

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, March 4, 1991, Phalguna 13, 1912
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Encouragement to Regional Films

*101. SHRI SRIKANTHA DATTA
NARASIMHA RAJA WADIYAR: Will the
PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of the problems of growth being faced by the producers of films in regional languages;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether the Government propose to give more opportunities to regional films on Doordarshan; and

(d) if so, the details of the measures proposed to be adopted to give a boost to regional cinema?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MIN-
ISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
(SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (d).

A statement is laid on the Table of the
Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes, Sir. The entire film sector as a whole is facing a crisis because of the advent of Cable Television/Dish Antenna system and rampant Video Piracy.

(b) Though cinema is a State subject, considering the influence of this media on masses, the Union Government have from time to time been studying the growth and problems of this sector. Necessary steps are initiated by the Government on the basis of recommendations made by various Committees/Groups etc. In the recent past a High Powered Committee has studied the problems of film industry in its entirety and have made a number of recommendations for affording reliefs/concessions to this sector. A number of recommendations pertain to State Governments as the matters fall entirely within their jurisdiction, and the implementation is being pursued with them vigorously, at the highest levels in the Government. An Inter-Departmental Committee set up to study the aspect of Cable Television and Dish Antenna Network has also submitted its Report to the Government, very recently, which is to be further examined for implementation.

(c) and (d). In order to ensure availability of more regional language feature films for telecast on Doordarshan, the eligibility criteria for telecast of regional feature films on the national network were liberalised by adding additional criteria including State Awards last year.

[*English*]

SHRI SRIKANTHA DATTA NARA-
SIMHA RAJA WADIYAR: What action is
proposed to be taken by the Government to

curb video piracy? What is the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee set up to study the various aspects of Cable Television and Dish Antenna network? What specific and a comprehensive scheme the Government proposes to take to assist the producers of regional films? What steps are being undertaken to promote Kannada films including affording various reliefs and presentations to producers?

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a report on the points raised by the hon. Member has been received about a week ago and keeping in view the various aspects, it has been suggested as to what policies should be adopted on the question of Antenna and Cable Television network. The report is with the Government and we have not yet taken any decision on it. I think all the questions raised by the hon. Members are covered in the report. We will take a decision on it so that full protection can be provided to the film industry including regional film industry.

[*English*]

SHRI SRIKANTHA DATTA NARASIMHARAJA WADIYAR: I appreciate the criteria that had been laid down for the telecast of regional films. But I would like to know if the Government proposes to increase the frequency of regional films from the existing once a week to twice a week and also the regional Chitrahara from once a week to twice a week. The frequency of regional films being shown on the National Network, particularly, Kannada films, is very much less than other regional films. Only old films are shown. I would like to know the plans of the hon. Minister to rectify this anomaly.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, now two regional films are shown every week on television. Timings are fixed for that. Regional films are also shown on Sunday. So far as the questions of

showing more regional films and criteria to show regional films are concerned, I would like to say that films of good quality are shown on the television. If there is any such proposal in the Ministry that the good quality films, should be shown that would be considered on priority basis.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: I would like from the hon. Minister the number of Kannada films shown during the previous year. If so, what are they? I want to know from the hon. Minister, whether it has come to the notice of the Government the regional films which were telecast in Doordarshan were not of good quality and they were very poor compared to other award films like Amara Shilpi Jakanachari, Krishna Devaraya. Will the hon. Minister look into it and try to see that good films are telecast hereafter? Will the Government think of giving some guidelines so as to balance the regional films every year?

[*Translation*]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at present I do not have the information as to how many Kannada films have been shown but the procedure of selecting regional films is, I think, a very difficult one and after a critical examination they are selected. The main grievance of the regional films makers is that the regional films are selected after going through a more difficult examination than the examination of the films produced by Bombay Film Industry. Therefore, the question of showing low quality films does not arise. According to the information I have just received, 52 Kannada films were telecast from regional centres during the last year.

[*English*]

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARDHAN: The hon. Minister has said in his answer that eligibility criteria for telecast of regional feature films on the national network were liberalised by adding additional criteria including State Awards. Since nepotism and favouritism is there in the media,

will this new Government see that Doordarshan plays a better role in selecting better pictures? There are many pictures which are worth public showing. In the answer he has stated that this is a State subject. Since it concerns the mass media and the education part of the people, will the Government form a committee of prominent educated persons without compromising on the geographical or political considerations, to select pictures with educational theme to be telecast on Doordarshan?

[Translation]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Sir, I think Doordarshan has its own committee consisting of the people from different walks of life and not just bureaucrats. We have also proposed to constitute a media expert group to examine as to what kind of films and other programmes should be telecast on Doordarshan. I think Planning Commission has also suggested us the same thing. That would redress the grievances of the hon. Member and the procedure to select films will also be improved.

SHRI RAM KRISHAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Bhojpuri language is spoken in Eastern Uttar Pradesh like Azamgarh, Ballia etc., from where our hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Information and Broadcasting hail, and almost in entire Bihar. It is not spoken in rural areas alone but it is also a language of the masses. Bhojpuri films are popular in this region but there is no promotion of Bhojpuri language through Bhojpuri films at the national level. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will provide concession for the growth and development of Bhojpuri films so that the language spoken in the Eastern Uttar Pradesh and other parts of Bihar may develop. In these films, natural life of the rural masses should be depicted because that would be helpful for the development of Bhojpuri language. Sir, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Information and Broadcasting also belong to this region.

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, it is true and I admit that no concession is being given in the selection of Bhojpuri films. But I would like to assure the hon. Member that now priority will be given to Bhojpuri films also and a Minister is thinking over it. *(Interruption)* A special concession will be given.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, guidelines have been laid down for showing regional films on Doordarshan and the hon. Minister has just given information about the different expert groups but there is no arrangement to include viewers or their representatives in such groups. Will the Government introduce a scheme to review the programmes telecast from Doordarshan so that liking and disliking of the programmes may be known and will the Government consider to include the representatives of the viewers in such review committees?

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before telecasting any programme on Doordarshan a survey is conducted about the programmes and accordingly programmes are categorised. I can not say whether representatives of the viewers are included in the review Committees or not but people from different walks of life are included in the selection and the committee is responsible for selecting programmes for Doordarshan.

[English]

SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Sir, the criterion of having won an award is quite good. But what about those very good classic films which were produced before the award was introduced for example, New Theater Films, Calcutta or Prabhat Films, Poona? So, will the Minister relax this criterion of having won an award in case of good classic films which were produced before the award was introduced?

[Translation]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that this relaxation can be given to those

films which were produced before the award was introduced.

[English]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now, while replying to a supplementary of an hon. Member of Parliament, the hon. Minister came forward and said that there is and there are complaints to the effect that when it comes to the Bombay films, the cartel of Bombay manages to get away with very light screening technique while when it comes to regional films screening, the technique is harsh. I also understand that even though the Doordarshan is not yet autonomous, still even where the Minister feels that a particular film which he has seen should be screened and is of good value, the Screening Committee does not think so because of these highly restricted conditions. At least place the regional films on equal status with the Bombay films. Why should be cartel which has so much money and resources be allowed to get away with less restrictions, less qualifications for selection, while the poor regional films which are made by people with less resources be restricted so much?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true that there has been some distortion in the past. We are trying to correct this distortion. It will take some time. The step that has been taken is only in that direction. I think it will take some time and this distortion will be corrected.

[Translation]

SHRI ARIF BAIG: Mr. Speaker, There is a big film centre in Bombay and there is an office of Central Censor Board, so I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether like Bombay he would consider to open a Central Censor Board Office in Madras also so that the regional film makers may not have to go to Bombay for getting their films passed?

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, like Central Censor Board,

there are regional Censor Committees also and they also pass films like Central Censor Board. And thereafter, if necessary films are sent to Central Censor Board. Such Regional Censor Committees there in Madras, Delhi, Bengal and also at other places.

[English]

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU: Sir, earlier on there was a practice that Doordarshan, in the late night films slot, used to show national and international award winning movies. These days Doordarshan seems to have forgotten that practice. I would like to know from the Minister why it is so.

[Translation]

SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this practice has not been discontinued. If the honourable member has any inform of such an action, she may inform me. It will be looked into.

[English]

Shifting of National Test Range Baliapal

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*102. PROF. MADHU DAN-
DAVATE;
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA
RAJE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the residents of Baliapal region of Orissa have been agitating for the shifting of the "National Test Range" Project proposed to be located there;

(b) if so, whether the Government have reviewed the location of the project in the light of the strong feelings of local people; and

(c) if so, the final decision taken in this regard?