

कर अपने सुनियोजन का काम आरंभ किया था और अपनी रोजी कमाने का काम किया था, उन तमाम लोगों से इंटरव्यू प्रकाशित हुए थे और दिखलाए गए थे कि सरकार की कुछ नीतियों की वजह से जो उन्हें इंटरनेट सर्विस का 40/- रुपए प्रति घंटा मिलता था, वह घटकर अब 10/- रुपए रह गया है। रेट में अचानक कमी होने से इन नौजवानों के सामने यह समस्या आ गई है कि जो उन्होंने किराए पर ढाबे ले रखे थे, उन ढाबों का किराया निकालना भी उनके लिए मुश्किल हो गया है। तो क्या इस संबंध में मंत्री महोदय विचार करेंगे? और, इसका उत्तर देंगे कि ऐसा क्यों हुआ और क्या इस स्थिति को सुधारने के लिए उनके मन में कोई योजना है?

श्री प्रमोद महाजन: सभापति जी, यह संचार ढाबों से संबंधित प्रश्न तो नहीं है, लेकिन आदरणीय सदस्या ने पूछा है तो मैं इस संबंध में जानकारी लेकर उनको दूंगा।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 722, Mr. Khuntia. He is not here.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, this is an important question. He is not here. If you permit, we can take it up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it can't be done. Question No. 723.

*722. [The Questioner (Shri Ramachandra Khuntia) was absent. For answer vide page 22 infra.]

एसटीडी/पीसीओ के विकलिंग बूथ आपरेटरों की मांगें

723. श्री पी० के० माहेश्वरी: क्या संचार और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को एसटीडी/पीसीओ बूथ के दृष्टिहीन आपरेटरों की ओर से कोई अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त हुआ है जिसमें उन्होंने आम उपभोक्ताओं से लिये जा रहे किराये के 50 प्रतिशत के बराबर हिस्सा देने और उनका कमीशन 20 प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 50 प्रतिशत करने की मांग की है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो सरकार ने इस संबंध में अब तक क्या कार्रवाई की है; और

(ग) यदि अब तक कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की गई है तो इस मामले में सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है?

संचार और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री तपन सिकंदर): (क) से (ग) विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

दृष्टिहीनों द्वारा संचालित एसटीडी/आईएसडी/पीसीओ बूथ आपरेटरों के संघ की ओर से अन्य

बातों के साथ-साथ कमीशन की दर में वृद्धि करने के संबंध में कुछ अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त हुए हैं। यद्यपि दृष्टिहीनों सहित विकलंगों को स्थानीय पीसीओ हेतु प्रतिभूति (जमानत) जमा से छूट तथा एसटीडी/आईएसडी/पीसीओ के आबंटन में प्राथमिकता प्रदान करने जैसी कतिपय सुविधाएं प्रदान की जाती हैं, लेकिन इस समय उनके लिए कमीशन की मौजूदा दर में वृद्धि करने संबंधी कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है।

Demands of Handicapped STD/PCO Operators

†*723. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether government have received any representation from the visually handicapped STD/ISD/PCO booth operators for having a share equivalent to 50 per cent of the rental charged from common subscribers and enhancing their commission from 20 per cent to 50 per cent;

(b) if so, what action Government have so far taken in this regard; and

(c) if no action has been taken so far, Government's reaction in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Some representations have been received from association of visually handicapped STD/ISD PCO operators, *inter-alia* to increase the rate of commission. While certain facilities are given to handicapped persons, including visually handicapped persons, like relaxation from giving security deposits for local PCOs and priority in allotment of STD/ISD/PCOs, there is no proposal at present to enhance the existing rate of commission for them.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Sir, my first supplementary is, it is our responsibility to look after the handicapped people. Once they have entered into a business, which now makes them to face cut-throat

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

competition, will the Minister consider helping them, especially the blind, by giving increased commission, as also remuneration, for running these STD/PCOs? I would also like to know from the Government, how many such STD/PCOs are being run by the blind people? What would be the total amount of money involved, if their commission is increased?

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Sir, actually, some facilities have already been provided to these handicapped people, including the visually handicapped people. But, so far as the remuneration is concerned, we have not yet taken any decision. We will examine it. What we observed is that if we allow it in a general way, every PCO operator will utilise these handicapped people and play fraud on us.

Regarding his second question as to how many PCOs are being run by the handicapped people. I don't have the exact information, at present. I will inform him in writing.

SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Sir, my second supplementary is, it is not a question of how much misuse will take place. The question is, whether these people can run their business with the help of the Government, because so much money is spent on promotion of communication by these companies which have now come into being. Will you consider appointing a person in your Ministry to look after the interests of these handicapped people, as has been done by the Government of Madhya Pradesh? We have got a handicapped person employed as the Commissioner for the Handicapped, in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Sir, we have received so many representations regarding the States. We will adopt some policy with regard to this, in the near future. We have not yet finalised any policy.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Sir, the plight of the visually handicapped people has been discussed all over the country for the last so many years and steps have been taken to enable them to become self-dependent. But the situation with regard to the visually handicapped girls and women has gone from bad to worse. Many NGOs are working very hard to settle down blind girls. If it is not possible for the Government to enhance the commission for the visually handicapped people to 50 per cent, will the Government enhance the commission at least in the case of blind girls who own STD/PCO booths, keeping in view their peculiar condition?

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: We treat all handicapped people equally. We have not yet finalised the different categories of handicapped persons. The policy of the Government is uniform. As I said earlier, we have yet to finalise the other facilities which can be provided to them. Only when we finalise all these things we will be in a position to say anything in this regard.

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: माननीय सभापति महोदय, आपके माध्यम से मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय को यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि मूल प्रश्न के उत्तर में आपने जो हम लोगों को आश्वस्त किया है, सदन के सामने जानकारी रखी है, उस संबंध में कई बार ऐसी स्थितियाँ आती हैं जब सरकार को किसी न किसी सूचना या किसी न किसी कारण से एसटीडी लाइन्स को वन-वे कर देना पड़ता है। जैसे उदाहरण के तौर पर मैं आज आपको बताऊँ कि इस समय जब हम इस सदन में बात कर रहे हैं तो जम्मू-कश्मीर राज्य में उधर से एसटीडी नहीं आ सकती, इधर से जा सकती है, आपने वहाँ से लाइन्स बंद कर दी हैं। इसके पीछे सरकार के कोई भी कारण रहे हों, इससे सारा का सारा नुकसान एसटीडी बूथ वालों का होता है, उनके वहाँ ग्राहक जाते हैं और वापिस लौट आते हैं। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसी स्थिति में उनको कम्पन्सेट करने के लिए सरकार क्या किसी न किसी प्रस्ताव पर विचार करेगी? सरकार के कारण एसटीडी बूथ बंद हुए हैं और आपने जान-बूझकर बंद किए हैं, जिसके कारण ग्राहक वापिस लौट रहे हैं। एक तो बूथ चलाने में उनको वैसे ही बहुत परेशानी है और यह जो दूसरी स्थिति आज पैदा हुई है, इससे उनकी परेशानी और बढ़ी है। क्या आप इस बारे में विचार करेंगे जैसा कि आज की तारीख में जम्मू-कश्मीर का उदाहरण मैं आपको दे रहा हूँ?

श्री तपन सिकदर: अगर ऐसी कोई स्पेसिफिक शिकायतें हमारे पास पहुंचेंगी तो हम इस विषय में जरूर देखेंगे।

श्री सभापति: सरदार गुरुचरण सिंह तोहड़ा। चले गये। श्री मोती लाल बोरा।

श्री मोती लाल बोरा: माननीय सभापति महोदय दृष्टिहीनों के द्वारा उनकी एसोसिएशन्स के द्वारा जो आवेदन केन्द्र सरकार को दिया गया उसमें उन्होंने यह मांग की है कि कमीशन की दर को 20 प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर 50 प्रतिशत किया जाए। सभापति महोदय अगर आप इस प्रश्न के जवाब को देखें तो माननीय मंत्री जी ने इसमें कहा है 'लेकिन इस समय उनके लिए कमीशन की मौजूदा दर में वृद्धि करने संबंधी कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है।' एसोसिएशन्स ने आपको एक प्रस्ताव भेजा है आपको एक मेमोरेण्डम भेजा है, आपने उस पर किस प्रकार का विचार किया और इस नतीजे पर कैसे पहुंचे कि हम अभी इस कमीशन में वृद्धि करने का विचार नहीं रखते हैं? What is the reason behind it? I would like to know whether meetings were held at that time.

माननीय सभापति जी, विक्लंगों में दृष्टिहीन बहुत बढ़तर हैं और जो दृष्टिहीन इस प्रकार के बूथ चलाते हैं उनके सामने कई प्रकार की कठिनाइयां आती हैं। तो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि इस निर्णय पर पहुंचने का क्या कारण आपके सामने है?

श्री तपन सिकंदर: मान्यवर महोदय मैंने यही बताया कि अब तक कोई निर्णय हम लोगों ने नहीं लिया लेकिन साथ-साथ अभी-अभी मैंने यह भी बताया कि हम इसको ऐगजामिन कर रहे हैं और उनको कैसे हम बाकी पेसलिटी दे पाएंगे, यह निर्णय हम इस ऐगजामिनेशन के बाद लेंगे।

श्री मोती लाल बोरः मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसोसिएशन्स का आवेदन आपको कितने महीने पहले मिला था और अब कितने महीने और लगेंगे उस पर विचार करने के लिए?

श्री तपन सिकंदर: यह तो मैं आपको तत्काल नहीं बता पाऊंगा क्योंकि इस विषय पर अभी अध्ययन चल रहे हैं। मुझे लगता है कि जल्द से जल्द हम इस विषय का अध्ययन कर लेंगे और इसके बाद हम आपको सूचित कर देंगे।

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, this is very unfortunate. A memorandum has been given, but the Minister is not ready with the information about the date of receipt of that memorandum. It is a Starred Question, Sir, If this is the kind of preparation on the part of the Government....

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: I never said that we have not received any memorandum. हमने मैमोरेण्डम तो रिसीव किया है। We have received the memorandum and we have been examining them.

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: सभापति महोदय मैंने कम से कम 6 मैमोरेण्डम साल भर में दिए हैं।

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know one thing from the hon. Minister. You have summarily rejected the petition given by the visually handicapped people. What was the reason for coming to this conclusion? I think you have not gone through the whole memorandum properly, You have taken this decision casually. I would request, through you, Sir the hon. Minister to let us know when he is going to take this decision.

श्री भारतेन्दु प्रकाश सिंहल: सभापति महोदय इस प्रश्न का उत्तर तो दिया जा चुका है। मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि गवर्नमेंट ने अभी कोई डिसेजन नहीं लिया है। गवर्नमेंट के पास प्रस्ताव आए हैं और वह उन्हें ऐगजामिन कर रहे हैं। बार-बार एक ही बात को छोड़ने से क्या फायदा है?

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Sir, for the kind information of the hon. Member, we received this memorandum on 16th April, 2002.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: You received it on 16th April. One month has gone, but the Government is still sitting over it. These decisions should be taken at the earliest. You should not evade such decisions. *(Interruptions)* I am thankful to you that you have given the date. But one month is sufficient to arrive at a decision. How many months will the Government take?

श्री तपन सिकंदर: सरकार का निर्णय जल्द से जल्द आपको सूचित कर दिया जाएगा।

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, apart from the humanitarian aspect that is involved in this whole issue of upward revision of rates for those who are operating these STD/ISD/PCO booths, there is another vital aspect. It concerns the tele-density in this country. The STD/ISD/PCO booths, the world over, in the developing countries have been a major instrument in the expansion of the telecom network. Fifty-two per cent of the telephones in South Korea are in the STD/ISD/PCO category and that has triggered a process of expansion. At the present juncture, in the context of the falling tariff of long-distance calls, the economy of these STD/ISD/PCOs, as a whole, is becoming unviable. This issue has been agitating the minds of these booth operators, in general. I think for the last one year, the Government has been examining this issue. What is the actual status of this exercise, because it is seriously affecting the overall fixed-line telephone network of this country which is being used by a majority of the people, unlike the cellular phones.

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: For your information, Sir, these STD/ISD/PCO booths are in the free category. Anyone can take these booths, after making a proper application and so on. So, we are not creating any obstacle in this. We are actually providing these STD/ISD/PCO booths... *(Interruptions)* One minute.

Sir, another question which the hon. Member has raised is about the increase in the area of local call, STD reduction in charges of long distance calls and other things. I would like to inform the House that many facilities have recently been provided to them. The licence fee on FAX machine has been removed; conference facility of STD/PCO has been allowed; interest has been allowed on the security deposit made by the PCO Franchise to run the PCO; additional STDs/PCOs in the same premises have also been allowed; payment of PCO bills through cheque has been allowed; sale of postage stamps and other stationery items by the PCO

Franchise has been allowed; PCO Franchises have been allowed to sell VCC card, with five per cent commission, and they have also been allowed to sell other chip cards of the mobile telephony. So, all these facilities have been given to them. Moreover, the volume has increased like anything. We are also seriously thinking....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: In the last one year, how many STD/PCO booths have come up, given the economic viability of these booths.

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Many booths have come up. Compared to the year 2000-2001, in the year 2001-2002, the number of booths provided was much more.

MIRZA ABDUL RASHID: Sir, I would like to inform the Minister that in Jammu and Kashmir, more than thousand PCO and STD booths have been closed. As a result, thousands of people have been rendered unemployed, and no arrangement for payment of compensation has been made either by the Central Government or by the State Government. बैरागी जी ने भी यही सवाल उठाया है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि जम्मू-कश्मीर में हजारों लोग बेरोजगार हैं वे एसटीडी बूथ बन्द कर देने से बेरोजगार हो गये हैं। छह महीने से वे लोग सड़को पर हैं उनके लिए कोई अर्रेंजमेंट नहीं है। मेरा निवेदन है कि बेरोजगार लोगों के लिए कोई न कोई बंदोबस्त किया जाये। जम्मू-कश्मीर के चीफ मिनिस्टर साहब ने यह केस प्राइम मिनिस्टर साहब से टेक-अप किया और उन्होंने यकीन दिलाया था कि वे उनके लिए कोई आल्टरनेटिव बंदोबस्त करेंगे। लेकिन पिछले छह महीने से कुछ नहीं हो रहा है, जबकि वहां पर मिलीटेंसी है। वहां पर हजारों ही नहीं, लाखों पढ़े-लिखे लोग बेरोजगार हैं। मैं मिनिस्टर साहब से जानना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार ने उनके लिए कौन-सा पैकेंज तैयार किया है या इनको कब तक दुबारा रियून्ड कर रहे हैं जिससे कि वहां पर जो बेरोजगारी है वह खत्म हो जाये यह बहुत बड़ी प्रब्लम इस वक्त जम्मू कश्मीर की है।

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Sir, we are also worried about what the hon. Member has said just now. Because of the law and order situation and other reasons, the technical people of BSNL are not in a position to reach the various areas of the State. So, these difficulties are there. We are considering this matter very sympathetically. I think, in the near future, we will be able to fulfil the demands of the PCO/STD/ISD booth-owners who have been incurring loss for some months.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Is there any provision for compensation. सर, छह महीने हो गये हैं। छह महीने से माननीय मंत्री जी इस बारे में कोई फैसला नहीं कर रहे हैं जबकि पूरी एसटीडी वहां की जाम पड़ी हुई है।

मिर्जा अब्दुल रशीद: सर, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह कम्पनसेशन है या कोई पैकेज है? वहाँ के लिए गवर्नमेंट क्या कर रही है?

श्री सभापति: आपने सवाल कर दिया है। अब आप बैठ जाइये। ... (व्यवधान) ... आपने सवाल किया है, अब मंत्री जी को जवाब देने दीजिए।

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: Practically, we have not yet prepared any package for Jammu and Kashmir. But, progressively, we are repairing many booths and providing many technical equipment to those booths by which they can run their booths. As I told you, we are also worried about this thing. We will do something positive in this regard.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, the main question is the social obligation of the Government to help the physically handicapped people. The Government is giving some facility, it is giving priority while allotting STD booths for the handicapped people. The handicapped people lead a pathetic life. They have also mentioned in their representation that because of the reduction of rates in respect of long-distance calls, they are unable to live on the meagre income. They want an enhanced commission. This is number one.

Number two, they want to have relaxation in the matter of security deposit that they make. Now, the reply given is that there is no proposal. It is very unfortunate. What proposals do you want? The Minister must give a clear answer, saying, "Yes, it is under examination." I would like to know whether you would bear in mind the social obligation as well as have sympathy for these people. You say, "No, if we give it, some manipulations can happen". It can't happen. How can manipulation happen? It is very clear; you are allotting STD booths to these people after verifying whether one is handicapped or not. Having allotted the booths, when they are not able to earn their livelihood, is it not obligatory on the part of the Government to give them the required facilities. सोचने की क्या बात है? I urge upon you to take immediate action.

SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR: No doubt, it is an obligation on the States and the Central Government. But, so far as giving concessions to the physically disabled and blind persons is concerned, we have allowed facilities, like 50% rebate in the normal rental charges and 50% rebate in annual advance rentals for general connections. So far as the PCO booths are concerned, we have already allowed relaxation in the case of security

deposit for the local PCOs. But, so far as the STD/ISD/PCO booths are concerned, till now, only priority is being given to them. What I said earlier was that we have been examining the case very sympathetically. I think, within a short time, the Government will decide on some positive things.

Sale of Foodgrains to Poultry Industry

*724. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of issuable and non-issuable stocks of foodgrains in FCI godowns of Andhra Pradesh as on the 31st March, 2002, commodity-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to sell foodgrains unfit for human consumption to poultry industry to produce poultry feed on token price to ease the stock position and promote poultry sector in the State; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The requisite information about issuable and non-issuable stocks of foodgrains available in FCI godowns in Andhra Pradesh as on 31.3.2002 is given below:

(Figures in MTs)

Sl. No.	Commodity	Issuable stocks	Non-issuable stocks
1.	Wheat	3,31,955	1,364
2.	Rice	10,67,081	33
3.	Paddy	191	—

(b) and (c) The disposal of damaged foodgrains, unfit for human consumption, is a continuous process. Such stocks, including foodgrains fit for poultry feed, are disposed of as per the prescribed procedure. The poultry industry is also eligible to purchase such stocks.