

an>

Title: Issue regarding net neutrality and declare Internet as a public utility.

SHRI M.B. RAJESH (PALAKKAD): Madam, though I am called much lower in the order, I hope that the entire House will agree with me that the issue that I am raising is of extreme and great importance.

Madam, I would like to echo the sentiments and voice of millions of people, especially, the youth on the issue of net neutrality. A number of telecom companies such as Airtel, Reliance and many others along with some other internet companies offer special packages, and through these special packages they bundle only a few websites and applications with their services pretending that this limited access to internet is the whole internet.

Madam, when such cartels form, these cartels lead to further concentration of economic power, marginalized innovations and most of the progressive media, and only the rich will be able to access content and services through internet. Unfortunately, TRAI has brought out a Consultation Paper, which blatantly supports these cartels, internet companies and telecom companies and their assault on net neutrality.

Madam Speaker, the internet has become such an indispensable part of our life because it has become a source of knowledge, a means of communication and a vehicle for all media. When this assault on net neutrality is being fought by people throughout the world and when TRAI came out with this Consultation Paper, then within days about a million people responded to that Consultation Paper online. Further, all of us are receiving messages, and that is why I said that I hope that the entire House will agree with me on this issue. It is because we are receiving thousands of mails each and every moment demanding us to act in defence of net neutrality.

The arguments that they have put forward and are making in favour of attacking net neutrality or doing away with net neutrality are all false arguments. They are saying that they need more money to create / build infrastructure to meet the demand for new internet services. Actually, Madam Speaker, revenues from their data services are growing rapidly, and it has grown 100 per cent in 2014 alone. These facts are being masked. Already, the Competition Commission of India has begun an investigation of the telecom companies for violating net neutrality.

If the Government is serious and sincere in protecting the net neutrality, the Government should come out against the Consultation Paper of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). I would like to appeal to the Government to declare Internet as a public utility. This is the only way to protect net neutrality, to protect the source of knowledge and the medium of communication.

The hon. Home Minister has been generous today as he has responded on many issues that were raised. I hope that when million of people are interested in such an important issue, he will respond on this issue as well in a positive manner. ...(*Interruptions*)

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri P.K. Biju,

Dr. A. Sampath,

Shrimati P.K. Shreemathi Teacher,

Adv. Joice George,

Shri Sankar Prasad Datta,

Shri Gaurav Gogoi,

Dr. K. Kamaraj and

Dr. Boora Narsaiah Goud are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri M.B. Rajesh.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): There should be a Half-an-Hour discussion on this issue, Madam. ...(*Interruptions*)

KUMARI SUSHMITA DEV (SILCHAR): There should be a Half-an-Hour discussion on this issue. ...(*Interruptions*)

माननीय अध्यक्ष : आप मांग लीजिए, हम दे देंगे।