

Written by B4M
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21 सदस्यीय लोक लेखा समिति (पीसी) के रपॉर्ट लीक होने के चलते मचे घमासान के बीच हम आपके इस रपॉर्ट में नीरा राडिया से हुई पूछताछ और उसके जवाब वाले अंश के पढ़ा रहे हैं। साथ ही पीसी क राडिया-मीडिया पार्ट पर खुद क्या कहना है, ये भी बता रहे हैं। 2जी स्पेक्ट्रम आवंटन घोटाले के जांच करने वाली पीसी ने राडिया समेत कई लाबसिटों-पत्रकारों से पूछताछ की थी। पीसी के चेयरमैन मुरली मनोहर जोशी के नेतृत्व वाली रपॉर्ट में चैप्टर 13 में राडिया टेपकॉड क उल्लेख है।

राडिया से पीसी ने बरखा से बातचीत के बारे में भी सवाल पूछा और राडिया ने इसक जवाब दिया। सारे सवाल जवाब इस प्रकार हैं-

13.16 The Committee asked Ms Nira Radia whether the transcriptions of her conversation with various people, as published in the Outlook* and Open magazines were correct and authentic. Ms. Radia replied:

“We have not accepted any of these conversations”.

13.17 The Committee asked whether any notice had been served to the Editors of the two magazines. In reply, Mr. Radia stated:

“We have served a legal notice at the time they published the conversations, because, I believe, there is a tremendous amount of distortion in what they published and in the context in which they published the conversations and the real conversations. I believe that there is a tremendous amount of editing that has taken place in the conversations”.

13.18 The Committee then retorted that they were informed that nobody had legally contests or contradicted what was published in the magazines. In reply, Ms. Radia stated:

“If I can say, there are two aspects to this. When the conversations were made public, we did what we had to. We had to do it in terms of making at least protesting it as far as the magazine is concerned. As far as legal recourse available to us is concerned, we have time for the legal recourse”.

She further stated:

“..... Our priority at that time was to cooperate with the agencies because that was what was required of us to do. That is what we have done. As far as the magazines are concerned, I would imagine you are aware that my clients, who are the Tatas, have taken action and they moved the court on the larger issue of privacy in which the court itself has served notices to these magazines”.

13.19 Asked to state specifically whether any legal notice was served or not, Ms. Radia at last admitted:

“We served only a protest. We have not taken legal action”.

She further stated that she was intending to take legal action.

13.20 When the Committee pointed out several of her exact conversations on payment of bride for spectrum allocation of portfolio in the Union Cabinet, she simply replied that she did not recollect any thing.

13.21 The Committee then desired to know that after she was made witness by the CBI, the investigating agency must have played the tapes to her and whether she agreed with the conversation or contradicted it.□ In response Ms. Radia stated:

“Sir, the matter is sub-judice”.

She further stated:

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“I am glad that the investigating agencies went into the details. I am glad that they heard my conversations in the context that they needed to be heard. I am glad that they looked at documents and papers that were submitted in the context that had to be given and not taken out of context just because a magazine chose to carry something in a particular way. The magazine would have chosen to carry something in a particular way because we may not entertain the magazine. Today, the media is driven in a completely different way. It is driven bottom-line. It is sensationalist. So, we have taken a view to approach things slightly differently”.

13.22 The Committee then queried as to whether she meant to say that both the magazines were driven by some extraneous consideration.□ In reply, Ms. Radia submitted:

“I think, there is a conspiracy. I believe, there is a corporate conspiracy and I have seen it”.

Asked to point out the conspirators, she replied:

“Anybody who would not want competition”.

13.23 The Committee then desired to know whether she was performing a public relation service or actually lobbying for her client to get them certain advantages.□ The Committee also categorically asked whether carrying Tata’s personal had written letter to Mr. Karunanidhi was to part of her job, according to the mandate.□ In reply, Ms. Radia submitted:

“We are not lobbyists. It is not our job to lobby. Yes, it is our job to talk to various stakeholders, but that does not necessarily mean that we are lobbying for our client. We are simply communicating a point of view”.

On the issue of carrying Mr. Tata’s personal letter, she clarified:

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“...our role, as defined in our mandate, is to communicate our client’s point of view. Carrying the letter was to hand over the letter to Shri Karunanidhi on behalf of Shri Tata...”

13.24 Asked to state whether her conversation with Ms. Barkha Dutt did not give an impression that she was lobbying.□ In response, Ms. Radia stated:

“I think if you listen to the conversation in the context that they need to be listened to, everybody is discussing who is becoming what cabinet minister and what they are doing at that time. I do not think it was anything different from watching TV channels or watching new reports. Giving a particular point of view, we were simply asking information from journalists who were in touch with political people, who were on the political beat, who had information or who may know things because they have been reporting certain things in a particular manner that they seem to know things. All we were doing was just asking information from them”.

13.25 The Committee then asked whether the conversation did not indicate that Ms. Dutt was leading her up the garden path.□ Ms. Radia replied:

“I do not think that anyone was leading anyone up the garden path. I think, we were just having a conversation about who is becoming the Cabinet Minister and I was relaying to her the anxiety of what our client had lived through in the previous years, prior to that. I think all I was giving her was information as I knew it about a particular person and the chemistry that existed between my client...”.

13.26 On being asked to state categorically and truthfully as to whether the tapes were genuine or not, Ms. Radia submitted:

“At least the tapes that I have heard from the investigating agencies are genuine tapes”.

13.27 Asked to furnish the list of the conversations that were played to her by the CBI, Ms. Radia deposed:

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“Sir, we will write to the concerned agency and we will ask them, if this is permissible under law. We will also make a reference of the PAC”.

13.28 The Committee then asked Shri Ratan N. Tata whether he had heard the Radia Tapes. Shri Tata submitted in evidence in the affirmative. Asked to authenticate whether it was his voice in the conversation with Ms. Neira Radia, Shri Tata replied in the affirmative. He also submitted that it was absolutely the voice of Ms. Radia too. When asked to state whether the tapes were manipulated or doctored, Shri Tata replied in the negative....

13.35 When the Committee asked Shri Vir Sanghvi and Ms. Barkha Dutt, who also figured in the Radia tapes, about the authenticity of their conversation as published in the magazines, both of them in separate written communication stated that they had challenged, objected and protested against etc. But none of them had so far initiated any legal proceedings.

On the role of media and whistleblowers, the PAC says:

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The Committee note that the brazen irregularities in the allotment of 2G spectrum and UAS licences were unravelled by some investigative journalists much before the Radia tapes came into the public domain.

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A journalist who played a stellar role in exposing the irregularities, on being asked about the sources of his information, replied that the information was collected through the RTIs and from some public-spirited insiders.

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The publishers of the news magazines who first published the tapes, testified that they were actuated by their journalistic duty to reveal the truth and the irrepressible urge of public interest.

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The Committee appreciate the exemplary professional job done by these journalists who

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despite the imminent possibility of the serious hazards both physical and financial undertook the venture they embarked upon.

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When the Committee sought the response of a senior journalist about these taped conversations he candidly deposed that what they did was utterly unprofessional. He conceded that the journalists do speak to various sources as it is their job to fathom out and reveal the truth but they ought not get involved in lobbying for any one and certainly the taped conversations show that they transgressed the line of propriety – the 'lakshman rekha'. More so, senior journalists as they were, they knew when they made such a transgression....