

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, May 15, 1979/Vaisakha 25,
1901 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Half Past Ten
of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER: in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS Steps to Prevent State Governments Pressurising Newspapers

*1114. SHRI P. M. SAYEED:
SHRI S. S. LAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION
AND BROADCASTING be pleased to
state:

(a) whether the All India Small and
Medium Newspapers Association has
urged the Union Government to take
urgent and effective measures to pre-
vent State Governments from using
advertisements as a weapon to pres-
surise newspapers;

(b) if so, whether they have for-
warded a resolution which they passed
during their two day meeting held in
New Delhi to the Prime Minister,
Minister of Home Affairs and the
Minister of Information and Broad-
casting;

(c) if so, whether the Ministry have
examined the main problems mention-
ed in the resolution; and

(d) if so, what are the States who
are pressurising them and what steps
have been taken to help them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND
BROADCASTING (SHRI JAGBIR
SINGH): (a) and (b). In one of their
resolutions, the All India Small and

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Medium Newspapers' Association have
referred to reports of some State Gov-
ernments using advertisements as a
weapon to pressurise newspapers and
have asked for measures to prevent
this.

(c) and (d). The advertising policy
of the Central Government specifically
excludes discrimination in release of
advertisements to Newspapers/periodi-
cals on political grounds and thus is
expressly against pressurisation of any
kind. As regards the representations
of the Association alleging pressure by
some State Governments the Press
Council has been set up to consider all
such matters concerning the freedom
of the press.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: Mr. Speaker,
Sir, in the answer given by the hon.
Minister, they have conveniently avoid-
ed one or two points. In part (d) of
my question, I have specifically asked,
what are the States who are pressuris-
ing the small and medium newspapers
for their political ends. They have
not mentioned in the answer which
are those States. The Small and
Medium Newspapers' Association have
passed two resolutions. The first one
is with regard to giving fresh direc-
tive to the State Governments, Union
Territory Governments, who are pres-
surising them for their political ex-
pediency and groupism. The second
one is to amend the rules for accredi-
tion. May I know from the hon. Min-
ister in view of these difficulties faced
by the small and medium newspapers—
what the Government has been doing
in this regard. Whether they have
come to know which are the State
Governments who are influencing these
tactics. If they have not come to
know about it, whether they have
taken pains to know from the small
and Medium Newspapers' Association
which are the State Governments who

are influencing them, for their political ends.

श्री जगबीर सिंह : जो रेजोल्यूशन हमारे पास आया है उस में उन्होंने स्टेट का नाम नहीं दिया है, कोई स्पेसिफिक इस्टैसिड नहीं दिए हैं। हम यहाँ से डायरेक्टिव इसू नहीं करते हैं। अगर कोई स्पेसिफिक चीज आती है तो हम यहाँ की सरकार को लिख देते हैं। एक बार गोष्ठा के बारे में आया था और हम ने उनको लिख दिया था।

We can simply write to them. We do not issue directives. There is no mention of any State Government in the resolution.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: My first question has not been answered.

मैंने यह पूछा था कि कौन कौन सी सरकारें हैं जो राजनीतिक कारणों से चलन तरीके से प्रेसराइज कर रही हैं? अगर आपके पास इसके बारे में कोई जानकारी नहीं है तो क्या आपने स्माल स्ट्रण्ड मीडियम न्यूजपेपर्स एसोसिएशन को लिखा था यह जानकारी देने के लिए और यदि लिखा था तो उसका क्या उन्होंने कोई जवाब दिया है। मेरी जानकारी यह है कि वेस्ट बंगाल गवर्नमेंट और यहाँ दिल्ली की गवर्नमेंट और कुछ और गवर्नमेंट्स अलग अलग तरीके से प्रेसराइज कर रही हैं। क्या इसके बारे में आपने यना पत्राणों की कोई कंशिश की है और इस तरह की चीजों के बारे में प्रेश डायरेक्शन देना गवर्नमेंट का काम है या नहीं है? यह मैं पूछ रहा हूँ, इसका उत्तर नहीं आया है।

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): I had occasion to address the small and medium Newspapers Conference itself where this Resolution was adopted. I had pointed out that in the present federal set up we are responsible only for the advertisement that we issue. It is our Government's clear policy that advertisements will not be used as an instrument of pressure. So far as the State Governments are concerned, if any paper has any complaint, a statutory arrangement has now been made in the shape of the Press Council. But even otherwise if you write to me pointing out any specific instance, I will certainly communicate with the State Government in that regard. But beyond this

the Central Government does not have authority to issue directions to the State Governments in the matter advertisements.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: In the second Resolution which they have adopted—that is with regard to the amendment of the accreditation to the journalists to bring out the amendment so that genuine journalists are included, in this direction what is the Government thinking?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: The question pertains to the Resolution relating to the advertisements. This question does not arise from the main question. But I may inform the hon Member that so far as accreditation given by the Central Government is concerned, that is done entirely in accordance with the recommendations made by purely professional body of journalists. The Accreditation Committee has been constituted and they recommend to me whom to give accreditation and whom not to give accreditation. The Central Government goes according to that. So far as accreditation by the State Government goes, it is within their power.

SHRI P. M. SAYEED: Accreditation is done in a party manner. These people have demanded amendment. What is the Government's mind in that direction—whether they are prepared to amend it?

MR. SPEAKER: They said that they are going by the advice of the State Governments.

SHRI BEDABRATA BARUA: I am surprised that the Government has taken a very formal stand on this matter. Is it not a fact that the Janata Government is committed to Press freedom. It is not only that the Ministry of I & B is involved out Janata Government are also committed to it. If State Governments try to black mail a particular newspaper or try to curb its freedom, I think the Central Government can consider as to what to do in this regard. I would like to

have an assurance from him that no State Government will pressurise the Central Government organisations to stop advertisement to newspaper in the States without his knowledge. Has he left any such instructions?

SHRI L. K. ADVANI: I fully appreciate what the hon. member has said. The Government is conscious of the fact that freedom of press has to be preserved all over the country. The Government is keen about it. I have not expressed helplessness but we have to function within the bounds of the Constitution. I may inform the hon. member, at the Conference of Information Ministers held in November 1977, I had presented to them the Advertisement Policy adopted by the Central Government and I had requested them to adopt similar policy in the States also and to see that advertisements are not used as an instrument of political pressure. Now, how far it goes, it depends upon the State Governments. We have, on our part, set up the Press Council to ensure that there is no encroachment into the freedom of the press. Furthermore, I have already said, that if any instances are pointed out to me, we will take such steps as are necessary to take.

श्री राम शेषक हजारी : मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आल इंडिया रमाल गजट मिडियम न्यूजपेपर्स एसोसिएशन ने केन्द्रीय सरकार से अनुरोध किया है कि विज्ञापनों का समाचार-पत्रों पर दबाव डालने के लिए प्रयोग किया जाता है ? जो छोटे समाचार पत्र हैं या बड़े समाचार-पत्र हैं वह राज्यों के कुछ मंत्रियों के समाचारों को हाई-जाइट करते हैं उनके विचारों को छापते हैं और इससे प्रभावित होकर बास बास अखबारों को विज्ञापन दिए जाते हैं, जिन्हें जो समाचार-पत्र अपनी गरिमा नहीं निभाते हैं, सही खबरों को नहीं छापते हैं, ऐसे अखबारों को प्रथम मिलना है। मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वे उन अखबारों को प्रथम देने या ऐसे नियम बनायेंगे जिससे उन अखबारों को भी विज्ञापन मिल सकें जो सही विचारों को देते और राज्य के कामने रखते हैं और हमें भी सही खबरें छाप सकें ? क्या यही महोदय ऐसे अखबारों को भी विज्ञापन देने के नियम बनायेंगे ताकि उनका अस्तित्व बड़े और वह काफी तरकीबों कर सकें ? क्या आप उस पर विचार कर रहे हैं ?

श्री लाल कृष्ण झाड़वाणी : स्पष्ट एंड सीडियम न्यूजपेपर एसोसिएशन के इस सम्मेलन में केन्द्रीय सरकार की विज्ञापन नीति के बारे में प्रलोचना नहीं थी, राज्य सरकारों के बारे में प्रलोचना थी कि कुछ राज्य सरकारें विज्ञापन नीति का उपयोग अखबारों पर दबाव डालने के लिए कर रही हैं। जहाँ तक केंद्रीय सरकार का सवाल है, जैसा मैंने जवाब दिया है, हमारी तरफ से किसी भी प्रकार का दबाव नहीं डाला जाता है।

Food Supplies to Jawans

*1115. **SHRI KANWAR LAL GUP-TA:** Will the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) if it a fact that adequate nutritious food is not given to Jawans posted either in plains or mountains;

(b) what are the details of food provided to jawans posted in plains and on mountains and what is the average cost of food per day in each case;

(c) what specific steps Government propose to take to improve their food, clothing and residential accommodation and to provide other amenities to them; and

(d) number of complaints received in this connection in the past two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE (PROF. SHER SINGH): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) No, Sir. Jawans posted both in plain and in mountainous areas are provided with rations having nutritional and calorific value as evolved by the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences.