

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber)

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: The Agriculture Minister did not respond to the question of availability of credit at lower rate of interest rates and also about the money lenders. Therefore, we are also staging a walk out.

(At this stage some hon. Members left the Chamber)

श्री ब्रजेश पाठक (उत्तर प्रदेश): हम भी आपसे सहमत नहीं हैं, इसलिए हम लोग भी वॉक आउट करते हैं।
(इस समय कुछ माननीय सदस्य कक्ष से बाहर चले गए)

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2011

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I move:

That the Bill further to amend the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

This Bill further to amend Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 is going to herald a very significant transformation in the Broadcasting Industry. Honourable Members may be aware that the process of digitalization of analogue network has already been undertaken by many countries in the world like the USA, the UK, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, etc. Digitalisation will ensure several benefits for every stakeholder. The most important benefit flows to the common man, viewer, who is the most important stakeholder. Digitalization will enable the consumer to exercise a la carte selection of channels, get better picture quality, access to Value Added Services. For the Broadcasters and Cable Operators, who are both Service Providers, the system will ensure transparency, fairness and allow complete addressability resulting in increase in subscription revenue and reducing their dependence on TRPs.

Honourable Members will be very happy to know that we have charted out a detailed road map for this process of digitalization to be completed by 31st December, 2014. It shall be implemented in the country in four phases.

Sir, proposed introduction of digital systems will enable Regulatory Agencies to exercise supervision over illegal activities indulged in by some unscrupulous elements. Honourable Members are aware that it is no secret that we have all been agitated over the carriage of certain non-permitted channels in certain areas that have been difficult to control so far. With complete addressability, this matter can be addressed effectively.

I am sure Honourable Members would have a large number of useful suggestions, and I look forward to hearing them and incorporating those in the rules which will follow thereafter.

The question was proposed.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Bihar): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I have been asked to speak on the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 which has to be amended. I have to substitute for my senior colleague who had to rush out. So, I am sure, I will not be able to contribute with as much contents as my colleague would have done. But I have tried to grab some points just to facilitate whatever proposal is there in the Bill. I think, it was a much desired Bill which has been delayed for a while because one aspect which has been growing tremendously is viewership. Viewership of television channels, viewership through television usual, DTH, viewership through cable operators, viewership through Internet channels, is one aspect which has been growing, and in a country like India which is huge, there is a demand to regulate it; there is a demand to position this. If we get back to the history of cable operators, it started much back in 1990. That was during the Gulf War when Saddam Hussein had attacked Kuwait and that was a time when CNN was beaming what was happening there. And that created a demand.

कुवैत में जो हो रहा था, उसको पूरी दुनिया ने देखना चाहा। उस समय भीतर के भीतर भी बहुत-सारे ऐसे केबल ऑपरेटर्स थे, जो घर-घर में केबल चलाकर पिक्चर्स दिखाते थे, हिन्दी सिनेमा दिखाते थे और अंग्रेजी सिनेमा दिखाते थे। जब वह डिमांड पैदा हुई तो उसके बाद उन लोगों ने डाउनलोड किया और सरकार से लाइसेंस लिया। उसके बाद उन लोगों ने सी.एन.एन. जैसे चैनल्स दिखाने शुरू किये और पहली बार देश में लोगों ने इंटरनेशनल टेलिकास्ट देखना शुरू किया।

That is how the demand for a Satellite TV or, for that matter, cable television grew. And all this was followed by Star TV which was launched in the country and, thereafter, by 'Z' television. It

became a big network that people started following it up. But the whole idea, the purpose of this Bill, which I can understand, is to get an encrypted transmission to appoint, and the digital thing, the analog, can be retranscribed and reprojected. This is, possibly, for a better reception, for a better viewership, and I think this is much desired. This is done on the basis of the TRAI recommendation; a timeframe has been established, that this has to be done in a particular timeframe. It is the timeframe which was established earlier and which has been rechanged. Now, the Bill is being introduced; it would be passed and, then, by 2014, I presume, it is going to be concluded. I think it is very ambitious.

Section 4 of this entire Act takes into account all the aspects which could be there, and I think it is a very exhaustively printed document wherein each and every aspect has been taken into account and in the times to come, it is going to be effective, especially when you have talked about 'free-to-air channels'; you have talked about notifications in various cities, States and right up to the block level. So, it is a very ambitiously planned Act and, I am sure, in times to come, it is going to be a very effective instrument in transmitting things. Sir, whenever there is a change, there is always a protest and people are not very sure what is the change about. But, I am sure, in this case also, it may have some stiff resistance from cable operators because you are going to regulate them, and the number which, possibly, the Minister will say, is enormous, and the number of people who are being accessed to the cable operators is very huge. So, possibly, there could be a resistance; I am not exactly privy to the resistance there, but you will recall that when we had introduced the CAS in the NDA regime, there was a lot of resistance, but, today, we all find that CAS decision has ultimately come up and that DTH and other things have progressed so much that every one has a quality reception at home and the choices are plenty. But, of course, at that point of time, there was a lobby because it concerns the very important transmitters, the people who transmit the whole thing, when the people in-between broadcasters, followed by those people who have the intermediary channels, and I believe there were situations when the reception and the banks on which they have to be transmitted — I am very sorry, I do not know the technical words involved in it — but the transmission would be obscured because some people would not decide to pay the broadcasters. The broadcasters would demand more money, and these things have got regulated over the years. One does not really have the proof, but one believes that such things were happening, Sir. Today, of

course, it has grown. मुझे ख्याल आता है कि इसमें I have a very personal experience and that is even when I came as a Member of Parliament to Delhi.

जब मैं पहली बार 1996 में जीत कर आया, तब मैं पंडारा पार्क में रह रहा था। उस समय जो केबल ऑपरेटर था, वह वहां का स्थानीय था। उस समय आपने देश भर में देखा होगा कि केबल ऑपरेटर्स ने पूरे देश में अपना-अपना एरिया बांध रखा था कि इस एरिया में मैं हूं, दूसरा आदमी इस एरिया में प्रवेश नहीं कर सकता है या तीसरा आदमी प्रवेश नहीं कर सकता है। They don't allow competition amongst themselves. They allow a monopolised area, whether it is in a village or in a town or in a city. This is a very peculiar thing that they have monopolised areas. I remember that when I was staying in Pandora Park, the gentleman who was providing the service was a cable operator. He would not give me enough channels; he would not give me right reception. Every time I used to threaten him that I would not pay him and one month I didn't pay him. So, he cut off my channels. I was a Member of Parliament and I couldn't do anything. I went to the Tilak Nagar police station and I said, "Sir, he is not giving me a good reception and he is not giving me good service. When I said that I would not make payments for it, he cut off my channels". The police people said, "We can't help it because this area has been earmarked for this cable operator. So, whether he gives you a good reception or he doesn't give you a good reception or whether you are a Member of Parliament — I went as a common man — we can't do anything". I still remember, as a poor Member of Parliament — first time I was in Parliament in 1997 — I was helpless and my wife was very upset with me and said, "You have become a Member of Parliament and you can't even get a cable connection restored". So, I had to use all my contacts in police to get my cable connection restored. This is a small example. This monopolisation of cable operators continues. Absolutely, everyone wants to make money. Everyone wants to have a situation where he can control. So, I am sure, all these provisions — when we have gradually moved to DTH, when we can have better transmission, when we have a situation where we can control things — are desirable provisions.

But, Madam, I want to know a few things. This is a new technology which is going to come. यह एक नया तकनीकी है, जिसे आप लोगों के बीच लागू करेंगे। Once it is a new technology there would be money involved in it and then you are trying to get it encrypted and from the encrypted it would come

to us. We have seen the DTH box. It is working wonderfully and even in remote areas where people can afford it, they are really enjoying it. Once you put the cable operators under this there would be a box or some medium or a device which has to be positioned at the end of the whole system. Now that would mean some money. Again, the cable operators are usually those who wouldn't have DTH. They would be a combined group of people in an area and I think that class is very large. So, who would bear the cost of the new device? Is it again passed on to the customer? Or, is the cable operator going to bear it? As far as DTH is concerned, as far as I can understand, the numbers are less. So, you can sell it at a higher cost. But once it comes to cable operators, in a big building there could be 60 or 70 or 80 or 100. Now if every individual has to pay, the multiplier effect in the cost would be enormous. So, we would like to understand whether this transmission box which converts into back-end and back-end to reception or whether this reception box or whatever instrument which you have proposed will have a system. Is it to be paid by the customer or the cable operator? Or, will the broadcaster share it? This is an aspect which needs to be addressed.

There is not much in this Bill which we need to disagree with. I can tell you, Madam, the Government and the people in the Government that we must allay all these fears that the Opposition is always there to obstruct. Here is a provision which you have brought. हम लोग देख सकते हैं। We are not obstructing. We are saying that it is good and you must strengthen it. You must give clarifications and come back with whatever is good for the country and this is exactly what the Opposition wants to do. Unless and until you realize that we also have a role to play, as long as you take away the space of the Opposition, we will have to go to the Ramliila Ground or we will have to go to the airports or we will have to go to other places. So, let the Opposition have its space, whether it is on the issue of agriculture or on the issue of renewable energy or on issues which are of national importance. Please don't take away the space of the Opposition. We are always here to play a very constructive role, as far as this Bill is concerned. I am sure, with these provisions getting enacted and implemented in one year, it is going to be very beneficial because the customers and those people who are the viewers are most important for us. We are all working together for the last man in the last village of the country. Thank you very much.

श्री नरेन्द्र बुढानिया (राजस्थान): उपसभापति महोदय, आपने मुझे बोलने के लिए समय दिया, इसके लिए आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद। आज माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने केबल टेलीविजन नेटवर्क (रेगुलेशन) अमेंडमेंट बिल,

2011 पेश किया है, जिसका मैं समर्थन करता हूँ और उनको बहुत-बहुत बधाई देता हूँ कि उन्होंने हमारे देश के लिए एक बड़ा क्रांतिकारी कदम उठाया है।

माननीय उपसभापति महोदय, जहां तक मुझे जानकारी है, यह बिल 1995 में आया था और 10-11 वर्षों के दौरान जो कमियां सामने आईं, उन कमियों को सामने रख कर अब यह केबल टेलीविजन नेटवर्क (रेगुलेशन) अमेंडमेंट बिल अमेंडमेंट के साथ पेश हुआ है।

महोदय, केबल टेलीविजन नेटवर्क एक बहुत बड़ा सेक्टर है और मैं यह समझता हूँ कि इस बिल के माध्यम से इतने बड़े सेक्टर में जो एक संगठित क्षेत्र है, उसको संगठित करने का एक बड़ा प्रयास किया गया है। यह बहुत सराहनीय कदम है। इससे इस देश की जनता को बहुत बड़ा लाभ होने वाला है। महोदय, आज हमारे सामने एक बड़ी समस्या है। हमारे सामने यह समस्या है कि हमारे देश में कितने केबल ऑपरेटर्स हैं, इनकी सही संख्या की जानकारी हम सब को नहीं है। इसी प्रकार, हमारे देश में कितने टेलीविजन सेट काम कर रहे हैं, इसकी भी सही जानकारी नहीं मिल सकती है। कोई कहता है कि इस देश के अंदर 11 करोड़ टेलीविजन सेट काम कर रहे हैं, कोई कहता है कि 12 करोड़ काम कर रहे हैं, तो कोई 15 करोड़ होने की बात कहता है, लेकिन सही जानकारी किसी के पास नहीं है। लेकिन, यह बिल जो मंत्री महोदय लेकर आया है, उससे यह सही और स्पष्ट जानकारी इस सरकार और देश के सामने होगी कि कितने केबल टीवी नेटवर्क इस देश में काम कर रहे हैं और कितने टेलीविजन सेट इस देश के अंदर काम कर रहे हैं, जिनको लोग देख रहे हैं।

महोदय, इस बिल के अंदर यह प्रावधान रखा गया है कि सभी केबल ऑपरेटर्स को रजिस्ट्रेशन करना होगा। जब उनको रजिस्ट्रेशन कराना होगा, तो उसके कई लाभ होंगे। इससे ये जानकारीयां तो सामने आएंगी ही कि हमारे देश के अंदर कितने टीवी हैं और कितने केबल नेटवर्क हैं, लेकिन इनके साथ-साथ जो दूसरा फायदा होने वाला है, वह यह है कि सरकार को भी इसका रेवेन्यू का लाभ मिलेगा। जब सरकार को इसके रेवेन्यू का लाभ मिलेगा, तब इस सेक्टर के अंदर काफी बदलाव आएंगे।

महोदय, जहां तक मैं समझता हूँ कि इस केबल टीवी नेटवर्क सेक्टर में चार stakeholders हैं। उनमें पहली सरकार है, दूसरे केबल ऑपरेटर्स हैं, तीसरे broadcasters हैं और चौथे, जो कि सबसे ज्यादा important हैं, वे हमारे consumers हैं या हम सब लोग हैं जो टीवी देखते हैं। महोदय, मैंने बिल को पूरी तरह से पढ़ा है और पढ़ने के बाद यह महसूस किया है कि इस बिल के आने से चारों stakeholders को इसका लाभ मिलने वाला है। मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से यह निवेदन करता हूँ कि जब आप रुल्स बनाएं, तो उनको बनाते समय आप इन चारों stakeholders का ध्यान रखें ताकि इनको किसी प्रकार का नुकसान न हो। ये शंकाएं व्यक्त की जाती हैं कि consumers को नुकसान होगा, केबल ऑपरेटर्स को नुकसान होगा, तो मैं समझता हूँ कि जो सबसे बड़ा consumers sector है, उसको किसी प्रकार का नुकसान न हो, इस बात का आपको ख्याल रखना चाहिए।

महोदय, अभी माननीय मंत्री महोदया ने बताया और हमारे रूडी साहब ने भी उसका समर्थन किया है, जिसके लिए मैं उनको धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। एक अच्छी चीज आयी है, जिसका उन्होंने समर्थन किया है और उन्होंने इसे एक बड़ा क्रांतिकारी कदम बताया है। इसके लिए मैं उनका धन्यवाद करता हूँ। महोदय, डिजिटलीकरण की प्रक्रिया को सरकार चार भागों में करना चाहती है, यह दिसम्बर, 2014 तक पूरे देश में लागू हो जाएगी। पहले यह अगले वर्ष जून तक हमारे चारों महानगरों में लागू होगा। यह पूरा होने के बाद देश की 10 लाख की आबादी वाले शहर इस से कवर होंगे और अंतिम चरण में दिसम्बर, 2014 तक यह पूरे देश में लागू हो जाएगा।

महोदय, आज Analogue system के अंदर बहुत सी खामियां हैं। इस में consumer के पास विकल्प नहीं है। आज का consumer सब तरह के प्रोग्राम्स देखना चाहता है, लेकिन जैसा कि रूडी साहब ने कहा Analogue system के अंदर केबल ऑपरेटर्स की दादागिरी चलती है। उन का एक एरिया होता है और जो प्रोग्राम्स दिखाना चाहते हैं, वही दिखाते हैं। उन का limited channels का package होता है और वह consumer को वही limited channels देते हैं। मैं समझता हूँ कि डिजिटलीकरण होने के बाद एक क्रांतिकारी परिवर्तन आएगा और इस का लाभ consumer को मिलेगा। डिजिटलीकरण होने के बाद consumer खूब सारे चैनल्स देख सकता है और इस की कैपिसिटी हजार चैनल्स तक हो सकती है। Analogue में पिकचर सही नहीं दिखती, कार्यक्रम सही नहीं दिखते, सही चैनल्स नहीं दिखते, लेकिन डिजिटलीकरण होने से पूरा देश सारे चैनल्स देख सकेगा और इससे प्रसारण की क्वालिटी भी बहुत बढ़िया होगी।

महोदय, मैं एक बात और कहना चाहता हूँ। कई बार अखबारों में पढ़ता हूँ और सुनता हूँ कि कुछ टी.वी. चैनल्स अच्छे कार्यक्रम नहीं दिखाते हैं। लोग उन्हें नहीं देखना चाहते हैं। इस डिजिटलीकरण के बाद consumer के पास यह option रहेगा कि वह कौन से चैनल्स देखना चाहता है। जो चैनल्स वह नहीं देखना चाहता, वह उन्हें छोड़ सकता है। महोदय, ऐसी आशंका भी की जा रही है कि इस अमेंडमेंट के आने से इस क्षेत्र में लगे नौजवान बेकार हो जाएंगे। मैंने पूरा बिल विस्तार से पढ़ा है और पढ़ने के बाद मैं आज आत्म-विश्वास से कह सकता हूँ कि इस अमेंडमेंट के बाद किसी प्रकार का बुरा प्रभाव उन लोगों के काम पर नहीं पड़ेगा। आज जो केबल टी.वी. का काम शुरू करना चाहते हैं, वे registration कराने के बाद अपना काम शुरू कर सकते हैं। उन के लिए कहीं कोई रोक-टोक नहीं है। इसलिए आज ये सब बातें कहना निराधार है। महोदय, मैं जहां तक समझता हूँ, इस अमेंडमेंट के बाद केबल ऑपरेटर्स को लाभ मिलेगा। आज करीब 20 परसेंट उन पर कैरेज फी लगती है, वह इसके बाद नहीं देनी पड़ेगी। यह फायदा भी केबल ऑपरेटर्स को होगा।

महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदया से एक निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ। आज टी.वी. चैनल्स आपस की प्रतिस्पर्धा में इस प्रकार के प्रोग्राम्स दिखाते हैं जोकि अश्लील होते हैं। इस का हमारे समाज पर बहुत बुरा प्रभाव पड़ता है। साथ ही आज जिस प्रकार से वेस्टर्न कल्चर का प्रभाव हमारे समाज पर पड़ रहा है। अगर मैं कहूंगा कि आप ऐसे प्रोग्राम्स पर

रोक लगाइए तो सब लोग इसे सेंसरशिप कहेंगे, लेकिन यह सेंसरशिप का नहीं बल्कि देश हित का सवाल है। इस देश हित में आप यह रास्ता निकालें कि हमारी संस्कृति बचे और हमें टी.वी. चैनल्स पर अश्लीलता देखने को नहीं मिले। महोदया, अभी कई चीजें हमारे सामने आई हैं, जैसे रूडी साहब कह रहे थे कि बॉक्स लगाना पड़ेगा, बॉक्स का पैसा कौन देगा, कौन लगाएगा? मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि जब यह सेट-टॉप बॉक्स लगेगा, तो उसमें प्रतिस्पर्धा इतनी जबरदस्त होगी कि इसके रेट्स अपने आप डाउन होंगे। मुझे याद आ रहा है, जब मोबाइल फोन शुरू हुआ था, तो उस वक्त मोबाइल की कीमत इतनी ज्यादा थी कि सस्ते से सस्ता मोबाइल भी तीस हजार रुपए तक मिलता था। मैंने जब यह स्वयं सर्वप्रथम लिया था, तो उस समय उसके तीस हजार रुपए लगे थे। आज जिस प्रकार से इस देश के अंदर मोबाइल क्रांति आई, उससे इस देश के अंदर मोबाइल के भाव काफी गिरे हैं। इसी तरह से यह जो नई चीज शुरू हो रही है, निश्चित रूप से जब कंपटीशन बढ़ेगा, तो इसके भाव भी गिरेंगे और जो शंका व्यक्त की जा रही है कि उसका पैसा बढ़ेगा, कौन देगा, वह शंका भी दूर होगी।

उपसभापति महोदय, एक दो-बातें और मैं कहना चाहता हूँ। हो सकता है, माननीया मंत्री महोदया, यह विषय इस बिल से जुड़ा हुआ न हो, लेकिन मैं किसान का बेटा हूँ और मैं यह महसूस करता हूँ कि आज किसान के लिए इस देश के अंदर टेलीविजन के माध्यम से कोई कार्यक्रम नहीं चलाया जा रहा है। थोड़ी देर पहले आज हमारे कृषि मंत्री जी किसानों के बारे में हुई बहस का जवाब दे रहे थे। यह सही है, आज किसान के लिए सोचना बहुत जरूरी है, लेकिन किसान के लिए आज कोई भी चैनल काम नहीं कर रहा है। जब प्रथम हरित-क्रांति आई थी, उस वक्त बड़ा योगदान रहा कि हमारे देश के अंदर दूरदर्शन पर एक प्रसारण "कृषि-दर्शन" चालू हुआ था, जिसका लाभ लोगों को बहुत मिला। उस वक्त इतने टेलीविजन नहीं हुआ करते थे, बहुत कम होते थे, लेकिन आज आप जब इस प्रकार का एक अच्छा बिल लेकर आई हैं, जिसके द्वारा आप एक क्रांतिकारी कदम उठाने जा रही हैं, तो इस देश का जो सबसे बड़ा हिस्सा गांवों में रहता है, खेती करता है, हमें अन्न देता है, हमारे देश के खाद्यान्न की आपूर्ति करता है, उसके लिए आज सबसे बड़ी आवश्यकता है कि उनकी तरफ भी ध्यान दिया जाए।

महोदय, यह दूसरी हरित-क्रांति है, जो हमारी यूपीए की अध्यक्ष माननीया सोनिया गांधी जी के नेतृत्व में आ रही है। इस दूसरी नई हरित-क्रांति के लिए आपको इस ओर ध्यान देना पड़ेगा कि कृषि के लिए एक चैनल चालू किया जाए, जो 24 घंटे इस देश के लिए काम करे, किसानों के लिए काम करे ताकि किसान जब चाहे उसे जानकारी मिलनी चाहिए कि आज उसे कब बीज बोना चाहिए, कब खाद देनी चाहिए, कब पानी देना चाहिए, अगर फसलों में कीड़े लग रहे हैं तो क्या देना चाहिए। जमाना बदल गया है। आज किसान के पास मोबाइल टेलीफोन है, आज किसानों के लिए ऐसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए कि किसान मोबाइल के माध्यम से उस चैनल से पूछ सकता है कि मुझे इस प्रश्न का उत्तर चाहिए और उसे उसका उत्तर मिलना चाहिए। इसलिए मैं पुरजोर शब्दों में मांग करता हूँ कि

आप किसानों के लिए, कृषि के लिए विशेष तौर पर एक चैनल चालू करवाइए, जो 24 घंटे नहीं, तो कम से कम 12 घंटे तो काम करो।

उपसभापति महोदय, मैं अंत में एक बात और कहना चाहता हूँ कि आज टीआरपी के लिए बहुत लड़ाई चल रही है। यह जो टीआरपी के लिए लड़ाई चल रही है, उसमें हमारे जो इतने सारे चैनल हैं वे प्रतिस्पर्धा के लिए अनेक प्रकार से ऐसी पिववर दिखाते हैं, जिससे इस देश की संस्कृति को बड़ा भारी नुकसान हो रहा है। आज टीआरपी के लिए 800 घरों में बॉक्सेस लगे हैं, उन्हीं के आधार पर यह टीआरपी तैयार होती है। मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि आज जो मंत्री महोदय बिल लेकर आई हैं, इस बिल के आने से टीआरपी का दबाव भी कम होगा? क्योंकि, इस बिल के आने से यह पता लगेगा कि कितने लोग टेलीविजन देख रहे हैं, कौन-सा चैनल देख रहे हैं, जिससे आने वाले समय में जो इस देश के अंदर टीआरपी के लिए सिस्टम बना हुआ है, वह कम होगा और इस बिल से फायदा होगा।

उपसभापति महोदय, अंत में मैं एक बार फिर अपनी मंत्री महोदय को दिल से धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ और हमारी माननीया यूपीए अध्यक्ष सोनिया गांधी जी को और हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जी को भी धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ कि उनकी अगुवाई के अंदर माननीया मंत्री महोदय एक बहुत शानदार, क्रांतिकारी बिल लेकर आई हैं। इस बिल के आने से सरकार को लाभ होगा, consumers को लाभ होगा, केबल ऑपरेटर्स को लाभ होगा, Broadcasters को लाभ होगा, सभी लोगों को लाभ होगा। मैं उपेक्षा करता हूँ कि आज दिल्ली के लोग जो कार्यक्रम देखते हैं, वही कार्यक्रम हमारे देश के गांवों में, दूर-दराज के इलाकों में बैठे हुए लोग भी देख सकेंगे। इतना कहकर, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ, धन्यवाद।

श्री वीर सिंह (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभापति जी, आपने मुझे केबल टेलीविजन नेटवर्क (विनियमन) संशोधन विधेयक, 2011 पर बोलने का अवसर दिया, इसके लिए मैं आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ। यह अच्छी बात है कि कानून बने। हम केबल ऑपरेटर्स और उपभोक्ताओं के लिए कानून बनाते जा रहे हैं, लेकिन उन्हें लागू करने की मंशा जरूर साफ होनी चाहिए। केबल ऑपरेटर्स, अपने केबल नेटवर्क के माध्यम से उपभोक्ताओं को विभिन्न कार्यक्रम दिखाते हैं। पूरे देश के उपभोक्ताओं की आम शिकायत है कि जो चैनल्स दिखाए जाते हैं, उन्हें पूरे परिवार के साथ देखना बड़ा मुश्किल होता है। इसके लिए केवल केबल ऑपरेटर्स को दोष देना ठीक नहीं है, क्योंकि जो लोग कार्यक्रम बनाते हैं, वे कार्यक्रम बनाकर इन केबल ऑपरेटर्स को दे देते हैं, इसलिए कार्यक्रम बनाने वालों को भी इस ओर ध्यान देना होगा। भारत, प्राचीन संस्कृति और सभ्यता का देश है तथा इस संस्कृति और सभ्यता के साथ खिलवाड़ न हो, इसे देखने की जरूरत है। केबल ऑपरेटर्स द्वारा जो चैनल्स दिखाए जा रहे हैं, उनमें सुबह और शाम के समय ऐसे कार्यक्रम प्रसारित होने चाहिए, जिन्हें उपभोक्ता अपने पूरे परिवार के साथ देखें, क्योंकि लगभग सभी चैनल्स पर कभी-कभी ऐसे दृश्य आ जाते हैं कि यदि परिवार के सभी लोग वहां बैठे हुए हैं, तो बुजुर्गों को वहां से उठाना पड़ता है। ऐसे चैनल्स पर रोक लगाई जानी चाहिए।

उपसभापति जी, आज यदि हम अपने यहां केबल लगवाते हैं, तो जिन भाषाओं को उस क्षेत्र के लोग जानते हैं, उस भाषा के चैनल्स तो वे देते हैं, लेकिन वे कुछ ऐसी भाषा वाले चैनल्स भी जोड़ देते हैं, जो प्राइवेट सैक्टर की कंपनियों द्वारा चलाए जा रहे हैं और जिन्हें उस क्षेत्र के व्यक्ति नहीं समझते हैं, लेकिन उन चैनल्स का पैसा भी उनको देना पड़ता है। इस प्रकार की बहुत सी शिकायतें सामने आई हैं।

उपसभापति जी, केबल नेटवर्क वाले उपभोक्ताओं को नाराज कर देते हैं। अगर कोई 100 चैनल्स लेना चाहता है, तो ये उसे 300 चैनल्स दे देते हैं। अगर कोई अपनी भाषा के 50 चैनल्स लेना चाहता है, तो ये उसे 150 चैनल्स दे देते हैं और पैसा भी 150 चैनल्स का ही लेते हैं। इसलिए यह देखना जरूरी है कि यदि कोई उपभोक्ता 100 चैनल्स ही लेना चाहता है, तो डिजिटल नेटवर्क वाले 100 चैनल्स का ही पैसा काटें, 150 चैनल्स का पैसा न काटें। इस बात को देखना अति आवश्यक है।

उपसभापति जी, जो digitalization की बात कही गई है, उससे सही आमदनी का हिसाब लगेगा। इसके लिए 5 करोड़ सैट टॉप्स बॉक्स लगाने पड़ेंगे, जिन पर 20 से 30 हजार करोड़ रुपए खर्च होंगे और इस कार्य को चार चरणों में पूरा करने का लक्ष्य है। वर्ष 2014 तक digitalizations करने की योजना है और प्लान यह है कि पहले महानगरों में digitalization करेंगे, उसके बाद क्रम से दूसरे छोटे-छोटे शहरों में digitalization करेंगे। केबल ऑपरेटर्स विभिन्न प्रकार के चैनल्स दिखाते हैं, लेकिन नेशनल चैनल्स नहीं दिखाते हैं। टी.वी. के माध्यम से ही सारा प्रचार किया जाता है।

मैं पूछना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आपने अवांछनीय प्रोग्राम न दिखाए जाने के लिए कोई इंतजाम किया है, क्या कोई बोर्ड बनाया है या वे बिल्कुल फ्री हैं कि जो चाहें, वह दिखा सकते हैं? कोई हस्तरेखा देखने वाला आता है, कोई राशिफल बताने वाला आता है, कोई अंगूठी पहनाने वाला आता है कि इससे इतना फायदा होगा। इस प्रकार लोगों को अंधविश्वासी बनाया जा रहा है। मान्यवर, ऐसी चीजों के प्रसारण पर रोक होनी चाहिए, जो समाज, जनता और देश के हित में नहीं है। टी.वी. का विषय जनसम्पर्क का है और technology का सही इस्तेमाल देश और समाज के हित में होना चाहिए, लेकिन आज उलटा हो रहा है। एक लाइन समाचार दिया जाता है और फिर से उन चीजों का प्रचार शुरू हो जाता है।

मान्यवर, यह चिंता का विषय है कि शहरों, गांवों और कस्बों में रोज़ खुदाई होती है, लाइनें डाली जाती हैं और छः महीने बाद अथॉरिटी कहती है कि रास्ता खाली कीजिए, सड़क तोड़नी है, तार हटाए जाएं और फिर उसी तरह से काम चलता है। इससे कुल मिलाकर कॉस्ट बढ़ती है, क्वालिटी खराब होती है, इसलिए मैं बहुत विनम्रता से कहना चाहूंगा कि इसमें जो अधिकारी हैं, अगर उनको अपने विवेक और discretionary power का इस्तेमाल करने

दिया जाए, तो उसे कारण भ्रष्टाचार होगा। हमें Distributor की कुछ न कुछ चिंता करनी चाहिए। चाहे केबल लाइन डालनी हो, गैस पाइप लाइन डालनी हो या टेलीफोन लाइन डालनी हो, मेरा सुझाव है कि सरकार कुछ trenching तय कर दे कि जिन्हें इस्तेमाल करके ही लाइन डालें, जिससे बार-बार सड़कों का टूटना और बनना बंद हो, कॉस्ट का बढ़ना बंद हो। मैं समझता हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री जी इस पर ज़रूर ध्यान देंगे।

मान्यवार, आज जो सरकारी चैनल - नेशनल चैनल हैं, वह गांवों में दिखाया जाता है, लेकिन गांवों में डिश नहीं होती है। उस नेशनल चैनल पर बहुत सी बातें नहीं दिखाई जाती हैं, जिससे गांवों में रहने वाले किसानों और मजदूरों को कुछ सीखने को मिले, उनको भी फायदा हो, इसलिए मेरा सुझाव है कि नेशनल चैनल पर भी ऐसी बातें दिखाई जाएं, जिससे गांवों में रहने वाले व्यक्ति भी उसको देख सकें और उसका फायदा उठा सकें, धन्यवाद।

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL (Kerala): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, this Bill is replacing the existing Ordinance. The steps taken by the Government to regulate the Cable T.V. operations in the country are good. I am supporting it. As part of our policy to regulate the Cable T.V. operations and the maximum utilisation of the new technology in the field of electronics, it is the recommendation of the TRAI to switchover from the analog system to the digital system, DAC System. Through this recommendation, it is expected that the television viewers in the country will get maximum channels and the maximum possible better services. As per the latest figures, we have about 89 private players in the television field in the country. There are 550 television channels, and out of that, 115 are paid channels. Sir, when this new system is coming, we are having some apprehensions. Naturally, everyone will have some apprehensions. Earlier, we used to get cable television through local cable television operators. Now, we are switching over to a new system. The apprehension is that the cable television system will be monopolized by a few. Now, in the digital cable television field, we are having some major players. We have very big companies. The DTH companies are there, which are directly controlling the entire system. Sir, in a medium State like Kerala, we have more than 25,000 cable television operators. What will be the fate of these cable operators, and thousands of people who are working under them? What will be the fate of these small and medium cable television operators in every village? I could not make it out from this Amending Bill as to what will be the fate of all these people. Sir, this monopoly is coming through the Bill itself. There is a provision in the Bill for the pay channels to charge fee accordingly. That means, seasonally, they can charge more. For example, when the Cricket World Cup is there, these pay channels can charge very high fees as per

their wish. So, there is no provision to control this kind of tendency— I do not want to use the word 'looting'— adopted by the DTH companies. Another thing is that DTH is a very costly thing. Some cable TVs are operating from their main server and some are working through the DTH services. I do not know what exactly will happen to all these cable TVs. DTH services are priced at Rs.2500 with their own staff. If we calculate for a State like Kerala, an amount of Rs.2500 crores is needed for changing over to the new system. But we can think of a new cheap system like Aakash and like our iPod. It is not even like iPod or Samsung Galaxy. We make Aakash Tablet at a very low cost. For DTH also, low cost instruments should be there. Otherwise, it will be a monopoly thing and will be costly for the people.

Sir, coming to Free to Air Channels, even in Delhi there are provisions for FTA channels. Even there is compulsory provision for showing of Doordarshan, Lok Sabha TV, Rajya Sabha TV, etc. At many places we are not getting it. Even in many places we are not getting Malayalam, Tamil and other regional channels. Many companies are there. I am not giving the names of the DTH companies. They are asking for higher amount to broadcast some of the regional channels. For example, for a Malayalam channel in Delhi, they are charging Rs.10 lakh or Rs.20 lakh. In other channels this kind of monopoly is there and we are not getting information relating to us. This is like a question of right to information. We are not getting channels that way.

Sir, another thing is that arbitrariness may happen. The rule making is yet to be done. There is a provision for registration. If some officer is not registering, there is a question of arbitrariness. There is also a provision for suspending or cancelling the licence. Even there is a provision of seizure of equipments by the authorities. For ten days the seized equipment can be with the officer. It can be seized for an indefinite period with some judicial pronouncement or intervention. So, this type of arbitrariness should be avoided. There may be different interest. We know some State Government officers may have their own interests and a local operator's instruments can be seized. This type of arbitrariness should be avoided.

Chapter 5, Section 19, of the original Act talks about prohibition of transmission of certain programmes in the public interest. Since the Minister is hearing all these things very patiently, I request her to pay attention to the news items on channel spreading hatred among people. The Government is not looking into the details. The latest example is about the Mullapariyar issue going

on between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the morning also I was trying to raise this issue. On Mullapariyar issue some channels are showing that some Tamilians are attacked by the Malayali people. It is mainly such types of news which are creating problems. This type of news creates some kind hatred and tension among people. This is a very serious issue. I do not know why the Government is not looking into this kind of issues. The editors of the channels and newspapers have to be called. This type of stories creating tension among people should be avoided. There is a provision in the original Act. Otherwise also it is there. The hon. Minister and the Government have to look into this kind of matters. It should not be in this case only. Otherwise also in India this type of issues are very much developing. So, that aspect has to be taken care of in this Bill. Thank you.

SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir for giving me this opportunity to speak on The Cable Television Networks Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2011. This Bill is a major step that the Government has initiated enabling the digitization of the analog TV network. It was enacted to regulate cable television network operations in the country in order to bring about uniformity in the operations, avoid unwelcome programmes that are available to users and to make use of potential technology so that users can avail information and entertainment. However, I would also like to express my concerns that more steps should be taken to address several concerns that are plaguing the broadcasting sector. This Bill is a commendable step that the Government has initiated as it brings India on par with countries like the United Kingdom, USA, Korea and Taiwan. I think that the whole country, especially the consumers will be pleased to have the opportunity to choose their right choice in the selection of channels in viewing better quality pictures, getting good quality signal and reception, getting Value Added Services like Video on Demand, etc. through this Bill. This Bill will usher in a system of transparency for service providers. This system, especially, will encourage the growth of subscription value and reduce dependence on TRPs. I am glad that action will be taken on illegal activities, given the provision of complete addressability. I welcome the move as it takes into account the proper collection of taxes for the Government also. Here I would like to express my concern about the cost of set top box. The cost approximately of a set top box is Rs. 2500. I am quite sure that people from the poorer sections of society would be

unable to reap the benefits of this Bill unless some concrete measures are taken in this step. I am not sure whether the Ministry plans to ensure that set top boxes will be available at a cheaper rate. Also, cable operators will have to recover the cost. If the Ministry would clarify this issue, it would be a great welcome step. Perhaps the scientific and detailed survey of people availing cable TV and the corresponding reasons why they are not able to receive these benefits in rural areas especially, will be instructive in determining the state of affairs. It would also be greatly beneficial if awareness programmes about digital cable TV will reach the less privileged sections of the society. I would like to know the details of training programmes, if at all any, that were initiated to ensure the smooth transition from analog cable TV to digital cable TV. With private players entering the broadcasting domain, there is no doubt that consumers now have wider options and quality of telecasting has improved. However, the prices will also go up. So, we must take into consideration the reach of the policies that are made and whether they can cater to economic interest of the people at large. I am also concerned if broadcasters have the option of pricing. Abrupt increases in rates before particular events are something that is quite undesirable. I hope that the Minister carefully identifies channels that should come under the basic tier, taking into account the variety of benefits TV channels have. It should include channels that are educative, informative and entertaining. Here, I would like to address the Minister. Again, my concern is about the objectionable content in the TV channels. In the cinemas, only if we go to cinema theatres, it is causing problems at the cost of our own. But in the small screen, which is in our own house, most of the children and women especially in the house spend more than three to four hours a day. All the TV channels, all the TV serials invariably are doing a brain wash of women. They are really brainwashing the mother-in-laws and the daughter-in-laws. Gone are those days. Women are now financially independent. In those days when they were not financially independent, maybe the mother-in-laws would tend to treat their daughter-in-laws badly. But even now, it is shown as if they are poisoning their daughter-in law or they are sending away their mother-in-laws. Women are depicted very badly like this. I was literally quoting some of the TV ads also last time. I would like to quote one more ad now.

It is, literally, a man is chasing a woman, is taking water from her body and drinking! If you look at the advertisement, it makes you feel that the advertisement is going to be about a condom; but it is an advertisement about soap. It was banned only after it was telecast again and again on television. I would bring to the notice of the hon. Minister — I was earlier a member of the Censor

Board that whatever was banned on the big screen is all shown on small screen. This is literally spoiling the children and women in the house. So, what I would like to suggest is this. India is one. Every State has its own culture. So, I would like to suggest for a regulatory mechanism with a set of rules can be framed, State-wise. Umpteen channels are coming up and umpteen serials are being telecast. So, literally, we cannot screen each and everything. But, a group of people can, randomly, watch these channels and, if any content goes against the rules and regulations prescribed, action can be taken against them. I would like to give an example, Sir. On the big screen, if women are beaten up, if they are slapped again and again, we ensure that those scenes are deleted from the movie. But, when it comes to small screen, literally, there is no mechanism to ban such things. I really would appeal to the Minister to take this opportunity, when she is bringing such a nice Bill, such regulatory system should be set up for small screen also.

Sir, younger children go on watching the dubbed version of programmes in channels like Pogo, etc. The main problem I would like to say, as a language teacher, is that the lip movement in the dubbed version and in the real picture is totally different. Parents go to work by leaving their children at home and allow them to watch television. What the children do is, they try to follow the lip movement in the programme, but when the lip movement is not forthcoming, they are not able to follow the language. So, most of the young children between the age group of 1 and 3 face the problem in speaking unless and until they go to school. So, I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister, at this juncture, that special channels for children should be started by the Government so that our culture —we are very rich in our culture— is truly reflected. I also request that these children channels should be in our regional languages which would help in the development of our children.

With these observations, I welcome the Bill and appreciate the hon. Minister for bringing this Bill before the House. Thank you.

SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN (Kerala): Thank you Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir.

I support this Bill with some reservation. Reservation is on account of some apprehension about the impact of the Act on the employment opportunities in the cable television sector, thousands of employees are working in this sector. There is a general tendency of monopolization of

cable network. Some big players are monopolizing cable television in cities. There are three or four big players. It is in their hands. In the rural area, vast majority of players are cable operators. Under one cable operator, five or ten or fifteen people are employed. What will happen to them?

Another thing is about the cost of the Set Top Box. It has already been stated that it costs Rs. 2,500. Sir, how many people in rural areas can afford this? And, what the Government's doing and how it is going to provide free Set Top Boxes to the rural people? Or, who will bear this expenditure — either the cable operator or the channel? I am asking this because ordinary consumer cannot bear this expense.

As far as TRP is concerned, there will be some unanimity and scientific pattern to fix the rating of the programmes. That's very good. That is one of the major benefits. Then, as it has already been raised, who is going to fix the rate of channels? Is it the Government or the TRAI who will fix the rates? I think, when it is completely under the DTH, the channels are going to fix the rates. Of course, there is a provision that they have to provide some free channels, which includes the doordarshan and some other channels. But for all the prime channels, they will fix the rate. It cannot be accepted. There must be some mechanism. I think, it cannot be the TRAI, which will fix the rates, because the TRAI is basically telephone regulatory authority. I think, under the I&B Ministry itself there should be some mechanism to fix the rates of channels. And, there should be an ombudsman to redress the complaints regarding pricing and quality.

The hon. Minister, I think, is also contemplating to evolve a content regulating mechanism. Some discussions are going on, in this regard. Though there is a voluntary mechanism of the channel operators, but it has not proved to be so effective. So, the Government, along with this Bill, must also consider to bring forward a Content Regulation Bill as early as possible.

With these words, I thank you, Sir, for having given me this opportunity to speak here.

SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I rise to express my views on the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2011. As I speak on this Bill, I would, first of all, like to share some of the achievements made in Tamil Nadu, recently. The State of Tamil Nadu, under the chief ministership of Madam Jaya Lalithaji is the first State in India to successfully operate a

government-run major cable network. We have about one crore thirteen lakh cable connections. We give almost one hundred channels at the cost of Rs. 70/- only. This is the cheapest rate in the country. Earlier, it was Rs. 250-300 per month. Now, it is only Rs. 70/- per month, per household. Many States, including Andhra Pradesh and other neighbouring States are conning to Tamil Nadu to study the experiment, successfully done by Madam Jaya Lalitha's Government. There are about 30,000 cable TV operators in Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu has given them a social and legal status to operate channels. An unorganized sector, largely comprising of rural educated and semi-educated youths is, now, given an organized status, a legal status. Every State is looking upon the experiment in Tamil Nadu and waiting in the wings to follow the suit.

Secondly, some of the provisions of this Bill are encouraging and some are worrying. The Bill talks about a digital addressable system, within six months.

My worry is, that would involve a large cash outflow for each cable TV operator and each household. We do not produce that kind of Set Top Boxes and Digital Addressable Systems in India in large scale now. The major beneficiary of this Bill may be China, South Korea and, to an extent, Taiwan. I request the hon. Minister to think of manufacturing those equipment at low cost within India and provide those Digital Addressable System equipment to the cable operators and to the receiving ends, maybe, at a subsidised cost, or, you can collect them on a monthly basis. That will ease the burden of the cable operator.

Then, it talks about the seizure of the equipment. I request that before a drastic step of seizing the equipment of the cable operator is taken, he should be given an opportunity to correct himself or to amend himself. We know how the Government officials behave in the rural areas and semi-urban areas. Let the cable operator, who has invested so much of his hard-earned money and who has found self-employment, be given an opportunity to correct himself. Maybe, out of ignorance, he might have done something wrong. Give him an opportunity before a drastic step of seizing his equipment is taken.

Finally, Sir, to avoid cartelisation and to avoid gang operations, I think you must set an upper limit for the total number of connections a cable operator can have. It can be anything, but you fix an upper limit so that there won't be a monopoly, there won't be criminalisation and there won't be large

companies involved in this. On the other hand, this will democratise the system. We should understand who a cable operator is. A typical cable operator is a young man, educated, entrepreneurial, who has little money. He could not find a Government job or better job anywhere else; so, he has found self-employment for himself. He is a self-employed person. He is reducing the burden of the Government. He is investing his time, money and experience. So, we should help him to run his industry profitably. That is why, I am suggesting that you should put an upper limit so that the number of cable operators will be many in this country. This will democratise the system and a large number of self-educated, self-employed youth will be benefited. These are my views. Thank you.

DR. BHARATKUMAR RAUT (Maharashtra): Sir, there are rare occasions when we can stand up and support a Bill which is brought forward by the Government. So, at the outset, let me congratulate the Government and support the Bill. Sir, this initiative was long overdue. This should have happened some time back. Nevertheless, you brought in the Ordinance and now you are bringing the Bill, it is good. Having said that, I wish to strike a note of caution about the whole thing. Sir, here the Government should ensure that the pricing of each channel is regulated not by the channel owners or the service providers but by some other authority which would be impartial. This caution was expressed by somebody that during sports days or cricket days, the charges of the Sports Channel sky rocket. So, these things should not happen because then, they become seasonal. Therefore, the Government, at this stage, should intervene and regulate the minimum and maximum price for each channel on monthly basis, quarterly basis, as they may feel. But there has to be a Government regulation on pricing; otherwise, the basic purpose of having this Act will be defeated, because at the end of the day, the 'last consumer, that is, the person sitting at home will be spending much more from his pocket for seeing the channel. Sir, another good thing about this Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill is that the 'carriage fees' which the channels now have to give to the cable operators will be perhaps marginalized or will be nullified. This is a good thing. But that advantage has to go to the consumer. If the 'carriage fees' has been reduced or negated, then who is benefited? It is not that the channel should not be benefited; but the end consumer, the end-user should also be benefited. There is no such provision in the Bill which says that that advantage should go to the consumer. Here the Government has to ensure that this happens.

Sir, another problem is the installation of set-top boxes. The set-top seems to be a must in this system. The moot question is, how would you produce so many set-top boxes? The reason why I am asking this question is, I come from Mumbai, and, in Mumbai, we had 'CAS' system which was introduced some three years ago. Even now there are not enough set-top boxes that would suffice the need of the island city of Mumbai, forget about the rest of the nation. It is the situation in the island city of Mumbai, even though we don't have those type of set-top boxes. Then how and when are we doing it? Are we likely to import these set-top boxes from China and Korea, the cheap cost set-top boxes? If we import them from there, then what is the guarantee of their quality? Now since we have brought this Regulation, we should ensure that there is an indigenous industry in India which is capable of making so many set-top boxes. Perhaps, the television manufacturing companies will be able to provide this service. But that set-top box should come at a minimum cost. It should not cost much. At present, the cost is not reasonable. It should be cheapest and of best quality which the China products provide. Sir, this is one thing I would like to bring to your notice.

Then, Sir, I was reading Section 10 of this Bill. It raises my eyebrows. It is because many times the intention of the Government is not as clear as it seems on the piece of paper. It is the second paragraph of Section 10 which says, "If any authorized officer has reason to believe that the provisions of section 3, section 4A, section 5, section 6, section 8, section 9 or section 10 have been or are being contravened by any cable operator, he may seize the equipment being used by such cable operator for operating the cable television network." Sir, on the face of it, it looks a good provision. However, there is every possibility — and I have reason to have this fear — that it will be utilized to meet the political ends. Here, it is left at the discretion of the officer who is going for inspection to decide as to what is good, what is bad, what is ugly, what is lawful and what is not lawful. Now, if he goes and confiscates the equipment, stop the transmission in that area, then what will happen to the viewers? What is the guarantee? There is such a possibility. I am not questioning it or I am raising a doubt about it. But there is such a possibility. Suppose a political meeting of an opposition party is taking place in a particular area and if your officer goes in that area and confiscates the equipment, then that area will not get any transmission during that time. What happens in such a situation? You may perhaps say, one can go to the court and lodge a complaint. But the *post mortem* does not really provide the immediate remedy. Therefore, I have doubt to believe that such provisions will defeat the basic purpose of the Bill. Therefore, instead of giving this

authority to an individual or an officer, a committee could be formed that would consist not only of officers but also local social workers and senior people who would go there and check whether any provision of the Act has been violated. Having said that, I sincerely wish that this Act comes into force. For that, rules must be framed under this Act and they must be enforced immediately.

I am a Member of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation and I have come to observe that many laws are passed with a good intent but the rules are not framed for the next four or five years. This should not happen here. It is already late. I hope you get it done as soon as possible.

Then, Sir, this is not only about a Set-top Box. On this Set-top Box, because of the digitisation, you can do many other things. You could have access to the Internet. Not only this, shopping could be done through these Boxes. That happens in America and England. The local shopping networks would be more interested in getting it done. Let them chip in the cost of this initiative. They are going to be benefited. So, they should also contribute something towards the development of this system.

Sir, I think, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is a very powerful Ministry and it impacts everybody's life. So, if the Minister so desires, she could get it done.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Goa): Sir, it is Goa Day today.

The hon. Member who spoke before me said that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is a very powerful Ministry. I wish the Ministry, indeed, was very powerful and the hon. Minister was equally powerful. She has all the powers but, unfortunately, she has not been using those powers.

The cable network or the print media derive power from the freedom of expression which is enshrined in our Constitution. But how far are we going to stretch this freedom of expression? That is the moot question. Is it so flexible as to have no limits at all? It needs to be seen whether there is any responsible limit to be laid down by the media themselves. I see that Government has taken steps through which certain restrictions have been put on the exercise of these powers by the electronic media, and they have been very elaborately and nicely put. The only point is that they must be implemented. Somehow, an impression has gone that there is no law to control the electronic media and they think that they can show whatever programme they want, in whichever manner they want. I

had mentioned this even last time, but today, I would like to specifically mention that we have got what is known as a 'programme code' which is laid down in law. That programme code says that no programme should be carried in the cable service which offends, is against good taste or decency, contains criticism of friendly countries, contains attack on religions or communities, or has visual works contemptuous of religious groups, or promotes communal attitude, contains any obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos, and half-truth, is likely to encourage or incite violence, contains anything that goes against the maintenance of law and order or which promotes anti-national attitude, etc. There are other guidelines. Each guideline is being violated everyday by the electronic media and no action is being taken against them. This is called 'code'. When it is called 'code', it appears to be voluntary. But this is not so. Section 6 provides for punishment for violation and this punishment extends up to two years of imprisonment. You can imagine. Therefore, I request that a monitoring cell should be set up in the Ministry of Information to monitor daily telecast of programmes and see what are the provisions here which are violated. In fact, nobody would like to touch media for the belief that it may turn out to be against the provisions of freedom of expression. Law is there and we have to be within its limitation. These programmes, day in and day out, spread superstition beliefs. Our Constitution bans programmes and telecasts which spread and propagate superstition beliefs. Why should our Government tolerate these superstition beliefs?

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) in the Chair.]

Then again, common people are misguided about job and marriages.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please conclude. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: I was just speaking on freedom of expression and you are curtailing my freedom of expression. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Only five minutes for you.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: It is my maiden speech on Goa Day. Regarding jobs and marriages, some laptop astrologers sit and ask about people's date of birth, their birth timing and then tell them when they are going to get married and when they are going to get jobs.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please conclude.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: I will take one or two minutes. ...*(Interruptions)*... Then on healing of sickness, any type of sickness can be cured through these programmes. When science has not developed to such an extent as to cure some illnesses, these people who appear on TV programme claim to cure all sorts of diseases. Are we going to be carried away by such pronouncements and let our common people be misguided by them? In reality shows, talented children cry on the show. It is pitiable. Just because of few marks, they are discarded. Sometimes film actor and actresses come in these reality shows. Suppose a film is going to be released on Friday, they appear as guests' to promote their film. Fine, there is no problem. But I saw Anna Hazare in one of these reality shows. Anna Hazare appeared in such a show. Why? What did he want to promote? Let anybody answer. There was some meeting after one week. To promote that meeting, Anna Hazare appeared in that reality show, just like film actor and actresses. Can you imagine this? ...*(Time-bell rings)*...

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Why is he trying to politicizing the whole issue? ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please conclude. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: He cannot do so. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Please conclude. ...*(Interruptions)*... Why don't you conclude? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: Okay, Sir, I conclude.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Now, the hon. Minister to reply.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Sir, there is a small clarification.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Mr. Rudy, you have already spoken. After the Minister's reply, I will give you a chance to seek clarification. Otherwise, you may have to seek clarification again. Now, hon. Minister.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I am extremely grateful to all our nine hon. Members of the House who have given their very important suggestions on this path-breaking legislation for digitalising cable TV network and having the sunset hour by the 31st December, 2014. As I said earlier, several countries have already done it, and India, I hope, will be able to keep to its time frame.

The hon. Members have expressed, firstly, their concern that it should not mean any additional cost to the consumer. As I said in my opening remarks, the consumer is going to be the principal beneficiary of the process of digitalisation. He will get a much better viewing. He will have access to many more services which today are provided by the Direct-to-Home (DTH) operator. He will also be entitled to a tariff fixing, which hon. Members have rightly expressed concern about, because in the absence of a regulator for the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, the TRAI (telecom regulator) is empowered to recommend the legislative framework for our Ministry as well as do the tariff capping for individual channels. Some rates have already been floated by the TRAI. The consumer is expected to be safeguarded by allowing, in this case, a *la carte* choice. Today, they have to choose the bouquets. After paying the bare minimum of the cable operator, they have to take a full bouquet of a broadcaster. We are now going to ensure, in the digital framework, that he would be able to choose, along with all the free-to-air channels, *la carte* channels as per his choice and as per the tariff capping by the TRAI.

Some hon. Members, especially Dr. Raut and some others, expressed a concern that at the time of a sporting event or any special event, the rates may go up. These rates will be fixed for anything from three months to six months at a time. So, it will ensure no sporadic escalation of the tariff.

As far as the cable operator is concerned, our friend from Kerala also said that there are 25,000 cable operators there and somebody said that they may lose out in employment. They are the next most important concern for the Ministry. In the past, we were not able to digitalise as fast as we could in earlier years because we could not ensure the cable operator a level-playing field. We have now ensured the same by some enabling mechanisms. The Government had approved HITS. The House knows about the HITS policy, an enabling policy, of sending digital signals from a Headend-In-the Sky to MSO, as also to individual cable operators, thereby ensuring that the last cable

operator, on a maximum investment of about Rs.2,50,000 to Rs.3,00,000, can go digital if he wants direct digital signals from the Headend in the Sky.

Cable operators are also being threatened by the DTH operators. We have one million new connections every month. They are putting a great pressure on the cable operators. So, this process of digitalisation will allow those cable operators, who want to be remain as independent entities, to go digital and compete with the Direct-to-Home operators.

Many hon. Members, and Mr. Naik specifically speaking about it, expressed a concern about the content on television. Two-and-a-half years ago, when I joined this Ministry, I did have prolonged discussions with broadcasters. There were two issues which they put up as the maximum points for their discontent about good content. One was carriage fee. They had to pay large sums of money, Rs.10 crores, Rs.20 crores, Rs.30 crores, etc., to get on to a cable network, or, to get on to even to a DTH.

The second was the race for TRPs. We talk of superstition, obscene content or fly-by-night operators, and, they always say, unless we get TRPs, we don't get advertisements. I think the biggest advantage of this whole process of digitalization is going to be in this context. The world over, people depend sixty five per cent on subscription and only thirty to thirty-five per cent on advertisements, whereas, we have been, till now, depending primarily on advertisements, and, our subscription system has not been addressable. It has only been there by word of mouth. Not only has the Government lost, the broadcasters are at a loss, and, they have not been able to spend their resources on content issues, which we definitely need to see improved. It is because of the expenses involved in carriage fee and their race for TRP. Both these issues are going to be really addressed by the digital system.

The digital system will allow almost a thousand channels per system. We can ensure that Doordarshan, Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha, and, other free-to-air channels are shown necessarily, and, they will all be in good content. A cable operator, who gets about 80 channels, has to take money for the first twenty channels because they are mostly clearly viewed and so they have to be paid for. Very often, we see that even the mandated channels are not shown when they should be shown.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA (Madhya Pradesh): May I intervene? I need a clarification, Madam. It was mentioned that there are only 7,000 households in country where those TRP boxes are kept,

and, on that basis, a completely, I would say, skewed TRP measure comes into the public, and, that determines advertisements. What is the system which the Government proposes to democratize this so that it genuinely reflects people's choice of programmes?

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I did not speak at length on the TRP system and the steps which we are taking along with the industry because it did not really come under the purview of this Bill which is before us today. But I just mentioned the TRP factor because TRP has been the bane of what we call obscene or superstitious programmes. Since the dependence for revenue will be less on TRP and more on subscription, we hope that the TRP will play a lesser role. Just to answer the hon. Member's question, the Government has been told very clearly by the industry that they did not come in to a process, which is a private arrangement between the industry and the broadcaster, but because, we are the broadcasters indirectly with Doordarshan and also we give advertisements of Government through DAVP — we had the Dr. Amit Mitra Committee Report, which was accepted by the industry — I would like to assure the House that we are directly, indirectly or through persuasion working on both the broadcasters and the industry and it is for us to see that we have a more credible, more transparent and more reflective system of the choices of audiences across the length and breadth of our country in the future. Now, I would like to reply to a few more points which were raised by our hon. Members. बीएसपी के हमारे मैम्बर, श्री वीर सिंह ने जो कहा, उन दो मुद्दों का जवाब मैंने पहले ही दे दिया है कि दूरदर्शन के चैनल हम लोग देख सकेंगे। जब पूरा सिस्टम डिजिटल हो जाएगा, तो वे बिना किसी रुकावट के ये सब mandate channels डाल सकेंगे। जो चैनल्स फ्री टू एयर हैं, वे भी उनमें शामिल होंगे और उनकी viewing सबसे अच्छी होगी।

इसके अलावा, आपने यह चिन्ता जाहिर की थी कि इसके बहुत ज्यादा चार्ज न किया जाए तथा आपने यह पूछा था कि सेट टॉप बॉक्स कहां से आएंगे? मैं हाउस को बताना चाहती हूँ कि हमारी मिनिस्ट्री काफी अर्से से उस एसोसिएशन के साथ बातचीत में है, जो सेट टॉप बॉक्स बनाती है। अधिकतर सेट टॉप बॉक्स पार्ट में इम्पोर्ट किये जाते हैं और फिर वे असेम्बल किये जाते हैं, लेकिन एक इंडस्ट्री बाकायदा ग्रां कर रही है, जो सेट टॉप बॉक्स बनाने के लिए तैयार है। जब इस तादाद में बॉक्स बनेंगे, यानी छः करोड़ से भी अधिक बॉक्स बनाने की आवश्यकता पड़ेगी, तब हमें उम्मीद है कि उनकी कीमत हजार या बारह सौ रुपये से ज्यादा नहीं होगी। और न सिर्फ यह एक आयटम है जो कि consumer को देना पड़ेगा, लेकिन प्रावधान किये जा रहे हैं कि वह उसे instalments में खरीदे

या वह set top box किराए पर ले सकें और अगर किसी को अपने set top box के बारे में complaints हैं, तो वह वापिस भी किए जाएं।...(व्यवधान)... इंडस्ट्री के लोग आश्वासन चाहते थे कि एक बार यह बिल पास हो जाए तो वे लोग जो पैसा लगाएंगे, क्योंकि सारा पैसा इंडस्ट्री के जरिए आएगा, इसलिए वे भी चाहते थे कि बिल पारित हो जिस से उन को तसल्ली हो जाए कि यह काम आगे होने जा रहा है।...(व्यवधान)...

DR. BHARATKUMAR RAUT: I have one query, Madam.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Mr. Raut, let her complete her reply please.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: You can ask me later.

We have been in touch with the industry, organisation of all the set-top box manufacturers and they have assured us that in a time-frame, with some duty impetus, they will be able to give us the required number of set top boxes. All the financial issues which have been raised by the cable operators, by different sectors of the industry are being looked at by a Group of Secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary, and within a time-frame, they will be giving as their report.

Narendra Budania was quite right in saying that आज ही हम लोगों ने इतना लम्बा डिस्कशन किसानों की स्थिति पर, उन के suicides पर, उन को राहत कैसे पहुंचायी जाए, आदि पर किया है, लेकिन दूरदर्शन के अलावा शायद आज कोई दूसरा चैनल नहीं है जो किसानों के बारे में, कृषि के बारे में या कृषि से जुड़ी technology के बारे में, उन के लिए खास प्रोग्राम करे। इस बारे में ब्राडकास्टर्स के साथ बात हुई है तो वे यही कहते हैं कि हमें टी.आर.पी. परमिट नहीं करता। सर, जब digitalization के जरिए ज्यादा चैनल्स संभव होंगे तो मुझे पूरा यकीन है कि हमारे niche channels को भी लोग ज्यादा बढ़ावा देंगे और मुझे इस बात की उम्मीद है कि किसानों के मुद्दों को लेकर, महिलाओं के मुद्दों को लेकर, छोटे entrepreneurs के मुद्दों को लेकर भी अलग-अलग niche channels हम आने वाले समय में देख सकेंगे। सर, मि. बालगोपाल ने कहा कि कीमत ज्यादा नहीं होनी चाहिए, चैनल्स की कीमत एकदम नहीं बढ़ायी जानी चाहिए। मैंने कहा कि 6 महीने के लिए एक वक्त तक कीमत निर्धारित की जाएगी।

श्रीमती वसन्ती स्टान्ली ने भी कहा कि कुछ मॉनीटरिंग होनी चाहिए और there should be some capacity building. I would like to inform the hon. House that we have already, from the Ministry, started a training programme which is being conducted by a public sector undertaking (BECIL) for cable operators. We have also planned out a consumer awareness campaign which will be launched by the Ministry and all stakeholders.

5.00 P.M.

The other point Vasanthi/ made was that there should be constant monitoring. I would like to inform, as I have done on earlier occasions, that the Ministry was monitoring 150 channels 24x7. We have, in the last few months, increased the channel monitoring to 300 channels. There are a lot of complaints which have not come to us from consumers, but the Electronic Monitoring Department of the Ministry has generated many concerns and they have been sent to the self-regulatory body of both the advertisers as well as the cable operators.

I would also like to point out in response to a point raised by Mr. Achuthan. He was worrying how the people would lose their jobs who work for the cable operators. They are losing their jobs. As I said, cable operators are not being able to keep up with the competition being given to them by the DTH. Increase in rural viewing also will enable them to continue in their job because cable operators will be empowered to show digital signals.

This process of digitalisation I feel would have a major impact on regional channels. They do not get on to national carriages. They cannot pay the high fee. There are small channels catering to different States. When you have a large number of digital channels with any operator, I think digital channels will be greatly facilitated by this. There are a lot of other points which I have minutely noted.

Before Dr. Chandan Mitra leaves, I would like to inform him this. He has been very concerned about channels which are not permitted. These channels are sometimes shown and we have not been able to exercise a control as fully as we can from Delhi because they come under the State Governments. After this amendment, whenever there will be digital signals of the channels which are not legally permitted in our country, we will be able to intervene. That will take care of many issues which are today going unaddressed.

An hon. Member gave an example of the news related to the dam issue between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. I would like to inform you that on these issues the State Governments have been asked to form State-level Monitoring Committees. Unfortunately, only 11 States have so far formed such committees. There are only a hundred-plus District Monitoring Committees. Naturally this has to be done at the level of district and States. That is why under the Cable Regulation Act you have the

provision of designated officers. If a cable operator, in any way, shows a programme which hurts either religious sentiments or affects the unity and integrity or security of our country, they can go to the office of the cable operator and act under those circumstances only and not in any other manner.

Sir, I think I have taken into account most of the issues raised by the hon. Members. In any case, I have almost a verbatim account of what they spoke. I would like to inform my friend, Mr. Shantaram Naik, that I am not a powerful Minister. Nor is this Ministry, as Mani Shankar Aiyar said, should be wound up. I was one who supported him because this Ministry has autonomous bodies under it. We do tightrope walking. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY (Odisha): You are unable to appoint the CEO of Prasar Bharati.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I cannot let it go unanswered. Prasar Bharati is an autonomous body. The appointing authority is headed by the hon. Vice-President, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Its second Member is the Chairman of the Press Council. And its third member is a representative of the President of India. So the Minister of Information and Broadcasting does not appoint any Chairman of any body.

I am extremely grateful to all the Members of the House who spoke and even those who gave us their silent support. I assure the House that we would do it within the timeframe. It is for the first time that we have all the Stakeholders on board. There may be individual concerns which we will keep addressing as we move along. All the stakeholders, including the Government, the cable operators, the MSOs, the broadcasters, and the viewers are on board with us for digitalisation. This is a step forward. Mr. Rudy, you're quite right it's a step above partisan politics. This Bill will truly be for our country, India, and for all of us Indians. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Sir, I have a very small clarification. Madam, it is excellent and we are all with you on this account. There is a system of registration which you would put for the operators. In case, that registration does not take place, or, is rejected, or, is compounded, who would it go for appeal? This is one aspect. If registration is denied then he has to go for an appeal.

Second, it is about aesthetics. In provision 4B, you have said that the 'public authority would

allow digging of places and allowing wires to operate. All over the country we see wires hanging all around. If we want to legalise a system where you find cable operators putting wires in every house, every building, and even public institutions like the Archaeological Survey of India, I think it would become very dangerous for public places because we are already having a lot of urban problems having these wires.

So, if you could tell something -that we need a regulation not to allow a public display of cable operators' instruments hanging all over the country is something which we need a clarification.

DR. BHARATKUMAR RAUT: I have to raise one question. As per the Bill, the hon. Minister has said by September, 2014, this whole thing has to be implemented all over the country. Now, in that situation you need to have Set Top Boxes in almost every household. What is the manufacturing capacity? How are you going to complete this task in the given time, or, any foreign companies or any Indian people having foreign collaborations? If so, who are they?

SHRI PRAMOD KUREEL (Uttar Pradesh): It is a suggestion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): No time for suggestion.

SHRI PRAMOD KUREEL: Okay, no suggestion. I will seek a clarification. Sir, in the last two years, we have seen some of the channels which are notorious for showing "dooms day" that on this day the world is going to end. Last year also there was a panicky situation spread across by one of the channels that on this particular the world is going to end. So, how to regulate these kind of channels because it creates panicky all over the country and create a lot of problems in the society.

SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: This is about power to transmission of certain programmes in public interest. The Minister replied that concerned States have to do and have to formulate some committees. But at all India level these channels are giving all stories, not only in regional news but in national news also. So, it is a question of harmony between the States and some wrong news coming from Tamil Nadu to Kerala; and some wrong news going from Kerala to Tamil Nadu. So, whether the Government will do something to control this kind of news items being broadcast in the country. This is what I wanted to ask.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would like to respond to Mr. Rudy's question. There is a provision for an appeal to the Central Government in the case of registration. If a registration is denied to a cable operator, if it is rejected, the provision of appeal is to the Central Government.

We are trying for the right of way. That was one of the requests of the cable operators. This is not something which we can work from the Centre. We have assured the cable operators that we will take up this matter with the States and with Municipalities. I see that some kind of right of way in an easily fashion is given to the cable operators.

As far as Dr Bharatkumar Raut's question is concerned, the Indian domestic production of Set Top Boxes is about 10 million per year. Our requirement for three years will be about 60 million Set Top Boxes. So, the rest will have to be met either through import of components and assemble them here or import them to begin with.

As far as controlling news channels are concerned, we have two self-regulatory bodies working. There is a Bill put up on the website regarding the regulatory authority. But, in the meantime, we have the National Broadcasters Standards Association for the News Channels and BCCC for the entertainment.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P. J. KURIEN) : The question is :

That the Bill further to amend the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995, as passed by Lok Sabha be taken into consideration.

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 13 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I move :

That the Bill be passed.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN) : Now, we take up the Damodar Valley Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2011.