

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, May 14, 1997/Vaisakha 24, 1919 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[PROF. RITA VERMA *in the Chair*]

[English]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House about the demise of our esteemed friend Shri B. Bhagvati.

Shri B. Bhagvati was a member of Second, Third and Fourth Lok Sabha, representing Darrang and Tezpur Parliamentary constituencies of Assam during 1957-70. Earlier, he was a member of Assam Legislative Assembly for ten years. He served as Union Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications and Works and Urban Development from May, 1962 to March, 1967.

A veteran freedom fighter, he had actively participated in the Non-cooperation Movement in 1921 and Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 and had suffered imprisonment on many occasions.

A widely travelled person, he was the workers' representative to Geneva on the Plantation Committee of the International Labour Organisation. A man of letters, Shri Bhagvati authored many books—'Gandhivad' and 'Bhartiya Sanskritik Dhara' are some of his important publications.

Shri Bhagvati passed away at Tezpur on 8th May, 1997 at the age of 90 years.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the house will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

11.02 hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

[Translation]

SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI (DUMARIAGANJ):
Madam, Chairman....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour should not be treated as Zero Hour. You should get time in the Zero Hour.

11.04 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Rural Electrification

[Translation]

+
*541 DR. RAM VILAS VEDANTI :

SHRI N.J. RATHWA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages electrified in the country during the last three years and the funds incurred thereon. State-wise;

(b) whether it is proposed to include rural electrification as a minimum basic amenity under the common minimum programme;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The details of the villages electrified in all the States, as reported by the respective State Electricity Boards and the financial assistance provided by the REC to the State Electricity Boards, in the last 3 years is given in the Annexure enclosed

(b) and (c) Government accords priority to rural electrification in order to provide the energy infrastructure as a 'basic need for rural development'.

Annexure

(i)

State-wise villages electrified and Financial Assistance provided during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 (Prov.)

(i)	Sl. No.	State	No. of villages electrified during			Financial assistance provided to the SEBs including for village electrification by REC#		
			1994-95	1995-96	1996-97 (Prov.)	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
(ii)						(Prov. & Un-audited)		
						(Rs. in lakhs)		
(i)	1.	Andhra Pradesh*				13221	10329	1787
	2.	Arunachal	310	121	91	2779	1555	1199
(v)	3.	Assam	170	222	126	3600	3000	13
	4.	Bihar	59	43	27	588	0	0
	5.	Delhi*				0	0	0
(v)	6.	Goa*				0	0	197
	7.	Gujarat*				4409	4640	4205
	8.	Haryana*				1598	1053	1076
(v)	9.	H.P.*				1307	1299	1470
	10.	J & K	50	43	13	926	1567	1800
VICE-F	11.	Karnataka*				5004	6871	8520
	12.	Kerala*				1597	4179	4825
	13.	M.P.	1019	503	400	16158	15055	13362
	14.	Maharashtra*				9299	9730	8599
	15.	Manipur	71	163	140	709	1348	1980
	16.	Meghalaya	0	0	60	0	386	0
	17.	Mizoram	65	45	9	819	741	337
DICU\$	18.	Nagaland*				11	80	175
R	19.	Orissa	223	740	585 @	1700	1582	1200
	20.	Punjab*				2497	2153	3219
	21.	Rajasthan	699	750	670	7704	7065	9200
	22.	Sikkim*				30	0	0
	23.	Tamil Nadu*				7779	7243	7646
	24.	Tripura	150	62	16	648	565	633
	25.	U.P.	428	1305	1283	9253	1886	7142
	26.	West Bengal	310	89	49 @	2089	566	423
		Total	3554	4086	4369	93725	82893	79008

- Note 1: Asterisk represent the States which have achieved 100% electrification (excluding those villages which are technically not feasible for electrification).
- 2: Plan allocation and release of funds are programme-wise and not for each component such as village electrification and pumpset energisation. Hence the financial assistance indicated in columns 6, 7 and 8 is for all the programme including for village electrification (new and already electrified, wherever applicable).
- 3: Physical achievements during 1994-95 & 1995-96 include State Plan also. Achievements during 1996-97 are provisional.
- @ Progress upto February, 1997.
- # Does not include grant released under Kutir Jyoti Programme and a sum of Rs. 8243 lakhs provided under leasing and Wind Energy Generation etc.

[Translation]

DR. RAMVILAS VEDANTI: Hon'ble our Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from Hon'ble Minister the total number of villages in Uttar Pradesh at present which are yet to be electrified and the time by which they are likely to be electrified. At present the situation is that transformers are lying burnt in villages. There are the poles without wires. Equipments to install transformers are lying for years. They are not being maintained. The equipments of Power Station are lying for years in my constituency Sujanganj but the work is yet to be started. An announcement has been made to set up a power sub station at Narora under Meerapur Assembly constituency in Pratapgarh but the work could not be started so far. Whether in view of the above facts Government have conducted any survey in this regard ?

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI : Madam, in Uttar Pradesh, the total number of provisionally electrified villages as on 31.3.96 is 86,639 villages. It comes to 77 per cent of the population. The total number of villages to be electrified in Budget up to 1997 is 1283. Against this, the total achievement covered is 78 per cent. The total achievement at the end of March, 1997 are 87,922 villages.

Regarding survey, the Central Government, especially the Regulatory Corporation is giving enormous support to all the proposals of the Electricity Boards. The REC would definitely support the proposals through funding.

[Translation]

DR. RAMVILAS VEDANTI: Whether the honourable Minister would be please to tell the number of such villages which are still to be electrified and whether there is any possibility to electrify those villages ? By when those villages can be electrified ?

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: As per the Census of 1981, out of 11.25 lakh villages, 8.66 lakh villages are electrified. Nearly 30 per cent are still to be electrified. Selection of villages and other things are left to the State Electricity Boards. After receiving proposals, the REC would fund the projects.

[Translation]

SHRI N.J. RATHWA: My question was as to how many villages have been electrified during the last three years but in reply, the number of villages of several states have not been mentioned. There are several states like Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala for which funds have been allocated but the number of villages to be electrified in these states has not been mentioned. I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to whether the Government have formulated any special scheme to identify only such villages, particularly in tribal and backward areas, which have not been electrified so far and to electrify all other villages excluding those villages where Harijans and tribal people are inhabited ?

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: Madam, as mentioned in the Annexure, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat and Haryana have 100 per cent electrified villages.

We are still surveying the total number of Dalit *Basti* Electrified villages. As on 31.3.96, Dalit *Basti* Electrified villages are nearly 55.2 per cent, that is, 2,87,766 villages. As on 30.9.96, the total number of electrified villages is 2,88,043 villages, that is, 55.2 per cent. The total number of electrified tribal villages is 1,11,886.

SHRI K.S.R. MURTHY: In the statement given by the hon. Minister, the allocation for Andhra Pradesh during 1996-97 has come down to hardly Rs. 17 crore as against Rs. 132 crore in 1994-95 and Rs. 103 crore in 1995-96. Bihar which is supposed to be not 100 per cent covered State, the allocation in 1995-96 and in 1996-97 are practically nil. Is the Ministry doing any job in finding out the States where there is no electrification at all ? What exactly is the action being taken by the Ministry regarding those villages which are not technically feasible ?

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: The financial assistance provided to the various State Electricity Boards depends on their viability and their outstandings. But the REC is not deducting any fund whether it is Andhra Pradesh or Bihar or any other State. This subject comes under the Concurrent List and it is for both the Centre and the State to act.

The REC is supporting the State Governments regard-

ing provision of funds for rural electrification. The REC is providing 100 per cent funds but at the same time, we have also to recover the outstanding arrears from various State Governments. As on 31.3.97, nearly Rs. 8900 crore were the arrears. Whatever funds were given by the World Bank or any such institution, still we will have to approach the banks for more funds. Now, those institutions are asking us about the recovery of those arrears. The REC is not an executing agency. As far as execution is concerned, it is the responsibility of both the Central and the State Governments.

Recently, a lot of discussion had taken place. Even some questions were raised in the Standing Committee. There was also a question about its inclusion in the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front Government. Madam, I would request all the hon. Members of this august House, through you, to give their suggestions with respect to the changing of definition. Earlier there was a boundary about energisation of pumpsets or for electrifying the houses beyond which we could not go. Then, we also collected the information as to how to totally energise all the villages. We had counted the number of those villages, and electrified them. Each village is having seven to eight hamlets. Those hamlets are not covered. But, we are not taking into account those hamlets for electrification. So, there is a necessity of changing the definition.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJBHAI CHIKHALIA: Honourable Madam Chairman, in our country the number of villages is more than four lakhs. Today, after 50 years of Independence when we are going to celebrate it I feel that by not providing electricity to the people living in the villages, they are being treated like second class citizens. Through you, I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to how much time it will take to electrify each and every village of the country and by when the programme of electrification will be completed? In my constituency, Junagarh, there are more than one thousand such villages which have not been electrified. It seems that the benefit of Independence of India has not reached them till today. Therefore, I would like to know from the honourable Minister as to what programme the Government have chalked out to give benefits of electrification to all people living in the villages and by when this programme would be completed?

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: Madam, according to 1991 census, 5,87,288 villages were to be electrified. As on 31.3.97, there were 5,50,300 villages to be electrified. So, it has come down to 87 per cent. As far as covering the whole country is concerned, as I submitted earlier, it is the responsibility of both the Central and the State Governments. The REC is only a financial body. The executing agencies are the Electricity Boards. Once the Electricity Boards are able to identify the locality or the area, they will have to utilise the funds provided by the

REC. The hon. Members may see that we are not deducting anything from the Plan allocation. In fact, it is growing steadily. In 1994-95, it was Rs. 704.85 crore. In 1996-97, it has gone up to Rs. 758 crore. So, the plan allocations for the Department of Power and the Ministry of Finance have also increased steadily. But the problem is of outstanding dues. As I have already told the outstanding arrears are to the tune of Rs. 8900 crore. Only because of this we are not able to electrify all the villages. If the Electricity Boards are able to pay their arrears, then the REC will be able to continuously support them. As per the survey, it was told that by the year 2000, all the villages will be electrified. I would like to say that practically it is not feasible. This much I can say.

SHRI N. DENNIS: Madam Chairperson, though considerable achievement has been made in respect of rural electrification, some far flung hilly and remote areas are not provided with electricity so far. May I know from the hon. Minister whether any special strategy would be made for providing electricity connections to these remote and far flung areas?

The Hon. Minister has stated that it is the responsibility of the State Governments to provide electricity connections in the villages. I would like to know if any direction has been given by the Central Government for a time bound programme for providing electricity connections. I would also like to know whether any report has been received from the State Governments on the basis of which the entire country would be provided electricity connections within a time limit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please ask questions directly so that some more Members could be accommodated.

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: In addition to our regular programmes like pump set energy, RE, etc. we are also providing funds through the Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources to take up small hydro projects, wind energy, etc. The REC is also providing funds to the Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources to electrify remote, hilly, tribal and dalit areas.

As the hon. Member has rightly said, even though we have achieved a lot in the past fifty years, it is not sufficient. So in this year, 1997-98 we are spending Rs. 20 crore through REC on non-conventional energy to take up projects like small hydro projects, wind energy and gas reserve projects.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: May I know from the hon. Minister as to how many villages, percentage wise, in the country are considered to be technically not feasible for expansion of rural electrification; and whether the Government is considering any proposal to redefine rural electrification to facilitate involvement of the Panchayati Raj system to expedite the progress of rural electrification in the backward areas?

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: Nearly 18,000 villages in the remote areas have been identified for this. There is also a proposal before the Ministry for a change of the definition of rural electrification.

As I have told this august House earlier that in the revenue boundary, whether it is for the pump set or for electrification of a village or a hamlet, it would be covered 100 per cent for electrification purposes. Now we want to change it and for that we are changing the concept from village revenue boundary to inhabitation. In consultation with the Central Electricity Authority, we are changing the definition.

Furthermore I would request all the hon. Members, if they wish to submit any suggestions regarding change of definition, they may kindly do so. Their suggestions would be welcomed.

[Translation]

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: Bhavnaji has already asked my question.....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Every Member cannot ask a question in the Question Hour. Members are requested to send their questions to the honourable Minister in writing and get the replies.

[Translation]

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask from the honourable Minister as to whether it is correct that those villages which have been electrified, have intact not been electrified completely and a large part or several localities of those villages have not been electrified. What schemes the Government propose to launch to electrify the part or portions of those villages ?

Second thing is that in electrified villages transformers often become out of order and the State Governments take several months to get these transformers repaired.

Whether the Central Government has any scheme to help the State Governments so that they can keep spare transformers and in case of failure of a transformer in any village, spare transformer can be installed there. Supply of electricity should be maintained at least in those areas where it is being supplied at present. Therefore, through you, I would like to know as to how classification will be completed in partly electrified villages, and what arrangements do the Government want to make to repair those transformers which go out of order.

[English]

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: Madam, in addition to our regular programmes we are spending a sum of Rs. 20 crore yearly for the MLAs' programmes and non-conventional energy programmes. We are taking up programmes like small, hydro, wind energy, and gas based programmes. Further, we are having system improvement schemes through the REC. Through the system improvement schemes we are providing loans to State Electricity Boards for making transformers and other systems and also to improve the efficiency of load.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN: Madam Chairperson, the question was asked about all the states. There are seven Union Territories in India out of which information has been given in regard to two Union Territories only in reply to the question but no information has been given about five other Union Territories. Union Territory of Chandigarh has demanded funds from the Government in this regard. Punjab, Haryana High Court has directed the Chandigarh Administration to give power connections in those areas where these connections have not been given so far. Therefore through you, I would like to know as to why information in regard to remaining five Union Territories including Chandigarh, has not been given and if you have got the required information are you in a position to apprise this House of the actual position.

DR. S. VENUGOPALA CHARI: Madam, I will pass on this information to the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall move on to the next question—Q. No. 542.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Madam, before you move on to the next question, I would like to know as to why I am specifically targeted by the Secretariat by supplying blank pages as schedules in the List of Business to me. Madam, would you please ask the Secretariat to inquire into it ?.....(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK: You can raise this issue later on and not during the Question Hour.....(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Actually I wanted to raise it before the start of the Question Hour. Madam, I saw that you had started the Question Hour....(Interruptions) Would you please ask the Secretariat to inquire into it ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can raise it later on.

Now, we shall take up the next question.

Allocation to Mega Cities

*542 SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Commission on Urbanisation had recommended allocation of funds for mega cities for the purpose of infrastructure development in the Seventh and Eighth Five Year Plans;

(b) if so, the details of amount allocated to the mega cities;

(c) whether the Government propose to continue the mega city scheme in the Ninth Five Year Plan period;

(d) if so, whether the Government propose to include more cities in mega city scheme; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, including the criteria laid down for the selection of cities ?