

Unreasonable tariff of telephone services

SHRI C.O. POULOSE (Kerala): Madam, my Special Mention relates to telephone tariff. The Telecom Department, while it was in charge of telephone operations, and now BSNL, has classified its operational areas as urban and rural.

The urban subscribers are charged higher rates of rental tariff than the rural subscribers. The benefit of reduced rates is also available in respect of call charges. The BSNL has, arbitrarily, decided to bring almost all rural subscribers on a par with urban subscribers, and is overcharging them.

The criterion for fixation of subscribers as rural/urban is the census figures. In States like Kerala, where the population density is much high, the classification, according to the census data, is totally unrealistic. The ordinary telephone subscribers in villages are, mostly, ordinary/low-income people, and classifying them into the urban category will cause heavy hardships to them. Telephone connection can no more be considered a luxury item. It is an essential item for daily life. A large number of subscribers are finding it difficult to continue with the telephone connection with an increased tariff.

I request the Government to direct the BSNL to classify only Corporations, Municipalities and Taluk Head Quarters as urban, and the areas under village/Panchayat as rural, and charge them accordingly.

Hogenakkal Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Dharmapuri District of Tamil Nadu

SHRI C. PERUMAL (Tamil Nadu): Madam, the Hogenakkal Water Supply and Sanitation Project was formulated to cover the two-third area of Dharmapuri District in Tamil Nadu, comprising three municipalities, 17 town panchayats and 5542 rural habitations of 18 panchayat unions, at an estimated cost of Rs.1,008 crores. The target population to be benefited by this project would be, approximately, 40 lakhs. Initially, the project was taken up for investigation with the intention of getting financial assistance from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan. As agreed to by the OECF Team, they did not visit the project. In the year 1999, as per the direction of Government of Tamil Nadu, the necessary project report

was prepared and sent to the Government for posing to OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) loan assistance from the Middle East countries. In July, 2001, the Tamil Nadu Government prepared the necessary project report and sent it for posing to JBIQ (Japan Bank of International Co-operation) for loan assistance for the implementation of the project. Recently, the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Government of Malaysia expressed their desire of co-operating in establishing the Hogenakkal Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Dharmapuri District, and the Memorandum of Understanding has been sent to the Government of India for its clearance. I request the Government, through this House, for an early clearance of the Memorandum of Understanding sent by the Tamil Nadu Government, in order to implement the Hogenakkal Water Supply and Sanitation Project. Thank you, Madam.

Closure of NTC Mills

श्री दत्ता मेघे (महाराष्ट्र) : उपसभापति महोदया, विदर्भ में कम्पोजिट मिलें बंद होने से वहां के मजदूरों की बढ़ती बेरोजगारी की समस्या की ओर मैं इस सदन का ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। महोदया, विदर्भ में 11 कम्पोजिट मिलें हैं जिनमें 5 मिलें NTC की हैं और 4 मिलें महाराष्ट्र सरकार की हैं। ये चारों मिलें बंद हो गईं जिनमें 6,000 मजदूर काम करते हैं। इन सभी मजदूरों को VRS देने का वायदा किया गया था लेकिन दिया नहीं गया। NTC की 5 में से 3 मिलें, जिनमें नागपुर की माडल मिल शामिल है, जिसमें 1,600 मजदूर काम करते हैं, उसे भी बंद करने का ऐलान किया गया है। बाकी 3 मिलें चालू हैं जो कोऑपरेटिव सैक्टर में हैं। चौथी श्रेणी में प्राइवेट सैक्टर की लगभग 5 मिलें हैं जो चालू हैं जिनमें कुछ कॉटन मिलें हैं और कुछ पॉलियस्टर धागा बनाने वाली मिलें हैं।

महोदया, इन मिलों को बंद करने का मुख्य कारण गैर-संचालन व्यवस्था है लेकिन सरकार इसका कारण पैसा न होना बता रही है। मेरा अनुरोध है कि इन सभी मिलों को बंद न करके इन्हें चलाना चाहिए तथा इनकी surplus assets को बेचकर उस पैसे को modernisation के काम में लगाया जाए क्योंकि मिलें बंद करना कोई उचित व्यवस्था नहीं है।

महोदया, मेरा मत है कि जो मजदूर VRS लेना चाहते हैं, उन्हें यह सुविधा देकर बाकी सभी लोगों को रोजगार उपलब्ध कराया जाए ताकि बेरोजगारी की समस्या पर काबू पाया जा सके क्योंकि विदर्भ में बेरोजगारी दिन-प्रतिदिन बढ़ती जा रही है और ये सभी मिलें जो प्राइवेट लोगों की थीं, उन्हें NTC ने और महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने अपने हाथ में लिया था। उनकी करोड़ों रुपये की प्रॉपर्टी को बेचकर बिल्डर्स को देने का जो काम महाराष्ट्र सरकार कर रही है, यह ठीक नहीं है। इसलिए ये मिलें चालू रहनी चाहिए, यह मेरी मांग है।

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Madam, I wish to associate myself with what the hon. Member has said. The Ministry should do something; the workers are dying; the mills are closed.