

3711
April 18, 1972

The Director-General
Posts & Telegraphs,
Ministry of Communications
Parliament Street
New Delhi 1

Sir,

The Swatantra Party is a national political Party with separate autonomous Units of the Party at the State, District, City and Assembly Constituency levels. These Units while being part of the Party are autonomous administratively, financially and in their day to day functioning. In all matters other than those relating to Party policies, each Unit works independently and is responsible to its respective Committees.

A couple of years back, we at the National Headquarters of the Party received letters from the telephone authorities in Hyderabad (in Andhra Pradesh) and Surendranagar (in Gujarat) stating that certain bills in respect of telephones used by the Party's units in those two centres had not been paid and asking us to make payment. We were also informed that if we failed to do so, our own telephone connection at the National Headquarters would be disconnected. Similarly, the Bangalore telephone authorities wrote to our Mysore State Unit office in Bangalore that if the telephone dues of the Party in Hyderabad were not cleared, the telephone of our Party Unit in Bangalore would be disconnected.

In separate letters we explained to the telephone authorities in Hyderabad, Surendranagar and Bangalore that since the connections were given on direct applications by the Party Units concerned, and since on such matters the units were autonomous we could not be held responsible for non-payment of telephone bills. We added that the telephone authorities would be fully justified in disconnecting the telephones in Hyderabad and Surendranagar (though the latter was a temporary one) and proceeding against the defaulters in the normal course.

However, after a certain amount of correspondence, we paid the Hyderabad telephone arrears. Meanwhile, the telephone authorities in Surendranagar (in Gujarat) instituted a suit in the District Court at Surendranagar against us the National Headquarters of the Swatantra Party, jointly with Surendranagar District Unit of the Party for recovery of telephone arrears in connection with a temporary telephone to the District Unit of the Swatantra Party for the 1962 elections. Due to a failure in communication, we were not represented in the Surendranagar District Court with the result that the judgement was delivered in favour of the telephone authorities and we were asked to pay the arrears. And, in order to avoid further complications, we have done so.

But, in order to prevent any recurrence of such situations in future, we wish to state our position in regard to payment of telephone bills by the various units of the Swatantra Party :

- (a) Each Unit of our Party, whether at the State/District/City or Constituency level is autonomous in all administrative, financial and business matters.

- (b) Each Unit of the Party should be treated as a separate independent subscriber; and, any coercive action that may be found necessary to recover over-dues, should follow the same procedure as in the case of individual subscribers.
- (c) The National Headquarters located in Bombay undertakes responsibility for payment of only the following telephone connections :
- Tel. No. 251424 - which is the telephone at the National Headquarters of the Swatantra Party, and
- Tel. No. 521857 - which is the residential telephone of the Executive Secretary of the Swatantra Party at its National Headquarters.
- (d) Dues of other telephone connections listed anywhere else, whether in or outside Bombay or anywhere in India, in the name of Party Units should be collected from them without the National Headquarters being in any way involved or held responsible for payment in cases of default.
- (e) The National Headquarters can assume responsibility if, and only if, a particular telephone connection was given on the basis of an application made, or guarantee of payment given, by the National Headquarters itself.

We shall be grateful if you would kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter and also kindly issue necessary instructions to all your departments and offices concerned.

Yours faithfully,

sd/-

(Madhu Mehta)
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Bombay 1