

28

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY
(1995-96)

TENTH LOK SABHA

**NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES
SCHEMES AND THE CONSUMER**

**MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL
ENERGY SOURCES**

*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained
in the 28th Report of the Standing Committee on Energy
(Tenth Lok Sabha)]*

TWENTY-EIGHTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

१८८८ अ— December, 1995/Agrahayana, 1917 (Saka)

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(1995-96)**

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**MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL
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*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained
in the 24th Report of the Standing Committee on Energy
(Tenth Lok Sabha)]*



*Presented to Lok Sabha on.....
Laid in Rajya Sabha on.....*

22 DEC 1995

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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**COMPOSITION OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY
(1995-96)**

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4. Shri A. Louis Martin	—	<i>Under Secretary</i>

* Case to be a Member of the Committee consequent upon his appointment as Minister in the Union Council of Minister w.e.f. 13-10-1995

** Ceased to be a Member of the Committee consequent on his retirement from Rajya Sabha w.e.f. 24.7.1995

**COMPOSITION OF ACTION TAKEN SUB-COMMITTEE OF
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
(1995-96)**

CONVENOR

Shiv Charan Mathur

MEMBERS

2. **Shri Parasram Bhardwaj**
- *3. **Dr. Krupasindhu Bhoi**
4. **Shri P.C. Chacko**
5. **Shri Dalbir Singh**
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- *18. **Shri M. Rajasekara Murthy**
19. **Shri T. Venkatram Reddy**
20. **Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu**
21. **Dr. Naunihal Singh**
22. **Smt. Kamla Sinha**

*Ceased to be a Member of the Committee consequent upon his appointment as Minister in the Union Council of Minister w.e.f. 13.10.1995.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Energy having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty-Eighth Report (Tenth Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 24th Report of the Standing Committee on Energy (Tenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Non-Conventional Energy Sources Schemes and the Consumer".

2. The 24th Report of the Standing Committee on Energy was presented to Lok Sabha on 18th May, 1995. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the report were received on 28th August, 1995.

3. The report was considered and approved by the Action Taken Sub-Committee at its sitting held on 16th November, 1995 and adopted by the full Committee on 11th December, 1995.

4. The Committee place on record their appreciation for the work done by the Action Taken Sub-Committee (1995-96) of Standing Committee on Energy.

5. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 24th Report of the Committee is given in Appendix-III.

NEW DELHI;
13 December, 1995
Agrahayana 22, 1917 (Saka)

JASWANT SINGH,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Energy.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

The Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty-fourth Report (Tenth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Energy on, "Non-conventional Energy Sources Schemes and the Consumer" which was presented to Lok Sabha on 18th May, 1995.

2. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 13 recommendations contained in Report. These have been categorised as follows :—

- (i) Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government:-
Sl. Nos. 2 to 11 and 13.
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply:-
-NIL-
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:-
Sl. No. 12
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:-
Sl. No. 1.

3. The Committee require that final reply in respect of the recommendation for which only interim reply has been given by the Government ought to be furnished to the Committee at the earliest.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations:-

A. Opening of Showroom-cum-Service Centre

Recommendation Sl. No. 1 (Part-B)

5. The Committee had observed that the market for non-conventional energy products was still at nascent stage and was supported by the Government through fiscal incentives/soft loans. Lack of awareness and information gap also constrained free play of market forces. The Committee, therefore, felt that the Government ought to play a positive role in protecting the interests of consumers. The Committee recommended that a study must be undertaken to ascertain problems of consumers and on the basis of outcome of the study,

suitable remedial measures should be initiated to safeguard consumers' interests. The Committee also desired that Consumer Assistance Cell should entertain complaints during the guarantee period after the purchase of equipments and ensure that the suppliers attend to the complaints expeditiously and to the satisfaction of the consumers.

6. The Government in their reply have *inter-alia* stated that survey and evaluation studies of Biogas plants, Improved Chulhas, Solar Thermal and Solar Photovoltaic Systems in the field are being periodically conducted through independent agencies. Detailed guidelines for setting up Consumer Assistance Cells for Biogas plants and Improved Chulhas have reportedly been formulated and sent to State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies. It has been stated that they have been advised to open these Cells at appropriate levels to examine complaints, ensure expeditious service to the user particularly during the guarantee period.

It has been further stated in the reply that the Government is also considering the possibility of opening a few showroom-cum-service Centres for non-conventional energy devices/systems of individual consumers interest. These centres may provide facility to the manufacturers of these devices/systems to market their product and also to provide after sales service to the consumer.

7. The Committee would like to know how many consumer Assistance Cells have been set up subsequent to Committee's recommendation, the outcome of latest evaluation studies conducted and the details of monitoring done. The Committee also desire that decision regarding opening of showroom-cum-service centres for non-conventional energy devices/systems should be taken expeditiously under intimation to the Committee.

B. Promotion of Multi-Purpose Use of Solar Lanterns

Recommendation Sl. No. 6 (Part B)

8. The Committee has desired that experiments for utilising solar lantern in controlling pest population should be intensified and results, if found positive should help to propagate solar lanterns for multi-purpose use.

9. The Govt. have stated in their reply that there are no restrictions on the use of solar lanterns for any type of applications. Further, all categories of individual beneficiaries and non-profit organisations/institutions are eligible for the central subsidy on solar lanterns under the 1995-96 programme. It has been further that the Ministry will support the development of a suitable system for pest control.

10. It is not clear from the reply whether the Govt. have taken any initiative to promote specific experiments regarding multi-purpose use of solar lanterns as recommended by the Committee. The Committee desire

early action to be taken in the matter, if not already taken. The Committee would also like the Ministry to clarify as to what kind of support is proposed to be extended for development of a system for pest control.

C. Mechanism to get Regular Feed Back from Consumers

Recommendation Sl. No. 11 (Part-B)

11. The Committee had urged that there must be an inbuild mechanism in the Ministry to come to know of the problems of consumers contemporaneously and get regular feed back to enable timely remedial action.

12. The Government have stated in their reply that in order to obtain regular feedback on the performance of the systems the State implementing agencies and regional offices of the Ministry are conducting inspections. In addition performance evaluation studies by independent organisations are also being commissioned from time to time. It has been further stated that the Ministry is developing a mechanism to monitor and get feed back on the after sales service being provided by the manufacturers and problems of consumers.

13. The Committee are glad to know that as recommended by the Committee, the Ministry is developing mechanism to monitor and get feed back on the after sale service being provided by the manufacturers and problems of consumers. The Committee hope that the mechanism would be developed soon and the Committee be informed of its working.

D. Installation/Sale of Sub-Standard Systems

Recommendation Sl. No. 12 (Part-B)

14. The Committee observed that though standards had been established by BIS for solar cookers and solar collectors used in hot water system, installation/sale of sub-standard systems was admittedly prevalent. There was also reportedly no system of warranties for solar cooker, solar water heating systems and solar lanterns and batteries. The Committee observed that having given market orientation to these devices, the MNES seemed to remain unconcerned about the problems of consumers. The Committee therefore, stressed that the Government should look into the problems indicated above and take immediate corrective measures.

15. The Government have stated in their reply as follows:—

"There is no subsidy on solar water heaters and solar cookers by the Central Government, therefore, ISI marked product cannot be enforced. However, additional rebate in the interest rate is being given on loan for solar water heaters with ISI marked collector by Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency. Similarly the promotion incentives under the solar cooker programme are available only to those manufacturers whose solar cooker models have been tested and certified by the Solar

Energy Centre or other Regional Test Centres set up by MNES. Only these models of solar lantern are being promoted under the subsidy schemes the sample of which are tested and certified by Solar Energy Centre and other authorised test centres to MNES specifications. The manufacturers are required to give warranty for a minimum of one year for the solar lantern and five years for the PV modules."

16. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry's view that ISI marked product cannot be enforced with regard to solar water heaters and solar cookers in the absence of subsidy on these systems. The Committee expect the Govt. to take positive steps to find an alternative solution in the matter to ensure that only quality products are marketed. It is evident that incentives indicated by the Ministry for promotion of ISI marked product have not yielded desired results in curbing installation/sale of sub-standard systems. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry ought to find ways and means to prevent installation/sale of sub-standard devices. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in the matter.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation Sl. No. 2

The National Project on Biogas Development was started in the year 1981-82. One of the major problems faced with regard to implementation of biogas and improved chulha programmes is stated to be the delay in disbursement of subsidy. According to the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources releases grant with hardly 5-6 months time left for executing the entire financial year's target and that to only 50 per cent of the funds. The Committee find from the information furnished by the MNES that there has been considerable delay by MNES as well as by some nodal agencies in release of advance funds to implementing agencies. AIWC has explained its difficulties on this count. The Committee hope that the Ministry would look into this matter and ensure timely release of advance funds to NGOs and other implementing agencies to enable their smooth performance. The Committee recommend that an application for grant must be disposed of with the release of the 50% of grant within two months of the receipt of application.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is releasing advance funds to NGOs and other implementing agencies within two months of the receipt of their demand subject to fulfilment of conditions prescribed for release of funds. The State Nodal Departments and implementing agencies have also been requested to issue instructions to District/Block/Local Agencies for expeditious release of funds to NGOs.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995]

Recommendation Sl. No. 3

The Committee observe that Bureau of Indian Standards has formulated a standard code of practice for construction of biogas plants and also specifications for biogas stoves. Many nodal departments and implementing agencies have reportedly developed a guarantee card system for biogas plants to enforce quality control and provide free maintenance services at least for the first three years. The Committee have, however, been informed by some NGOs/experts that the guarantees are given only on paper and complaints are not attended to

promptly. The Committee recommended that efforts should be made to strengthen the arrangements for post installation services. AIWC has suggested in this connection that NGOs should also be involved in monitoring and inspection of biogas plants. The Committee agree with this suggestion and recommend the Government to take necessary steps to involve NGOs in this task. BIS may be asked to play an active role in ensuring that the standards laid down by it are observed faithfully. A task force comprising the representatives of the Government, NGO concerned and BIS may be formed in each States/UTs to monitor post-installation services during the guarantee period.

Reply of the Government

Many State Governments/Nodal Agencies have already set up District and State Level Coordination Committees for monitoring, coordination and review of biogas and improved chulha programmes. They have been advised to include representatives from Regional Office of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and select NGOs (who are directly involved in the implementation of these programmes) in the District/State level Coordination Committees, if already not represented adequately.

It has been also suggested that these District/State level Coordination Committee may set up Task Forces to sort out long pending complaints and examination of loan applications of beneficiaries for biogas plants from banks. The Task Force may also include representatives of concerned manufacturer/supplier, Self Employed Worker, NGOs (if involved in implementation) and that concerned Technical Back-up Unit or Regional Biogas Development and Training Centres. The report of the Task Force should be considered in the District/State level Coordination Committee.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 4

National Programme on Improved Chulhas started in 1983 is being implemented through State Governments /Nodal Agencies, AIWC, National Dairy Development Board and other NGOs through Self-Employed Workers (SEWs) at grass root levels. Over 15.5 million improved chulhas have been installed till the end of 1993. Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) has developed specification on "Solid Biomass Chulha-portable metallic" in case of fixed chulhas the implementing agencies are required to ensure standard specification through technical back-up units. The implementing agencies have reportedly been advised to develop a guarantee card system and ensure quality control measures. The Committee find that the problems faced by consumers relate mainly to unsuitability of models and lack of maintenance support. The Committee desire that implementing agencies should be directed

to promote the models suitable to different purposes and areas and give preference to user's choice while selecting a model for promotion in a given area. It should also be ensured that maintenance warranty given by SEWs is enforced. The task force suggested above may also play a decisive role in selection of models of improved chulha best suited for a consumer.

Reply of the Government

Seventeen Technical Back-up Units (TBUs) for Improved Chulhas have been set up in different parts of the country. Thirty seven new models of improved chulha have been developed by these centres during last two years. The State Governments/State Nodal Agencies are normally promoting models suitable to their State and local areas. However they have been further advised to develop a suitable feed back system on the requirement of the beneficiaries to the TBU concerned for developing and/or modifying designs to suit users requirement.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 5

The Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) programme restructured in July, 1993 is implemented under two different schemes viz. Socially Oriented Scheme and Market Oriented Scheme. The Socially Oriented Scheme specially meant for designated areas provides subsidy of Rs. 2000 in the case of solar lantern and 50% of the cost in case of other systems. The market oriented scheme aims at rapid Commercialisation of SPV technology and is implemented through Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) by providing soft loan assistance. The main problem faced by consumers under this scheme is high capital cost of SPV systems. Though, the cost of solar lantern is stated to have come down from Rs. 5550 to Rs. 3900 during the last one and half years, the Committee feel that the cost is still beyond the reach of consumers. The Secretary, MNES expressed optimism that with the reported development of thin-film technology by some big manufacturers the cost will further come down considerably. One expert has cited the most recent development pioneered by Prof. Marting Green, New South Wales University, where he uses metallurgical grade silicon to combine the benefits of amorphous and crystalline silicon technology. The Committee urge that appropriate measures should be initiated for exploitation of state-of-the-art technology which aim at cost reduction and to ensure large scale use of SPV systems.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is supporting development of various solar cell and module manufacturing technologies which have potential for cost reduction. These technologies include amorphous silicon, cadmium telluride and copper indium diselenide based thin film solar cells and modules. Internationally these technologies are still at the pilot production stage. It may take some more years for these technologies to be commercialised in a large scale. Government is encouraging induction of State-of-art technology through collaborative projects. One of the public sector companies is working with Prof. Martin Green of Australia to manufacture PV modules using state-of-art solar cell technology. In addition, development of various applications of PV systems for large scale use is also being supported. The cost of Solar Photovoltaic systems have started declining, which is due to various incentives provided by the Government, increased production volumes and improvements in product performance.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 6

In rural areas, solar lanterns can have multi-purpose use such as lighting, crop protection and literacy and adult education. In Andhra Pradesh, a successful pest control programme is stated to have been carried out using electrical light traps. According to one expert, solar lanterns should be extremely successful in controlling pest population. If this is proved to be so, the cost of solar lanterns in relation to the value of crop saved will be insignificant. The Committee desire that experiments of this type should be intensified and results, if found positive should help to propagate solar lanterns for multi-purpose use.

Reply of the Government

There are no restrictions on the use of solar lanterns for any type of applications. Further, all categories of individual beneficiaries and non-profit organisations/institutions are eligible for the Central subsidy on solar lanterns under the 1995-96 programme. The Ministry will support the development of a suitable system for pest control.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph 10 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. No. 7

The other major deterrent in the popularisation of solar lantern/SPV systems is stated to be high replacement costs of certain components like batteries, lamps etc. Indian PV lanterns reportedly do not, as yet, have metal hydride batteries. One expert who deposed before the Committee has opined that metal hydride batteries last from 1000 to 1500 cycles, require minimum maintenance and will not lead to the kind of management problems faced by wet batteries. The Committee hope that Government will consider this matter and initiate suitable steps which will result in bringing down the maintenance cost of SPV systems.

Reply of the Government

It is recognised that the cost of major replacement items i.e. battery and lamp in a solar lantern is comparatively high. MNES is encouraging development and use of low cost batteries with longer cycle life. While the metal hydride batteries are known to have longer cycle life, the present cost of these batteries is also high, and therefore, such batteries are not considered suitable for use in solar lanterns. At present these batteries are not manufactured in the country.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 8

There is a general impression that non-conventional energy items do not involve operational and maintenance cost. In actual use, these devices do require maintenance and replacement of certain parts. The Committee feel that this misunderstanding ought to be removed. Conceding this fact, the Secretary, MNES assured during evidence that suitable instructions will be issued and manufacturers will be required to clearly state alongwith operational instructions, the expected life, the performance limitations, the requirement of replacement and maintenance. The Committee would like to be informed of the action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Manufacturers/suppliers of improved chulhas, flexi biogas digesters, biogas burners etc. are required to provide information on operational instructions, expected life performance limitations and common replacement and maintainance alongwith the device. The Consumer Assistance Cells may ensure and monitor that such information is actually being given to each beneficiary.

The Ministry has issued instructions to the manufacturers of solar thermal and solar photovoltaic devices and systems to provide all information

about installation and operation, expected life, performance limitations, maintenance and replacement requirements while selling and supplying these devices/systems.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 9

The Committee also desire that with regard to systems/devices for which subsidy is provided by the Government, the beneficiaries should be clearly informed of their privileges as also the obligations of the suppliers so that they may ensure that after-sales service is provided by the manufacturer/supplier. The Committee also recommend that information about specific mechanism that could be used by the consumers for redressal of their problems must also be given to them in vernacular languages. The Consumer Assistance Cell established by Nodal Agencies should also take steps to educate consumers through pamphlets and demonstrations.

Reply of the Government

The State Government, Departments/Agencies and other Implementing Agencies for Biogas, Improved Chullah and solar photovoltaic programmes, under which central subsidy is available, have been instructed to develop and adopt post card maintenance system involving turn key job workers, self employed workers and the manufacturers respectively, if not already being followed. It has been suggested that these cards may preferably be in local languages. The implementing agencies and the manufacturers have been asked to provide after sales service expeditiously on receipt of the complaint from the consumer during the guarantee period. It has also been suggested to the State Governments and Nodal Agencies to create a Guarantee/Inspection card system with the user to keep record of the service provided to users for biogas and/or improved chullhas. This will help in monitoring the effectiveness of Post card maintenance system. The manufacturers of solar photovoltaic system are being asked to provide literature in the regional languages about the operation and maintenance as well as on redressal of complaints along with supply of SPV devices and systems.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 10

According to Secretary, MNES there are certain countries where PV system has been standardized. In our country standard for PV system is yet to be developed. Standards for PV modules in our country is expected to be available in another two year's time. The Committee trust that the

MNES will take up the matter with the Bureau of Indian Standards and ensure that standards for PV systems are developed soon.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is in touch with the Bureau of Indian Standards for evolving Indian Standards for PV systems. The Ministry has evolved its own specifications for solar lanterns and other PV systems supported by it. In addition, the Ministry has set up a PV testing facility at the Solar Energy Centre, which has facilities for testing of solar cells, PV modules and some PV systems including solar lanterns.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P C dated 23rd August, 1995].

Recommendation Sl. No. 11

Inadequate after sales service and maintenance infrastructure for SPV systems are the other major difficulties faced by the consumers in the use of SPV systems. The Committee observe that in respect of subsidised programmes, the State implementing agencies have been directed to ensure that the responsibility of providing the required after sales service is taken up by suppliers and adequately covered under the agreement/contracts. In respect of Market Oriented Programme the question of after sales service is entirely left to the market forces. The Committee regret to learn that the MNES as yet has not received any feed back with regard to manufacturers' installed capacity, production, sales, after sales service, etc. It appears that only after the matter has been taken up by the Committee, the MNES is trying to collect information in this regard. The Committee urge that there must be an inbuilt mechanism in the Ministry to come to know of the problems of consumers contemporaneously and get regular feedback to enable timely remedial action.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is regularly obtaining information on the installed capacity, annual production and sales etc. from the manufacturers of solar cells and modules.

In order to obtain regular feedback on the performance of the systems the State Implementing agencies and regional offices of the Ministry are conducting inspections. In addition performance evaluation studies by independent organisations are also being commissioned from time to time. The Ministry is developing a mechanism to monitor and get feed back on the after sales service being provided by the manufacturers and problems of consumers.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C dated 23rd August, 1995].

Comments of the Committee

(Please see paragraph 13 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. No. 13

One of the major problems faced by consumers of non-conventional energy devices particularly in rural areas is lack of awareness. According to one NGO, even though there has been considerable achievements of renewable energy programmes from the point of view of awareness generation particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, there are remote villages where people are still unaware about technologies, their availability. Availability of loan from banks, etc. The Committee feel that much more needs to be done for mass awareness and training of users in the operation and maintenance of non-conventional energy devices/systems. The Committee, therefore, recommend that users education, awareness and training programme must be intensified in rural areas. The Panchayats must also be actively involved in propagation of renewable energy sources in villages. Mass awareness will need setting up of Consumer Assistance Cell at district/ sub-division/ taluka/tchsil levels.

Reply of the Government

Publicity and Awareness creation is a built-in-component of almost all the consumer oriented NRSE programmes for which partial financial support is provided to the implementing agencies. The proposed Consumer Assistance Cells for Biogas and Improved chullahs to be created at various levels by the States would also help in awareness creation through leaflets, demonstrations and organising training programmes etc. The States would be requested to involve Panchayats also in these activities. Solar devices and systems as of now have a limited spread, training programmes on these are being organised by the implementing agencies with financial support from MNES and by the manufacturers as a part of contract for supply of equipments. Besides, MNBES has been providing mobile exhibition vans fitted with NRSE devices and systems to the State implementing agencies for demonstration in rural and remote areas. It has been either participating directly or through agencies in exhibitions, melas etc. displaying these systems. The District Level Backup Units set up in 171 districts under the Centrally Sponsored Integrated Rural Energy Programme are also organising various awareness programmes for energy devices including non-conventional energy devices/ systems for the beneficiaries.

CHAPTER III

**RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO
NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S
REPLY**

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation Sl. No. 12

This Committee find that though standards have been established by BIS for solar cookers and solar collectors used in hot water system, installation/sale of sub-standard systems is admittedly prevalent. There is also reportedly no system of warranties for solar cooker, solar water heating systems and solar lanterns and batteries. Having given market orientation to these devices, the MNES seem to remain unconcerned about the problems of consumers. The Committee are not happy with this situation. The Committee stress that the Government should look into the problems indicated above and take immediate corrective measures.

Reply of the Government

There is no subsidy on solar water heaters and solar cookers by the Central Government, therefore ISI marked product cannot be enforced. However, additional rebate in the interest rate is being given on loan for solar water heaters with ISI marked collector by Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency. Similarly the promotion incentives under the solar cooker programme are available only to those manufacturers whose solar cooker models have been tested and certified by the Solar Energy Centre or other Regional Test Centres set up by MNES. Only these models of solar lantern are being promoted under the subsidy schemes the sample of which are tested and certified by Solar Energy Centre and other authorised test centres to MNES specifications. The manufacturers are required to give warranty for a minimum of one year for the solar lantern and five years for the PV modules.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M. No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph 21 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation Sl. No. 1

The scope of examination of the subject "Non-Conventional Energy Sources Schemes and the Consumer" is limited to those non-conventional energy schemes which are popular and applicable to individual consumers. The devices/systems covered under these schemes include biogas plants, improved chulhas, solar lanterns, solar photovoltaic systems, solar cookers and water heating systems. The Committee find that under the commercialisation strategy introduced in July 1993, any problem and actual difficulties faced by consumers in respect of systems installed under marked oriented programmes are entirely left to be taken care of by market forces. The Committee feel that this is not a satisfactory situation. The market for non-conventional energy products is still at nascent stage and is supported by the Government through fiscal incentives/soft loans. Lack of awareness and information gap also constrain free play of market forces. The Committee, therefore, feel that the Government ought to play a positive role in protecting the interests of consumers. The Committee recommend that a study must be undertaken to ascertain problems of consumers and on the basis of outcome of the study, suitable remedial measures should be initiated to safeguard consumers' interests. The Committee also desire that Consumer Assistance Cell should entertain complaints during the guarantee period after the purchase of equipment and ensure that the suppliers attend to the complaints expeditiously and to the satisfactory of the consumers.

Reply of the Government

Survey and evaluation studies of Biogas Plants, Improved Chulhas, Solar Thermal and Solar Photovoltaic systems in the field are already being periodically conducted through independent agencies. Detailed guidelines for setting up Consumer Assistance Cells for Biogas Plants and Improved Chulhas have been formulated and sent to State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies. They have been advised to open these cells at appropriate levels to examine complaints, ensure expeditious service to the user particularly during the guarantee period. These cells may also help in creating awareness about these technologies among the beneficiaries.

The Government is also considering the possibility of opening a few showroom cum service centres for non-conventional energy devices/systems of individual consumers interest. These centres may provide facility to the manufacturers of these devices/systems to market their product and also to provide after sales service to the consumer.

[Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources O.M.No. 4/48/95-P&C
dated 23rd August, 1995].

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph 7 of Chapter I of the Report)

NEW DELHI;
13 December, 1995
Agrahayana 22, 1917 (Saka)

JASWANT SINGH,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Energy.

APPENDIX I

EXTRACTS OF MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE ACTION TAKEN SUB-COMMITTEE OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER, 1995

The Sub-Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 16.15 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Shiv Charan Mathur—*Convenor*

MEMBERS

2. Shri Khelan Ram Jangde
3. Shri Khelsai Singh
4. Shri Arjun Singh Yadav
5. Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita
6. Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu
7. Smt. Kamla Sinha

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G. R. Juneja — *Deputy Secretary*
2. Shri A. Louis Martin — *Under Secretary*
2. ** ** ** **
3. ** ** ** **
4. ** ** ** **

5. The Sub-Committee then considered Memorandum No. IV regarding Draft Action Taken Report on 24th Report relating to the subject, "Non-Conventional Energy Sources Schemes and the Consumer" and approved the same with the addition of the following comments in Chapter-I on recommendation No. 1 :

"The Committee would like to know how many Consumer Assistance Cells have been set up subsequent to the Committee's recommendation, the outcome of latest evaluation studies conducted and the details of monitoring done".

6. ** ** ** **

**Paras 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Minutes relating to consideration of three other Draft Action Taken Reports have not been included.

7. The Sub-Committee, thereafter, authorised the Convenor to submit the two Draft Action Taken Reports referred to in Para 4 and 5 above to the Chairman, Standing Committee on Energy on their behalf.

The Sub-Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY (1995-96) HELD ON MONDAY, THE 11TH DECEMBER, 1995 IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 63, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NEW DELHI.

The Committee sat from 15.00 hrs. to 15.45 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Anil Basu — *in the Chair*

MEMBERS

2. Shri Bhawani Lal Verma
3. Shri Khelan Ram Jangde
4. Shri Parasram Bhardwaj
5. Shri S. Thota Subba Rao
6. Shri P.C. Chacko
7. Shri Arjun Singh Yadav
8. Shri Virender Singh
9. Prof. Rita Verma
10. Shri Vijay Kumar Yadav
11. Smt. Lovely Anand
12. Shri Dipankar Mukherjee
13. Shri T. Venkatram Reddy
14. Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G. R. Juneja — *Deputy Secretary*
2. Shri A. Louis Martin — *Under Secretary*

2. In the absence of Chairman, the Committee chose Shri Anil Basu, M.P. to act as Chairman for the sitting under Rule 258(3) of the Rules of procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

3. ** ** ** **

4. The Committee next took up for consideration the following draft action taken reports and adopted the same :

i) ** ** ** **

ii) The draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 24th Report of Standing Committee on Energy (1995-96) on the subject, "Non-conventional Energy Sources Schemes and the Consumer".

5. The Committee also authorised the Chairman to finalise the above mentioned reports and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

**Paras 3 and 4 (i) of the Minutes relating to consideration of two other draft Action Taken Reports have not been included.

APPENDIX III

(*Vide Para 5 of the Introduction*)

Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the Twenty-Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Energy (Tenth Lok Sabha).

I.	Total number of recommendations made	13
II.	Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government (<i>Vide Recommendations at Sl. Nos. 2 to 11 and 13</i>)	11
	Percentage of Total	84.6
III.	Recommendation which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies	NIL
IV.	Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee (<i>Vide Recommendation at Sl. No. 12</i>)	1
	Percentage of Total	7.7
V.	Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited (<i>Vide Recommendation at Sl. No. 1</i>)	2 7.7