

RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 11th May 1993/21st
Vaisakha, 1915, (Saka)

The House met at Eleven of the clock; Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Entertainment programme telecast on Metro Channel

*201. SHRI SHIV PRATAP
MISHRA:†

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA:

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

(a) whether Government are aware that the Metro Channel on Doordarshan is telecasting programmes concerning films and film stars only;

(b) whether Government propose to start some other entertainment programme on this channel; if so; what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not; what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO): (a) to (c) Besides films and film based programmes, serials, sports programmes and talk shows are also being telecast in the entertainment chunk on the metro network of Doordarshan between 8.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. daily.

SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Mr. Chairman; Doordarshan which had enjoyed monopoly of telecast in India for several years and which had telecast dull, drab programmes; suddenly found itself faced with competition from a number of foreign TV

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Shiv Pratap Mishra.

companies. It started the Metro Channel to win back advertisers and viewers by seeking to provide entertainment. May I know the percentage of time of the Metro Channel devoted to telecast of Hindi films. Hindi-film songs and film stars of Bombay films and to other entertainments like serials and cultural programmes? Has any survey been conducted to find out from the viewers of the above mentioned programmes how far the Metro Channel has been successful in bringing back the advertisers to Doordarshan?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, I will answer the latter part of the question first. As I had replied earlier in this House; the Metro Hour was started on the 26th of January, 1993 on an experimental basis to try out our technical capabilities and marketing feasibilities. Actually, the Metro Channel as such will be operative from the 15th of August.

As far as the question about Hindi films and other things which the hon. Member has asked for; is concerned, so far; that is; till the second week of May the film-based programmes have been 10 from Delhi; 7 from Madras and 2 from Calcutta; serials, 11 from Delhi and 5 from Madras; cartoons, 1; Pop Show; 1; and sports from Delhi, 1. These are the things. We have just started it, only three to four months back. Within three months to ask how effective or how successful it is, I think, as asking too much and too early.

श्री शिव प्रताप मिश्र : महामहिम, क्या मैं सरकार से जान सकता हूँ कि व्यावसायिक दृष्टिकोण को ध्यान में रखते हुए मौलिक पृष्ठभूमि जिसमें सत्यम् शिवम् सुंदरम् का सिद्धांत कालिदास के प्रियेष् सौभाग्य फलः हि चाहता के आधार पर दर्शकों को आकर्षित करने के कार्यक्रम में पौराणिक, ऐतिहासिक, और नैतिक सीरी-एल बनाए जाएंगे जैसे रामायण, महाभारत

और टीपू सुल्तान, बाइबिल, बेताल कथाएँ जिनकी माँग हमारे देश में ही नहीं विदेशों में भी है इन्हें लोग बहुत चाहते हैं या ऐसेही कार्यक्रम रहेंगे जैसे कुछ फिल्मों के गाने जिसकी धुन से साहित्यकारों ने उज्जैन में जिसके लेखक का बहिष्कार किया था, जिस गीत के गाने की धुन निकालने से राजस्थान में छात्राओं ने छात्रों का चरण पादुकाओं से स्वागत किया था, जैसे चाली के नीचे, चुनरी के पीछे, ऐसे कार्यक्रम में सिमटकर ये कार्यक्रम रह जाएंगे।

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: What is the question, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It seems to me that the question is why you are concentrating on low film songs, etc.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: I have given you what has been coming apart from that, for one hour from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. we are having the sports programme on the Metro Channel which is totally free. So, I do not think it is proper to say that we are only having programmes on films. Other programmes are also being given.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already explained that. **Mr. A. P. Gautam.**

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Sir,...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. **Shri Kamal Morarka.**

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: I would request the Minister to ~~anare~~ some information with the House. The Minister is so competent that he replies to all the questions without sharing any information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a unique feature.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: On the Metro Hour, the House had welcomed the Minister when he said that a number of channels were going to come and that we were going to use our own satellite etc. The Minister knows very well, as all of us do, since the Prasar Bharati Bill

was envisaged; events have overtaken us by leaps and bounds. Today we have about 8 to 10 channels being beamed from the skies into the drawing rooms all over the country. The provisions in the Prasar Bharati Bill are wholly inadequate now to meet the current situation. I want to know from the Minister (a) whether he will consider *de novo* as to what should be done with the whole gamut of the Doordarshan. What should be the institutional framework for Doordarshan and other Metro channels and whatever? Now there is a Standing Committee of Parliament. You can discuss it in that or even in the Consultative Committee.

Part (b) of my question is more specifically on Metro channels. When are the number of channels going to come through INSAT-2A and how many number of channels will be there? Just now the Metro channels are available in the four metropolitan cities. Their coverage is very small. Star TV is being beamed in every village in India. So, are you going to use the Indian satellite? If so, from when? I am asking this because various dates were announced—26th January, 1st April, 15th April, 15th May. We really do not know the exact date. So, please tell us precisely from when these programmes are going to be started.

I would also like to know whether the Air Time Committee of India, which is confused as a parallel Ministry has been buried or not. If not,

will you dissolve it? What are the plans? I would request the Minister to please give us the information. Don't just give us a reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Give reply with information.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, the hon. Member is a former Minister and is a very competent one indeed. (Interruptions)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He understands the difference between reply and information. (Interruptions)

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, the hon. Member has asked some very important and pertinent questions not only... (Interruptions)... In the course of the question he has really stated some very important facts. That is in regard to the situation that has developed as a result of the satellite invasion and that a number of channels will be available on our Indian satellites. The first thing is with regard to the dates from which we expect to operate these five channels on one single transponder, when our Satellite INSAT-2B gets into geostationary orbit in June. We are waiting two months to find out that it stabilises. So, from 15th August all the five channels will operate on 'C' Band. These can be viewed by any convenient dish antenna for that particular purpose. In my *suo motu* statement sometime back I had given information about the five channels, about what all they are going to give. So, I would not like to repeat and waste the time of the House.

The hon. Member wanted to know whether we would like to consider the Prasar Bharati Bill afresh because of the new situation. I have already taken it up in the Consultative Committee two or three days back.

My distinguished predecessor had assured and I reiterate in the House that I am now dutybound to discuss it with all political parties as well as the associations and the unions within a time-frame of six months. Then I will come back to Parliament as to whether we should look at the Prasar Bharati in a fresh way or in the 1991 way, which the distinguished Member here, Mr. Upendra, during his time had introduced it. As the hon. Member rightly said, there was only one channel at that time. Now we have got five channels; a new situation and how we can go about it...

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: What about the Air Time Committee?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: He had asked about the Air Time Committee. The Air Time Committee has tendered its resignation and there is nothing confusing about it. We have not yet accepted its resignation.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: That is confusing.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: We are examining it.

श्री जानन्द प्रकाश गोतम : सभापति, महोदय, माननीय मंत्रीजी के जवाब में यह प्राया है कि मनोरंजन के कार्यक्रमों धारावाहिक, खलकूद, के कार्यक्रम और भेट बातों की टेलीकास्ट किया जाएगा। लेकिन अब तक का जो अनुभव है उसके आधार पर यह नकारा नहीं जा सकता है कि गरीबों की गरीबी का मजाक और महिलाओं के चरित्र का मखोल बना करके मनोरंजन के कार्यक्रम दूरदर्शन पर प्रदर्शित किए जा रहे हैं और भारत सरकार की गरीबों और महिलाओं के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता का दूरदर्शन अब तक मजाक उड़ाता रहा है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि मेट्रो चैनल पर ये जो मनोरंजन के अधिक कार्यक्रम प्रसारित करने की योजना आपने बताई है उसमें क्या महिलाओं के चरित्र को अच्छे ढंग से प्रस्तुत करने और जो गरीबों की गरीबी का मजाक उड़ाने के कार्यक्रम अबसर प्रदर्शित किए जाते हैं, उस और ध्यान रखें और चरित्र निर्माण के कार्यक्रम अच्छे ढंग से प्रस्तुत करने की कोई योजना आप निश्चित रूप से चलायेंगे और इस पर ध्यान रखा जाएगा, यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ।

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, I think, first of all, there is still a lack of understanding of the functioning of the metro channel. The metro channel will come into being in its totality from the 15th August. Now we are testing our facilities; that is, technical capabilities and market feasibility. The Air Time Committee which was mentioned earlier was to

take off from the 15th August. We will be having five channels. In one of the channels, we are going to have what is known as an enrichment channel where aspects relating to women, children; youth and all the economic development will be telecast.

At the moment, in this metro hour which has been going on from 8.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. slots are allocated. These are mainly sponsored programmes. It is not that Doordarshan is showing programmes. It is only selling the time slots. Therefore, the producer, whosoever is getting the programmes has to get them sponsored. It is the viewer who is the judge, whether it is a good programme or a bad programme.

PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Thank you; Mr. Chairman, Sir. My question would be on a different plane. From what has transpired so far; it seems to me that particularly Doordarshan programmes, whether in metro channel or otherwise are being framed on a *ad hoc* basis. There are no clearcut formulations regarding the anvil on which they should be prepared. Is it so because of the proposed amendments to the Prasar Bharati Act and if it is so, how long this exercise is required so that Doordarshan is able to make a long standing programme for it telecast?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, this has got nothing to do with the Prasar Bharati Act, at the moment. We will take about six months in consultation before we come back to Parliament, in what form the Prasar Bharati Act has to be amended.

As far as programming is concerned, there is nothing *ad hoc* about it. In fact, after the budgetary support from the Government has come down from 80 per cent to 20 per cent, Doordarshan has to generate its own revenue. There is nothing *ad hoc* about it. It is systematic.

SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Sir, the great cultural event of the Birth Centenary of the Kanchi Sankaracharya was celebrated in Kancheepuram. The Prime Minister himself, two Governors and a number of Ministers were present there on that occasion. Even then, the live telecast of the programme was done in a shabby way. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it has come to his notice. Are steps being taken to correct the mistakes and, also, to make amends for the failure, is the Government prepared to have a telecast on 26th May which actually is the birthday of the Saint on which occasion also great personalities are to take part?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, we are very much aware that on the 7th of May, the live telecast was interrupted. Today's paper also carries it. We have ordered an inquiry by a technical person to find out why it failed. A committee is already constituted and it is composed of a technical person because it was a technical failure. This Committee is going to give its report very soon so that we may use it to avoid such errors in future and so that the Birth Centenary of the Shankaracharya on 26th May 1993 may be covered without any failures. We are looking into this. A committee is already constituted.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा : सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहती हूँ अंतराष्ट्रीय सांस्कृतिक हमलों को देखते हुए चाहे स्टार टी.वी. हो, जी टी वी हो एशिया सेंट हो, बी.बी.सी. हो या सी.एन.एन. हो, इनको देखते हुए हमारा मंत्रालय पांच पेट्रो चैनल शुरू करते जा रहा है और दो चैनल दूरदर्शन के हैं तो इस प्रकार से सात चैनल हैं। इन पूरे चैनलों की क्या राष्ट्रीय चैनल बनाने पर सरकार विचार करेगी ?

मेरे प्रश्न का पाट (बी) यह है कि राष्ट्रीय फिल्म विकास निगम, एन.एफ.डी.सी. की स्थापना बेहतर फिल्म बनाने

के लिए की गई थी। लेकिन पिछली फरवरी से इस एन.एफ.डी.सी. का मेट्रो चैनल की फिल्मों के लिए भार सौंप दिया गया है। यह देखा गया है कि पीछे दरवाजे से बहुत से प्रोग्राम ऐसे हैं, कुछ निर्माताओं को एन.एफ.डी.सी. की फिल्मों को निकाल कर दूरदर्शन मेट्रो चैनल पर दिखाए जाने की नीति निर्धारित की गई है। कुछ यह देखा गया है कि जिससे एन.एफ.डी.सी. की फिल्मों का भुगतान दूरदर्शन को नहीं हो रहा है। इस तरह से इनकी जो विज्ञापन आय है, इन फिल्मों के द्वारा जो विज्ञापन आय होती थी।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask the question.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा : जी हां। तो उसका आधा अर्थात् 50-50 प्रतिशत विज्ञापन आय का दूरदर्शन को भुगतान करना था। इस तरह से कितना भुगतान हुआ है और ऐसे कितने प्रोड्यूसर हैं जिनकी एन.एफ.डी.सी. की फिल्में मेट्रो चैनल पर दिखाई गई हैं और भुगतान नहीं हुआ है? इन चैनलों का क्या राष्ट्रीय चैनल बनाने पर सरकार विचार करेगी?

सभापति महोदय, दूरदर्शन पर मेट्रो चैनल पर जो दोबारा फिल्में दिखाई जा रही हैं, दोबारा भी कई फिल्में दिखाई जाती हैं, मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि इसकी नीति क्या है? कई बार यह देखा गया है कि मेट्रो चैनल पर भी धारावाहिक आ रहा है।...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा : और दूरदर्शन पर भी आ रहा है या दूरदर्शन पर भी चित्रहार आ रहा है और मेट्रो चैनल पर भी चित्रहार आ रहा है तो क्या इसको इस तरह से कोऑर्डिनेट नहीं किया जा सकता कि एक तरफ यदि चित्रहार हो तो दूसरी तरफ कोई और अच्छा कार्यक्रम हो ताकि जो दर्शक चित्रहार न देखना चाहे क्या दूसरी तरफ उनको कोई और अच्छा कार्यक्रम दिखायेंगे?

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Sir, the hon. lady Member is also the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Media. She is also a very valued Member of our Consultative Committee. All her suggestions would be given the best consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 202.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: It is a reply to the Member rather than to the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She did not object.

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Sir, I seek your protection. (Interruptions).

Expansion of Balgaum Airport

*202. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES:†

SHRI PRABHAKAR B. KORE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Balgaum airport is proposed to be expanded so that Boeing 737 can land there;

(b) if so, when was this proposal cleared and what was the amount of financial sanction;

(c) whether the State Government has made available the required land; and

(d) if so, what is the proposed length of the runway and by when the work will commence?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (d) The National Airports Authority has at present no proposal to expand Belgaum airport for Boeing-737 operation.

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri John F. Fernandes.