

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

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### LOK SABHA

### STATEMENT

Monday, May 7, 1990/Vaisakha 17, 1912  
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

#### Updated Technology

\*719. SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been made to identify areas in which outdated and obsolete technology is the main cause retarding the pace of economic development;

(b) if so, the outcome of such study; and

(c) the priorities fixed in this regard and the corrective steps taken or contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) to (c). Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (Ministry of Science and Technology) had carried out a number of studies to examine the status of technology in industry, in particular, through two specific schemes namely: National Register of Foreign Collaborations; and the Technology Absorption and Adaptation Scheme. Some of the studies completed include areas such as steel, cement, synthetic fibres, fertilizers, tyres, material handling equipments, mopeds, batteries, certain drugs and special chemicals. The objectives of these studies were to assess the technology content in the concerned industry, adaptation made, efforts to absorb technology and possible measures required to upgrade the technology so as to contribute to our economic development.

These studies have highlighted the priority programmes and corrective steps that could be taken to upgrade technology, in particular relating to aspects such as energy savings, productivity and efficiency improvement. This has further resulted in the studies being disseminated to the concerned Government Departments, industries and other organisations for better appreciation of the status of technology and evolving measures to avoid the setting in of technological obsolescence in industry.

[Translation]

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: Hon. Speaker, Sir, there are two indicators of prosperity in the world. Without any introduc-

tion, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards developing and developed countries. I would like to know whether he intends to adopt the techniques which are being adopted by the world and as a result of which other countries are heading towards progress? This may help India join the selected band of developed countries and being prosperity to the common man. I would also like to know whether the studies undertaken in technological fields are adequate? I am asking this question especially because no such studies have been undertaken about the industries which produce essential commodities and essential consumer items. Is the Government considering to adopt modern techniques being adopted in other parts of the world?

[English]

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: Sir, the Government is fully aware of the problems which the Member has raised. Even as early as in 1983, the Government issued a comprehensive technology policy statement. As a result of this, two bodies have been formed. One called, National Register of Foreign Collaboration and another called Technology Absorption and Adaptation Scheme. Both these Committees, consisting of experts on the Subject, have analysed how to get information from abroad, improve our technological outputs, quality and above all see whether it is necessary to import these technologies or how they can be indigenised? So, these very powerful bodies within the Ministry have been submitting various reports on various aspects. Now I would like to give an idea to the hon. member about the reports for identifying new areas to make our country as modern as possible. They range from chemicals, petro-chemicals, drugs, pharmaceuticals, electronics, engineering industries, meteorology, transport and various miscellaneous items. There is a list of Technology Status Reports which are at present in the country. They range from hand tools, fire glass, etc. The list is a very long one. If he wants, I can lay it on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI KAILASH MEGHWAL: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that some industrial houses are using obsolete and out-dated technology for production in the country and they try to ensure that modern technology is not imported into this country lest their industries should be adversely affected? Limited Foreign exchange reserves and use of foreign exchange received from N. R. Is. on the import of consumer items curtails the import of modern technology. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will take steps to increase it?

[English]

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: The member is right that quite often the imported technology becomes obsolete very fast. But I think it is the business of our experts here to constantly update the technology so that it becomes comparable to what is happening in other countries. It is for this very purpose that these committees have been formed in the Government of India where obsolescence is identified. There may be some industrialists who would like to keep the old technology going. But it is our business to point out to them that eventually they will be the losers.

SHRI M. M. PALLAM RAJU: I am glad that the hon. Minister has mentioned about adaptation of technology in his reply. But what happens in an area like computer? Although we have agreements regarding technology transfer, this technology grows obsolescent before we can adapt it to our needs. But, I think this is due to lack of adequate facilities for research and development and the speed with which it is adapted to our needs. What are you doing about it?

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: The hon. member is right that in certain technologies like electronics the obsolescence is very fast; even before we absorb a technology from another country, a new range of technology comes into existence. Now a question asked is how to solve this problem. The hon. member



is quite right that we can solve this problem. The hon. member is quite right that we can solve this problem only through our research. We have research units in the country. But, unfortunately, the biggest contribution of our research has been in the line of softwares. In hardwares, we have a long way to go. All these problems have been identified. I think, within the next ten years, we have to make up what we have lost through our various commissions that we have formed.

**SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE:** My problem while appreciating the induction of technology, arises from the quality of economic development. The answer that the hon. Minister gave is that they want to modernise their economy. I take a very strong exception to this view. The problem in our economy is not to be viewed in terms of modernisation at all. Therefore, my question is this. What are your needs for economic development? Have you ever assessed the need of technology from that point of view? That is, for the development of the people of the country and not in terms of how modern and comparable we are in certain exceptional fields with the rest of the world.

**DR. RAJA RAMANNA:** Sir, I think, there is a direct relationship between the quality of life and the use of modern technology. Just to say that you can get on with obsolete technology or an old fashioned technology, and the life of the people improve is a far cry. We must constantly, like in various other developed countries, be on the look out for modern technology. Automatically you will find that the economy also improves.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI:** Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that Indian brains are doing wonders abroad as talented persons are not encouraged here and they are forced to go back even after their return to India. I want to know whether any scheme to encourage and reward such talent has been formulated by the Central Government so that brain-drain could be checked? I wish that Indians

who are working wonders abroad could stay in India and bring glory to the country.

[*English*]

**DR. RAJA RAMANNA:** Sir, the hon. Member is right. There is a fantastic brain drain in the country and the country has suffered very heavily from a lot of very brilliant people not staying in the country to help in development. I would like to ask a question. Is it simply the facilities we have created that will keep people or the social structure in our country which is causing this brain drain? I must say that even in the schools, in the houses, parents encourage and say: 'you are a clever boy, go to America'. And he goes to America thinking that is the final achievement. Very few people, including the hon. Members here, really encourage the fact that they should stay in the country right from the beginning. This is the fault.

**SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATHI RAJU:** Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister and the Government to the fact that the third world countries are constantly used as dumping ground for foreign collaboration in the guise of taking their technology. What steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that only state-of-the-art technology is given to us? What incentives are being given so that the best brains are used in R & D and made them to stay back in the country to help in R&D?

**DR. RAJA RAMANNA:** Sir, the answer to the first part of the question is that we are having some system by which obsolete technology is not dumped here. We see it is of a high quality. This is what I referred to in the answer to the main question. There are two bodies which have been created by the Government of India mainly to see whether the technology that is coming in is an old technology, unnecessary expensive technology. We have to depend on the experts within the country to help to solve this problem.

**SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO:** In our country we have got old technology, modern



technology and high technology. We have also got Research and Development. We are adopting a set of science and technology. All these components are needed for technological development. For hi-tech it requires hybrid induction. The objective of hybrid induction for Research and Development is to reduce the high cost of the product. I want to know whether the Government is proposing to develop such a technology by which we will be able to reduce the high cost of the product either because of import or the technology which you have adopted and developed will be used in such a way by which we will be self-sufficient in respect of technology.

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: I think, the hon. Member has raised a very important question is the sense that R&D is necessary for any industry if it has to improve efficiency and bring down the cost. But unfortunately, except in Government industries, the R&D effort in private industry has not been all that effective. That is why, our costs are probably high which the hon. Member has referred to. It is important that all industries, whether in public or private sector, have an R&D group mainly towards reducing the costs. I think, the Government has been insisting that there must be R&D units in all the industrial organisations.

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: When it requires higher cost investment for industrial development, what the Government of India is going to do to give all that priority in the allocation for R&D?

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: It is noticed that the amount of money being spent by industry towards R&D is less than 4 per cent. That is perhaps, a little too small yet. In fact, larger amounts have to be invested and get help of good people who can see connection between R&D and industrial production.

SHRI A. K. ROY: Those of us who have come from technology schools, feel very sad about the affairs in the country. Lop-sided growth whether in economy or agriculture is

the root cause of political imbalance in the country.

And here not only import but motivation is important. The question of technology is connected with our thrust on self-reliance and indigenous growth because a country of 800 million people cannot live by import. You have to evolve everything by ourself. today you will find from tomato paste to tooth paste, for everything we depend on collaboration. May I know from the hon. Minister whether they will put a total ban on all foreign collaborations with multinationals, for five years and ask our national laboratories to develop the technology so that we can compete in this modern world?

DR. RAJA RAMANNA: The hon. Member, perhaps, has taken a very pessimistic view of the development in the country. there is a lot in the country which is absolutely indigenous and made out of the genius of our young people, young scientists and technologist. So there is no need for such a serious alarm that the hon. Member is raising. I do agree that a lot of import is taking place on the basis of foreign knowhow which is also available in the country. But it is the effort of the industrialists to make use of Indian know how which is sometimes of quality and sometimes not of quality also. The world is getting smaller in which, I think, world trade depends on inter-dependence and not simply on self-dependence.

### Preservation of Forests

\*721. SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent to which the legal and developmental measures undertaken by the Government to protect and preserve the forests have been successful so far; and

(b) the new measures to be undertaken by Government, if any, in this regard?