

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, April 8, 1986/ Chaitra 18, 1908
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Question
No. 597—Shrimati Basavarajeswari.

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : Sir, on
a point of information.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No, already
done.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. KOLANDAIVELU : You
please listen to me. It is a point of infor-
mation. Her name is wrongly put, not as
'Basavarajeswari'.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is
already corrected. Correction is also given.
You can note it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHAUBEY : Do
You know the meaning of 'Rasava' ?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I know
only Basavarajeswari.

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Telephone Connections During Seventh Plan

*597. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI:
Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS
be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of existing telephone
connections in the country ;

(b) the number of telephone connections
Government propose to provide during the
Seventh Five Year Plan ;

(c) the total number of applications for
telephone connections which are on the
waiting lists ; and

(d) the total amount required to meet
the demand ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI
RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) The total
number of direct telephone connections
working in the country on 31.1.1986 was
30.19 lakhs.

(b) It is proposed to provide about 11
lakh telephone connections during 7th Five
Year Plan.

(c) The waiting list for the whole
country as on 31.1.1986 was 9.97 lakhs.

(d) The demand for telephone connec-
tions by the end of the 7th Plan assessed by

the Working Group on Communications appointed by the Planning Commission is 76.63 lakh. For meeting this demand the assessed allocation needed is Rs. 13,768 crores at 1984 prices.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Sir, out of the waiting list, will the hon. Minister be pleased to say the total number of telephone connections pending in Karnataka along with STD connections? If so, how long the Government will take to complete the pending list?

(b) Is it a fact that when compared to southern States like Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka is having very much less number of rural telephones? If so, whether the Government would certainly consider during this year and try to give more rural connections irrespective of demand because the farmer and bankers are put to a lot of inconvenience for want of telephones?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, as on 31st January 1986, the waiting list in Karnataka Telephone Circle was 21,386. In Bangalore itself the waiting list was 28,013.

As I have stated, it will not be possible to wire out the waiting list in the 7th Plan because of resource constraint. Almost the same thing applies regarding our rural programmes. We thought that we would be able to provide one telephone connection and PCO would be available in 5 sq. km. area. We wanted to do this during the 7th Plan. But, Sir, because of the resource constraint, that would not also be possible.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Sir, is it a fact that Bombay and Delhi have been provided with M.T.N. for their fast and efficient running of the system? I want to know from the hon. Minister why in such cities like Bangalore, Madras, Hyderabad and other metropolitan cities, such an opportunity is not provided?

(b) whether the hon. Minister is aware...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What Madam, you are putting (a), (b), (c) (d)?

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI : Only one question, I would put because you will not allow me afterwards.

I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that there was a proposal to set up a digital unit in Bangalore but subsequently it has been shifted to Uttar Pradesh? Now, will the hon. Minister assure me that he is going to set up a second digital factory at Bangalore?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, the second Digital Switching Factory in principle, we had agreed to establish in Bangalore. We have not decided, as alleged, to shift it to Uttar Pradesh. However, we have not taken any decision whether we are going to have a second factory at all.

Well, as regards the introduction of latest electronic and other exchanges, it is not correct that we are doing so only in Bombay and Delhi. We are installing electronic and electronic digital exchanges in all the major cities that are mentioned by the hon. Member.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Can you display the Congress election symbol in the House?

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHAUBEY: Sir, will the hon. Minister kindly state what are the actual conditions of telephones in Calcutta? May I know why they very often fail and what remedial measures have been taken by the Government to see that the Calcutta Telephones work in order?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Only telephones to work in order? Nothing else?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please order.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, Calcutta has a waiting list, as on 31st January, 1986, of 31,069. The telephone system in Calcutta is not satisfactory for a variety of reasons. We are trying to go into the causes and we are trying to remedy them. We are replacing the old exchanges

with new electronic ones. One great difficulty that comes is about the cable system. The number of cable thefts in Calcutta are very much higher than in any other city. That is one reason why the system does not work well. We are trying to improve this and we are also seeking the cooperation of the State Government so that the cable thefts could be reduced.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Are those underground cables ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, our Minister is very much efficient. But his Department is not efficient.

SHRI NARAYAN CHAUBEY : What a certificate to you, Minister ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : You are the blind supporter of your government. But we can criticise our government constructively, if necessary. This is our freedom.

Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister because we are very much conscious of the telephone system, from this side and that side also— all Members are very much concerned—in this country. In our State, the condition of Calcutta Telephones is not dying. It is dead. All these existing telephones are now about to die. Has the Government any proposal to wind up the Department or is the Minister planning to introduce a new pilot project in Calcutta, Bangalore, Cochin, Madras also to improve the situation ? Even the persons who have registered for new connections, for the last 10 years, are not getting new connections at all. I am the member of the Advisory Committee of the Calcutta Telephones. I have given several complaints in regard to the Calcutta Telephones. We are not getting any fruitful result.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What do you want, Madam ?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I would like to know the efficiency of the workers. You have to see the efficiency of the Department.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I have just said that the telephone system in Calcutta is not what it ought to be. I have given the main reasons for that. Firstly, it is old equipment which we are trying to change. New electronic exchanges are put and wherever electronic exchanges are put, things have improved.

As regards cabling, we are trying to avoid cables as much as possible. We are trying to have micro-wave towers between various parts of Calcutta because cables are a great menace. By avoiding cabling, we can reduce the faults in telephone system, I can assure the hon. Member that Calcutta system is in no way dead. It is improving day by day. May be it is not improving as fast as you would like it to be. I can assure her that it would improve as our various schemes like micro-wave and electronic exchanges and other things get through.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from the hon. Minister the number of people on the waiting list for telephone connections in Bihar. Besides, everybody is aware of the condition of telephones today in Bihar. I want to know whether there will be any improvement in the prevailing conditions ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Sir, we are bringing about a lot of improvement in the telephone system in Bihar. But, as I said in the beginning of my reply, we have been allocated a very meagre amount as against the requirement of resources for bringing about improvements in the telephone system in the country. In my reply, I have stated that the Planning Commission itself had assessed the requisite allocation to be of the order of Rs. 13,768 crores for meeting a demand of 76.63 lakhs of telephone connections. But as against the requirement of Rs. 13,768 crores, we have been allocated Rs. 4,010 crores only. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell you and through you the hon. Members that the improvement we intend to bring about in the telephone system will not be possible with so small a size of plan allocation.

[English]

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA : Apart from the technical difficulties, there are certain difficulties regarding the services also, the telephone operators and all these people. We never get 199. We get 180 after half an hour. Would the hon. Minister kindly see this problem apart from the technical difficulty that he has promised to look into ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is true that some of our services are not properly attended to and one main reason for that is the great amount of absenteeism that we have in telephone operators and other staff. We are having a dialogue with the various staff associations. We are trying to give training to them, give motivation to them. We are trying to evolve schemes for incentives so that the absenteeism could go down and the numbers respond, as hon. Members want.

Achieving Self-Sufficiency in Alcohol

*598. **PROF. K. V. THOMAS :** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to give licences to new distilleries ;

(b) whether licences will be given to distilleries for the purpose of export of alcohol ;

(c) whether India is self-sufficient in alcohol ; and

(d) if not, the steps taken for achieving self-sufficiency in alcohol ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS AND PETRO-CHEMICALS (SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH) : (a) to (d) A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) and (b) Licences for new distilleries for manufacture of industrial alcohol and for manufacture of potable alcohol for 100% export are being considered on merits.

(c) and (d) India has largely been self-sufficient in alcohol. However, during the last two alcohol year some shortage has been experienced. With the increasing demand self-sufficiency in future would be dependent upon adequate availability of molasses, a bye-product of sugar, the availability of which would also depend on factors such as growth of sugarcane, cane crushed and sugar produced.

There is possibility of increasing production of alcohol through greater use of khandsari molasses, additional source of raw material like Tapioca. Further production can be increased by improved fermentation and distillation process which Government is encouraging.

PROF. K. V. THOMAS : In the Statement placed on the Table of the House, the hon. Minister has agreed that new licences for distilleries will be given for the export of industrial and potable alcohol. He has also said that for the last two years there is a shortage of alcohol due to non-availability of adequate quantity of molasses. My question is this : In States like Kerala where there are practically no molasses, tapioca is available in large quantities, which is now used for food preparations and for the preparation of starch. Will this tapioca be used for starting distilleries or will you explore export possibilities ?

SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH : As I mentioned in the main answer, distilleries for manufacture of industrial alcohol and manufacture of potable alcohol for 100% export are considered on merits. We have received an application from Kerala that they would like to manufacture potable alcohol from tapioca. But the present policy of the Government of India is that we do not allow any production or any manufacture of potable alcohol in the country and until such time the Government reconsiders its own policy, we cannot give permission. But as for production and manufacture of industrial alcohol from other sources than molasses we will definitely consider on merits.

PROF. K. V. THOMAS : The Minister said that there is an acute shortage of alcohol for the last two years. The major portion