

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 21st February, 1979/
the 2nd Phalgun, 1900 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Questions. Question No. 21.

SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Question No. 21.

श्री रामानन्द यादव : सभापति जी, मेरा एक बहुत ही इम्पॉर्टेंट सवाल है। हम चाहते हैं कि यहां का काम नियमानुक्ल होना चाहिए। हम यह देखते हैं और यह पहली हमारी समझ में नहीं आती है कि जो क्वेश्चन हम देते हैं वे उत्तर से दे दिये जाते हैं और जो सवाल हम देते हैं वे अनस्टाई हो जाते हैं।

श्री सुहेन्द्र महन सिन्धु : श्रीमन्, मैं भी इस संबंध में विवेदन करना चाहता हूँ.... (Interruption)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will consider it.

श्री रामानन्द यादव : : श्रीमन्, हम लोगों को ऐसा लगता है कि आपका सेक्रेटिरिएट भी इस सरकारी कांसपीरेसी में शामिल हो गया है। इसलिए मैं यह चाहूंगा कि आप अपने सेक्रेटिरिएट के संबंध में भी पूरी जानकारी कर लें।

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will look into it.

SHRI RAMANAND YADAV: You kindly look into it.

श्री प्रभाश मेहरोत्रा : श्रीमन्, मैंने भी एक पत्र आपके कार्यालय को इस संबंध में लिखा है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Question No. 21.

Decentralisation of Recruitment under the P&T Department

*21. SHRI AHMAD HOSSAIN
MONDAL:

SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN:†
SHRIMATI PRATIMA BOSE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to decentralise recruitment to various categories of posts under the Posts and Telegraphs Department;

(b) if so, what are the categories of posts selected for such decentralisation; and

(c) what are the places where the recruiting centres are proposed to be opened or have already been opened after such decentralisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Categories of posts decentralised:

(i) Time Scale Clerks in all the Wings.

(ii) Telephone Operators and Technicians in Telecom. Wing.

(iii) Telegraphists in Telegraph Traffic Arm of Telecom. Wing.

(iv) Postmen in Postal Wing.

(v) Sorters in Railway Mail Service Arm of Postal Wing.

(c) Recruitment centres would be the Headquarters of Divisions—Postal, Engineering and Telegraph Traffic.

SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister what was the procedure adopted so far in recruiting candidates in all categories of posts in the P. & T. Department, what was the total number of recruitments in all the categories of posts during the last three years, how many candidates among them

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Prasenjit Barman.

belonged to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and also whether the percentage of reservation to be maintained for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes was properly maintained?

SHRI BRIJU LAL VERMA: Sir, so far as the first question is concerned, the same norms which were there at the circle level were followed at the divisional level also.

As regards the quota of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the instruction has been followed and it is maintained. There is absolutely nothing of the type that there will be less of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people, who will be represented there. For convenience's sake, at the divisional level, the local people of that areas should be getting more jobs, and they have a better approach to the recruiting officer. So, this decentralisation has been done according to the policy of the Janata Government.

SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: I wanted the total number of recruitments made during the last three years.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: If he asks a separate question, I will give it; it is in thousands.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your second supplementary.

SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Since I think there is a heavy backlog in the vacancies reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes beside such decentralisation, what further steps are Government considering to take in order to induct more of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe unemployed young men in service under the P. & T. Department?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: There was a backlog in the last three years but we have cleared it now. We have given more opportunities to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes to make it proportionate.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, I think, the hon. Minister is aware that today, the employees of the Post and Telegraphs are observing a sectional demands day and a serious agitation is building up. Unless this is immediately tackled and redressed, it may well lead to total disruption of communications in the country? What is his reaction to this? What is his reaction to this rather sordid situation in the postal department where the rural postal staff—the Janata Government is all the time talking about rural development and so on—consisting of 2.80 lakhs are classified as Extra-Departmental Agents and they are denied overtime and other benefits? They are paid only Rs. 80 per month. Is this your bias towards the rural areas?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: Sir, this question does not arise out of the main question put here. Anyway I would like to say that when I took charge, from Rs. 80 per month which was there previously, I made it to Rs. 100 per month, minimum.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Can he survive on Rs. 100 per month?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: They are not Government employees.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: They are Government employees, as long as you are.

SHRI KHYOMO LOTHIA: Sir, the hon. Minister is aware that in the North-Eastern Region, in States like Nagaland and Meghalaya and in the Union Territories like Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and even in parts of Assam and Manipur, there are a large number of Scheduled Tribes. Now, even in the State of Nagaland, hardly ten local people are employed in post offices, telephone exchanges and so on. Even peons are employed from outside. I have made a complaint in this regard in the meeting of the North-Eastern Regional Council. Even then, they have not been able to help us in giving employment to our youth. May I ask

the hon. Minister whether he is aware of this fact and whether he will be able to help us in getting our youth employed at least in Class IV posts? There are also many graduates and matriculates among our youth. They are not employed even in Class IV posts, not to speak of Class III and other posts.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: This is not the intention of the department. We will try to employ the local persons. If there is any complaint from my friend, I will review it and see that they get employment.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO: As far as the telegraph staff is concerned employment at the divisional level or at the level of the Divisional Engineer, Telecommunications, it may be alright. But what happens to the postal people? Are they being recruited at the level of the Superintendent of Post Offices? This is my question.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: As far as the postal people are concerned, they are also recruited at the bottom level.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO: Which level you mean?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: At the circle level as well as at the sub-divisional level.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: There are a large number of EDAs spread all over the country who are not under the regular employment in the postal department, but who have been working for the last ten years, some for the last twenty years, but they have not been absorbed still. What is the policy of the postal department in regard to these EDAs who are working as Postmen, Branch Post Masters and Runners? What is the policy for recruitment from amongst these EDAs?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: The policy is to get experienced people from these EDAs and we try to re-

cruit them, as much as possible to Class III and Class IV posts.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: Have you fixed any percentage, say, 50 per cent?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: Yes, we have always said that as far as class IV posts are concerned, primarily all people from amongst the EDAs will be given preference.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: The hon. Minister in reply to Mr. Kalyan Roy said that he has raised the pay of the EDAs from Rs. 80 to Rs. 100/- I would like to know whether this was as a token of gesture on his part or has the Government accepted the recommendation of the Boothalingam Committee and raised the dearness allowance of the EDAs. Then, Sir, he has very categorically said that they are not Government employees? Accepted that they are not Government employees, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact or it is not a fact that these extra-departmental employees — he says are not Government employees — are debarred from participating in political activities, fighting elections or becoming members of any political party, which is a restriction only meant for Government employees. If they are not Government employees, why then is this restriction on them? Secondly is it a fact that these people are not allowed any trade union activities. Therefore, when these governmental restrictions, rules and regulations, etc. are imposed on the EDAs employees, what is the background for him to say that they are not Government employees?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: Sir, they are not Government employees. They are free men. (Interruptions) So far as the union activities are concerned, they are given the facilities of union activities also.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: He is making a wrong statement.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: I have recognised their union this time. Previously, it was not.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I am talking of the political activities. (Interruptions) My question is about the political activities. Are they or are they not allowed to take part in political activities, contest elections and become members of political parties? If they are not allowed, why are they not allowed?

SHRI PILOO MODI: They must be allowed to participate in political activities and they should also be allowed to be organised by Mrs. Soni.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: As they are not Government servants, they can be members of any political parties.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN: Sir, the method of selection by the P. & T. Department is quite different from that of other Departments in India. Whether it is the railways or the Accountant General's office or any other department, the method of recruitment is through examinations. In the P. & T. the method of recruitment is based on the maximum number of marks obtained in the SSLC or matriculation examinations. A man who gets 540 marks can become a clerk in the P&T Department, but a man with 539 marks is denied that opportunity. Therefore, in order to rationalise the recruitment system in all departments a P&T Service Commission should be appointed and through an examination this recruitment should be made. I would like to know whether there is any such proposal to change the policy of recruitment and appoint a P&T Service Commission for this purpose. It would be good to have a Service Commission. Since this has been decentralised, it would be easy also. Therefore, is there any chance of changing the policy, that is, through a P&T Service Commission the recruitment shall take place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yours is a suggestion for action.

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: It would be examined.

SHRI AMARPROSAD CHAKRABORTY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it has been said that they are not Government employees at all. That is not correct. The Supreme Court has recently given a judgment that since penal action is taken against them up to a certain extent, since they are holding some civil post, they are Government servants in one way. Now there are about 2.30 lakh extra-departmental employees. They have decided to go on strike because they are given on y Rs. 80 per month which is not sufficient in these days. In the Petitions Committee also we suggested that they should be given some benefits of Government employees. Therefore, will the Government consider giving them some facilities of Government servants and improve their pay scales and other service conditions?

SHRI BRIJ LAL VERMA: Sir, I have already replied to the question that they are not Government servants and so Government rules are not at all applicable to them. But when they are ousted, or disciplinary actions are taken against them, they are given notices before ousting them. That is the only thing.

Welfare of children in rural areas

*22. **SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:**
SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:†
SHRIMATI HAMIDA HABIB-ULLAH:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any specific programmes have been launched by the Central Government for the welfare of children in rural areas during the International Children's Year; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Prakash Mehrotra.