

RAJYA SABHA

*Monday, the 21st December, 1998/30
Agrahayana, 1920 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the Clock.
Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri Sushil Chand Mohunta, a former Member of Rajya Sabha, on the 7th December, 1998 at the age of 69.

Born at Sirsa (Haryana) in April, 1929, Shri Mohunta was educated at Dchra Dun, Lahore and Delhi. A lawyer by profession, Shri Mohunta was associated with several institutions engaged in the uplift of poor, down-trodden and backward sections of the society. He served as Advocate-General of Haryana from 1977 to 1979 and was President of the Sirsa Bar Association for two terms. He was a Member of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association and Supreme Court Bar Association. Shri Mohunta participated in a number of tripartite meetings on the Punjab problem. He had also attended the Conference of Inter-Parliamentary Union held at Seoul in South Korea.

Shri Mohunta represented the State of Haryana in this House from August, 1980

to August, 1986 and took keen interest in the deliberations of the House.

In the passing away of Shri Sushil Chand Mohunta, the country has lost a distinguished Parliamentarian and a noted social worker.

I request Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

*(Hon. Members then stood in silence
for one minute)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family our sense of profound sorrow and deep sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Capacity utilisation of Industries

*301. **SHRI E. BALANANDAN:** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the capacity utilisation of industries at present in attending to infrastructural needs in the country;

(b) whether India has been remiss to serve this sector; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Capacity utilisation details in respect of Telecommunication, Electricity and Ports and trends in performance in respect of Railway and Roads are given below for the year 1997-98:

Capacity Utilisation and Trends in the Performance of Infrastructure Sectors

S. No.	Sector	Unit	1997-98*	1998-99* (April-Oct.)
1.	Electricity			
	Plant load factor	(%age)		
	Thermal		64.7	60.9
	Nuclear		61.9	68.1

S. No.	Sector	Unit	1997-98*	1998 (April)
2.	Railway revenue earning goods traffic handled	Mn. Tonne	429.4	236.
According to Ministry of Railways, it is not possible to define and assess the capacity of complete rail system.				
3.	Ports Capacity utilisation	(%age)	115.8	110.3
4.	Telecommunications: Utilisation of Exchange Capacity	(%age)	84	84.5
5.	Length of national highways	Km.	38,517* (As on 31.3.98)	

According to Ministry of Surface Transport, it is not possible to give the overall capacity utilization.

*Provisional;

(b) and (c) In recognition of the importance of the infrastructure policy in the overall economic development, following are some of the initiatives taken to attract investment in infrastructure sector recently.

(i) 100% Foreign Direct Investment is permitted under automatic route for electricity, roads, bridges, ports and harbours for investment upto Rs. 1500 crores.

(ii) Independent regulatory authorities such as Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) and Central Electricity Regulatory Commission have been set up to institutionalise the process of transparent and independent procedures for tariff fixation, address the issues of competition and cost recovery and pave the way for stepped up investment in infrastructure sector.

(iii) Plan allocation for infrastructure sector in the current year has been enhanced by 35%.

(iv) Counter guarantee has been given for the following three fast track projects.

(i) Neyveli Project of STCMS Company Ltd. (250 M.W.)

(ii) Bhadravati Power Project (1082 M.W.)

(iii) Hinduja National Power Project Ltd. (1004 M.W.)

(v) Approvals of All India Financial Institutions for infrastructure projects have gone up by 217% in 1997-98 compared to the previous year.

(vi) Package of fiscal concessions has been given for infrastructure sector investments.

श्री सिकन्दर बख्त: सर, इस सवाल का जवाब देने से पहले इसकी बैकग्राउंड बताने की मैं आपसे इजाजत चाहूंगा।

اشری سیکندر بخت : سر۔ اس سوال
کا جواب دینے سے پہلے اس کا بیگ کر اٹھ کر
بنکے کی میں آپ سے اجازت چاہوں گا

There is some very wrong thing has happened. On the 14th December, through a letter this Secretariat was informed that this question did not pertain to my Ministry. I do not know why this correction has not been done. Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you see this question, unfortunately there are 5 to 6 Ministries involved. How do they expect me to answer all the questions on that? This letter was written on the 14th December. I do not know what has happened. I will try my best to answer whatever I can. I am prepared to answer this question, but it is very cruel. Nobody can answer this question in five-minutes time.(Interruptions)....

MR. CHAIRMAN. I am told that that question was addressed to the Prime Minister because he is in charge of everything. The Prime Minister's Office referred it to the Ministry of Industry.

-SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: This letter was addressed to the Joint Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat. I do not know whose mistake it is. The letter which I am quoting here was addressed to the Joint Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Later on, it was sent to me. The question is, I am not concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. You are a competent Minister.

श्री सिकंदर बख्त: मैं जितना कर सकता हूँ करूंगा। मैंने यह बता दिया है।

اشری سیکندر بخت : میں جتنا کر سکتا
ہوں۔ کرونگا۔ میں نے یہ بتا دیا ہے

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has confidence in him.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Oh God! (Interruptions)

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Sir, he cannot take that plea. It is the collective responsibility of the Government and the Government should answer this question through one Minister. Whatever coordination is required among the Ministers, they should have this coordination and expedite the matter. He cannot say that since the question pertains to various Ministries, he cannot answer.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: I have not said that I cannot answer. (Interruptions) I have only brought this fact to the notice of the Chair that this is not the right way of accepting questions and directing them to certain Ministries. That is what I am saying. I will do my best to answer the question. Five Ministries at a time are to be handled. How is it possible? How can it really be possible?

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Sir, I understand the difficulties of the hon. Minister. Sir, the question was about the infrastructure. Now, with the present set up, it is an overlapping of several Ministries.

That is how the hon. Minister wants to escape a proper answer. However, an answer has been given. The manner of utilisation of infrastructure has been given in the answer. I would like to put some questions to the hon. Minister. The CMIE has conducted a survey about the infrastructure utilisation and they have given the following findings. A study by the CMIE has revealed that 62 projects, which envisage an investment of Rs. 86,073 crores, were stalled in the recent past for various reasons. In the sphere of electricity generation alone, 51 projects were abandoned for various reasons. The Government have decided to close down various public sector units. Some of the units have direct and indirect links with the infrastructure sector. MAMC manufactures machines for the coal-mining sector. If it is closed down, the

government will have to import machinery for them. In the electricity sector, Railways, Ports etc., the capacity utilisation is very much less. In the Department of Industry, in an infrastructure unit like the MAMC, they are taking steps to privatise it. what would be the result? The result would be, the total infrastructure requirement again will be met, depending on foreign investment. Not only is the capacity utilisation less but the percentage is also very less. What I am trying to say is that under your own Ministry, you are privatising industries which are having relevance to infrastructure. So, the under-utilisation of capacity and privatisation has created a new situation and we are going to rely on the multinationals and foreign investment.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, primarily, the term infrastructure has not yet been defined at all. We have been using this term in relation to a number of items. The point about some of the industries which were mentioned in the question, that point has already been answered. Besides that, there is coal etc. There are some other items which are supposed to be infrastructure industry material. The way the hon. Member has read out his question, I will also read out a number of things and I will speak about the capacity utilisation as well as promotion. There is no common denominator for measuring the installed capacity or capacity utilisation in infrastructure industries such as telecom, power, transport, etc. Some of these sectors do not lend themselves easily to such capacity evaluation which has to be done with reference to performance trends over a period of time. The details with respect to power, telecommunication, ports, railways, roads, etc. may be seen in the statement laid on the Table of the House. But some of the industries do not lend themselves to capacity utilisation measurement at all. Then, how do I tell you about the capacity utilisation? The Railways have informed me that they don't have any measurement yardsticks for judging the

capacity utilisation of the entire railway system. They have given me some figures. The Railways have launched the build, lease and transfer system and they have answered this question only in relation to revenue-earning goods-traffic. As regards the rest of it, there is no way of measuring the capacity utilisation.

As far as the promotion part is concerned, in the last three years the Government has been putting a lot of emphasis on infrastructure sector. Some of the major steps taken in this direction are as follows: Plan allocation for infrastructure has been enhanced by 35%; an Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation has been set up with an equity base of Rs. 1650 crores; foreign direct investment up to 100% in power sector and up to 74% on automatic basis is allowed in most of the infrastructure industries; fiscal concessions have been offered for infrastructure projects like 100 per cent deduction on profits for the first five years, 30 per cent deduction on profits for the next five years, exemption for income from any fund dedicated to specific infrastructure sector, rebate on investment in securities offered by infrastructure companies, long-term capital gains are exempted from tax, if the amount is re-invested in securities of infrastructure sector; 40 per cent profit from infrastructure lending companies is deductible from tax liability for financial institutions.

SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Sir, as far as questions (b) and (c) are concerned, an elaborate answer is given. He is repeating that now. The question is that they go on giving 100 per cent concessions to private investment by multinationals. What are the concessions being offered? So many concessions are being offered to power projects, telecom projects and other projects so that they can be revived and the infrastructure deficiency can be met. From this answer I find that this is the attitude of the Government. I submit, through you, Sir, that today the Bretton Woods twins and its offshoot, the WTO, could not solve

any of the problems of the world and the world is going to be in an economic crisis, in a depression of the 1930's type in 1999. This is the world economic scenario. But our Government is thinking of privatising everything. They are giving all concessions to multinationals for power development. But I submit, through you, Sir, that it is not going to help us. You know that the second mightiest economy, Japan, is going into pieces. This year is almost over. We are going to face a great depression in 1999. That is the World Bank's dictum, not Balanandan's dictum. Therefore, the whole policy needs to be reviewed. Let us not go into all these things. I have out a very specific question because it is not going to be decided by his government. Actually, the whole policy is wrong. In the Palghat Instrumentation Ltd. only engineers are employed. The Palghat Instrumentation Ltd. where 500 engineers are working, is going to be privatised. That is going to have a lot of bearing on infrastructure, industrial development and engineering facilities which are of vital importance. I would request the Minister to see to it—he may not be able to do much—that at least, the Palghat Instrumentation Ltd. is not privatised so that we can stand on our own legs. Don't depend on Japan. Japan is in difficulty. Don't go with them. I would like to have an assurance from the hon. Minister that the Palghat Instrumentation Ltd. will not be privatised.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, I am sorry to say that the scope of the question is absolutely devastating. Even then questions are going to be put which are outside the scope of this question. Things like multinationals, privatisation, etc., are not concerned with this question. That is totally a different subject. I am prepared to answer this question whenever it comes. The Palghat Instrumentation Ltd. had nothing to do with the scope of the question.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister....

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Mercy, my lord!

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, I can help him by pointing out that the admissibility of a question says that it must be confined to one pointed and specific issue. Here I agree with his observation. But I am not going into that aspect now. There is rule 47 in regard to the admissibility of a question. But that is not the point.

When we had a discussion on the overall economic situation, we found two or three critical areas where we are getting very disturbing signals. For example, in the figures which the hon. Minister has given in regard to the revenue earning goods traffic of the Railways, there has been a shortfall in the first seven months. On an average, it should be around 36 million tonnes per month. But against that, there has been a shortfall. Similarly, in regard to cargo-handling in major ports, there has been a shortfall. Then exports have registered a negative growth. If there cannot be an overall improvement in the industrial climate, in the services sector and in the depression of international commodity prices which is affecting our exports, these problems cannot be solved. What short-term measures is the Government considering to provide the necessary boost? Most respectfully, I would like to submit that a more notional step-up in the so-called Plan Outlay and asking the infrastructure sector to borrow money from the market on a high rate of interest, which they are not going to do in any way, is not going to help. I would like to know whether the Government is in a position to inject one-time substantial quantum of money for public expenditure, especially to invest in the public sector so that the demand can be created. The steel industry, the cement industry and the aluminium industry are suffering because there is no take up. There cannot be any take up unless there is some constructive activity or industrial activity where the demand can be generated. I would like to know whether the Government is in a position to step up

the public expenditure in one short to generate the demand.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, there are three parts of the question. So far as the first part about railways is concerned, I agree with the hon. Member. I do not have to go into the details of it. About injecting extra money, I have already said that from out of the entire Plan allocation, 35% increase has already been made for the infrastructure sector and that is nothing but injecting money. As far as creating the demand is concerned, we have taken steps for creating the demand. It is still under consideration. We have not yet come to any final conclusion. But, so far as cement is concerned, it has been decided that we will construct 20 million houses in a year and the consumption of cement will increase. Then, we are considering construction of big highways. Instead of bitumen, we want to give them concrete floors. The consumption of cement will increase. On the same basis, the consumption of steel will also get increased.

SHRI B.P. SINGHAL: Sir, in the reply it is mentioned that a large number of incentives have been given to foreign investors who invest in infrastructure. Are the same incentives not being given to the Indian investors? If not, why not?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: I beg your pardon, Sir. Have I said anything of the sort? Anyway, whether it is the private sector or any other sector, we are encouraging them to come into our infrastructure sector.

SHRI SANATAN BISI: Sir, I know the limitations. So, I am asking only one question. The Plan allocation for the infrastructure sector in the current year has been enhanced by 35%. What was the figure last year? How much percentage and how much amount has already been invested?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: I am sorry. I cannot answer this question.

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Sir, power is a vital ingredient of infrastructure for overall economic growth. The

percentage of the PLF that has been shown is 60% to 64%, nuclear and thermal. It can be increased to more than 90%. The Plant Load Factor of thermal stations in the country can be increased to 90%. When we are spending thousands of crores of rupees for setting up new units, why is the Government unable to achieve this target? What are the constraints?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, luckily I have got hold of the figures pertaining to the question that Shri Bisi has raised. Shall I give the figures?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: The allocation for infrastructure spending has been increased very substantially, by 35%, from Rs. 45,252 crores to Rs. 61,146 crores. I can go on giving more details also.

So far as the question that has been asked by Shri Ramachandraiah is concerned, there are many reasons: Many old generating units in the system leading to frequent forced outages; Under-utilisation of full capacity in the Eastern Region due to low demand in the Region; Backing down of generation due to widespread unprecedented rains during the months of September and October. Hydro-generation depends on availability of water.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: I would like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware that funds allocated for development of infrastructure are being diverted to equity and term-loan markets by infrastructure development corporations like the Infrastructure Leasing and Finance Corporations and HDFC.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Could you please repeat the question?

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: The question is very simple, Sir. The funds allocated for development of infrastructure are disbursed through Government Corporations like HDFC and Infrastructure Leasing and Finance Corporation. These two corporations, instead of utilis-

ing their funds for development of infrastructure, are diverting these funds to the equity market and term-loan market. If it is so, can the Government do something about that?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Sir, I don't have any information with regard to diversion of funds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This supplementary does not arise out of the main question. Anyway, Shri Prafull Goradia.

SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Sir, I will descend from the universal to the specific, from the macro to the micro, and request the hon. Minister to clarify whether the public sector units under the Ministry of Industry use a costing system called PADATA which is fractionalisation—it is an Indian version of fractionalisation of costing—which I understand enables to even cross more than 100 per cent utilisation of plant and machinery.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Oh God! I will have to get an understanding of encyclopaedia to answer this question. No, Sir, I have no idea of this sort.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 302, Shri D.P. Yadav.

भिक्षावृत्ति को रोकने हेतु कार्यवाही

*302. **श्री डी०पी० यादव:** क्या सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि राजधानी के सभी चौराहों पर और सरे देश में भिखारियों का एक बड़ा गिरोह सक्रिय है;

(ख) क्या सरकार को इस तथ्य की जानकारी है कि भिक्षावृत्ति की आड़ में ये लोग अपराध भी कर रहे हैं;

(ग) यदि हां, तो भिक्षावृत्ति को रोकने हेतु सरकार द्वारा की गई कार्यवाही का ब्यौर क्या है; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं?

पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री संतोष कुमार गंगवार): (क) और (ख) जी, हां। यह सच है कि दिल्ली तथा देश में अनेक स्थानों में अनेक भिखारी सक्रिय हैं जो भिक्षावृत्ति में लगे हुए हैं तथा अपराध करने में भी संलग्न हैं।

(ग) भिक्षावृत्ति को रोकने के लिए की गई कार्यवाही में कुछ राज्यों/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों द्वारा अधिनियमन, किशोर न्याय अधिनियम, 1986 में भिक्षावृत्ति निवारण के लिए प्रावधान तथा राज्य सरकारों तथा संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों द्वारा भिक्षुक गृह की स्थापना शामिल है।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

श्री डी०पी० यादव: सभापति महोदय, आज भिक्षावृत्ति का रोग लाइलाज हो चुका है। चौराहे पर...

श्री सभापति: आप सवाल क्रीजिए, यह सब को मालूम है।

श्री डी०पी० यादव: सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से और सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि अभी तक सरकार ने ऐसे कितने गिरोहों का पर्दाफाश किया है? जो लोग बच्चों को विकलांग बनाकर भीख मंगवाने का काम करते हैं, उन के खिलाफ क्या कार्यवाही की गयी है?

श्री संतोष कुमार गंगवार: सर, यह बात तो सही है कि ऐसी जानकारी अखबारों के माध्यम से या अन्य स्रोतों से सुनने को मिलती है, पर अधिकृत रूप से ऐसी कोई सूचना उपलब्ध नहीं है जिस के आधार पर यह कहा जा सके कि कोई ऐसे गिरोह हैं जो बच्चों को विकलांग कर के या उन्हें प्रताड़ित कर के उन से भीख मंगवाने का काम करते हैं।

श्री डी०पी० यादव: सभापति महोदय, पिछले दिनों एक उर्दू साप्ताहिक ने इस घटना को उद्धृत किया था कि मुंबई के सहार एअरपोर्ट पर 76 बच्चों को अरब कंट्रीज ने वापिस भेजा है जोकि वहां पर भीख मांगने का काम करते थे और उन्होंने पत्रकारों को यह बयान दिया है कि कुछ ऐसे हाथ हमारे पीछे हैं जो कि नियोजित ढंग से दूसरे देशों में भीख मांगने के लिए भजबुर कर वहां भेजते हैं। ऐसे ही 76 बच्चों को अरब देशों ने वापिस भेजकर मुंबई उतारा था और माननीय मंत्री जी ने अभी जवाब दिया है कि ऐसी कोई जानकारी नहीं है। तो यह तो सर्व-विदित है, ऑन रिकार्ड है। इसलिए मैं यह जानना चाहता था कि क्या सरकार के पास ऐसी कोई जानकारी है जब कि सरकारी और गैर-सरकारी तौर पर यह कहा जाता है कि दिल्ली में भिखारियों की संख्या करीब ढाई लाख है जिन में से एक लाख महिलाएं और बच्चे हैं? क्या सरकार के पास ऐसी कोई निश्चित जानकारी है कि अभी तक देश में भिखारियों की संख्या कहां तक पहुंची है और क्या सरकार उन के निवास या रोजगार की कोई व्यवस्था करने का इरादा रखती है?