence to the prescribed programme and advertising codes which are spelt out separately in the rules, mandatory carriage of any of two Doordarshan channels, replacement of existing equipment being used by the cable network with that and meeting the specifications laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards within a period of three years from the date of establishment and publication of the same. Besides these, the ordinance also provides for penalty including fine and imprisonment for violation of various provisions as well as for non-adherence to the programme and channel codes.

The Government has accepted the demand made by the cable operators that they should not be held responsible for the programmes of foreign satellite channels which can be received without the use of specialised gadget decoder. However, the Government has retained the power to prohibit the operation of cable network in such as areas as it may consider necessary, in public interest and for the maintenance of law and order.

So, I would like to inform the hon. House that we are in the process of drafting a comprehensive Bill under which the electronic media should operate. This is under the direction of the Chair of the Rajya Sabha. Cable television will also form part of it. The various suggestions made by the hon. Members now will be reflected in it. After the comprehensive Bill is ready, I will bring it to the House.

With these words, I commend the Cable Television Network Regulation Bill 1994 for approval of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Motions moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Ordinance, 1995 (Ordinance No. 3 of 1995) promulgated by the President on the 17th January, 1995."

"That the Bill to regulate the operation of cable television networks in the country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha be taken into consideration.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly): Sir, let me start from the last point made by the hon. Minister regarding the comprehensive Bill being proposed covering the whole gamut of electronic media which will also include the cable television.

Sir, there was a demand for a long time that this country needs a comprehensive national media policy because in the radically changed circumstances by the satellite technology our nation, our country, our values are facing the onslaught of alien culture. We are very much in the midst of cultural invasion not only from the foreign satellite channels which are again being routed through cable operators but have grown in large numbers.

Then again there is the larger menace of the operation of multi-national companies and big business in this emerging new cable market, in this new emerging market in India for operation of such things like movies and other related things.

In this regard I would like to just draw the attention of this House to a very important statement made by a famous Latin American film director in the last Film Festival held at Bombay. Mr. M. Littin, who had been imprisoned and exiled for more than two decades, has said recently that in the Latin American countries, which had been very proud of their films, there it is being noted that lesser and lesser number of films have been produced and the whole market is being occupied by the American motion pictures. And he lamented that the countries, which could be proud of their film production, were just trembling and shivering before the latest onslaught. Even in the CATT discussions, we had seen that France had objected to the possible invasion in their culture, in their movies and others. There also and in many European countries also we do find today that there is invasion. The multi-national companies and particularly the U.S. movie lobbies are just invading not only the market but also the cultural values of these countries. This menace is there in our country also. The point is, how to save our culture, how to save our nation from the onslaught of this alien culture. This is a problem, which is being accentuated by a handful of cable operators.

By the promulgation of this Ordinance or for that matter any Bill, I do not think that we shall be able to contain this. We shall have to find out our new ways taking lessons from some Asian countries, what China has done today vis-a-vis the programmes being beamed from Hong Kong. The small countries like Malaysia have done this not only in relation to the cable trade but also vis-a-vis the satellite channel. Instead of taking lessons from such countries, we ourselves are moving in just a reverse direction.

We are amazed, we are rather distressed to notice that our own electronic media, which till today is under the monopoly control of the Government, which has not cared for the implementation of the Prasar Bharati Act, which was passed unanimously long back in 1998 by this House,

is coming to collaborate with MTU. There is a proposal to this effect going on and discussions are going on...

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rup Chand Pal, you can continue your speech next time.

The House stands adjourned to meet again on Tuesday, the 14th March 1995, at 11 a.m. 18.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, March 14, 1995/Phalgun 23, 1916 (Saka).*

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