

LOK SABHA

Thursday, April 10, 1969/
Chaitra 20, 1891 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Handling of Agricultural Produce in the
Co-operative Sector

*991. SHRI SITARM KESRAI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a scheme under the consideration of Government to entrust the work of marketing agricultural produce in the hands of the Cooperative Sector; and

(b) the quantity of agricultural produce handled by the Cooperative Sector at present, item-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) There is no specific scheme under consideration of the Central Government.

(b) During 1967-68 cooperative year, the cooperative sector handled agricultural produce valued at Rs. 462 crores of which foodgrains accounted for Rs. 163 crores and sugarcane Rs. 180 crores. The quantity of foodgrains handled by the cooperative sector during the year was 2.4 million tonnes. The quantity of sugarcane handled through sugar factories was 6.36 million tonnes. Other principal items handled were cotton valued approximately at Rs. 55 crores, oil-seeds Rs. 8 crores, fruits and vegetables Rs. 10 crores and plantation crops Rs. 15 crores.

श्री सीता राम केसरी : हमारे मंत्री महोदय ने अभी एक सेमिनार में अपने भाषण में कहा था कि चौथी पंच वर्षीय योजना के अन्तिम साल में 8 मिलियन टन ग्रेन और 5 मिलियन टन फल और कौटन का डील करेंगे। इन्होंने अपने भाषण में यह भी कहा था कि आप इस देश के अन्दर बहुत बड़ी संख्या में कोऑपरेटिव सोसायटीज स्थापित करेंगे, जिनके द्वारा आप ग्रेन का इतना बड़ा डील कर सकेंगे। अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप यह भी जानते हैं कि कोऑपरेटिव सोसायटीज के सम्बन्ध में भी उसी तरह के भ्रष्टाचार और गोलमाल की शिकायतें आप के पास भी हैं, हमारे पास भी हैं और लोगों के पास भी हैं। मैं सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि आप ग्रहस्थ किसानों से डायरेक्ट ग्रेन लेकर कोऑपरेटिव के द्वारा जो डील करेंगे, उस से देश के छोटे छोटे व्यापारी, दुकानदार, जिनकी संख्या करीबन 30 लाख है, इफेक्टिव होंगे, इन व्यापारियों के लिये आप क्या सोच रहे हैं? चौथी पंचवर्षीय योजना के अन्तिम साल तक जितना काम आप करना चाहते हैं, क्या आप जतना काम पूरा कर सकेंगे?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : By the end of the Fourth Plan it is proposed to handle about Rs. 900 crores worth of agricultural products through marketing societies. We also propose to identify certain societies in the intensive agricultural area and strengthen them so that they can take up the increased load that may be there in those areas. We have proposed to build strong marketing cooperative societies in those areas. Besides, the existing schemes will be continued in other areas also in the Fourth Plan. As I said we are trying to remove the structural weaknesses and also financial disabilities.....

SHRI RANGA : What about corruption?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : And other malpractices of the marketing societies and I may inform the hon. Member that we have so far more than 3000 primary marketing societies.

श्री सीता राम केसरी: आपने कोआपरेटिव मूवमेंट किसानों में चलाया, लेकिन फल कर गया, कोआपरेटिव फार्म न इंडस्ट्रीज़ में हैं और न किसानों में हैं। अब जो स्कीम आप लायेंगे उस से 30 लाख दुकानदार, जो किसानों से तिलहन लाते हैं, ग्राउण्ड-नट लाते हैं, घेन लाते हैं, फल लाते हैं और बाजारों में बेचते हैं, अब जब आप सीधे किसानों से सामान खरीदेंगे तो इन का काम बन्द हो जायगा। मैं स्वयं कोआपरेटिव मूवमेंट का समर्थक हूँ, लेकिन ये जो 30 लाख दुकानदार अनएपलायड हो जायेंगे, इनके लिये आपके पास क्या योजना है, ये कैसे एम्पलायड होंगे ?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : There is a large scope for private traders also. But this question refers to marketing societies and the amount of agricultural produce handled by the marketing societies is quite small still. Therefore, my friend need not have any apprehension about the displacement of private traders or private people in this regard. So far as the working of the marketing societies is concerned we have already proposed various steps to the State Government and cooperatives so that in the Fourth plan these societies may be consolidated and strengthened.

SHRI RANGA: In view of the admitted prevalence of inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption and partisanship and politics in the sphere, especially of co-operative marketing, where it is much more difficult to manage than in case of a cooperative credit society, may I know whether Government have considered the advisability of helping the State Governments with whatever service capacity the Government of India have developed to

ensure better efficiency and better working on a non-partisanship basis, of these co-operative societies, and also seeing to it that they would not be given a monopoly, but they would really be expected to compete with private traders for better production and produce ?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : We have suggested a number of steps to the State Government so that these marketing societies may be strengthened. Among the steps that we have suggested to them are steps like these; we have told them to start what are called promotional and assessment cell at the apex level. We also give them subsidy for creating cadres for managerial and other posts and a pool of key personnel. We participate in all these measures and more so that marketing societies may become viable and they may function more effectively in future.

SHRI RANGA : The other part of my question was whether they will function as competitors with private enterprise so that producers will be able to get better prices, while these two will be competing one with the other.

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (SHRI JAGJIWAN RAM): We have taken action in this regard, where they are regulated markets as in Punjab and Haryana. 80 per cent is taken by the Food Corporation or the Government agency and the cooperative marketing society and 20 per cent is left for the private trade. And the private traders also participate in the Auction. Therefore the interests of the farmers are protected. But apart from the two commodities wheat and rice, as the House is aware, there are other foodgrains which are free and that is a protection to the farmer as there is competition between these two sectors.

SHRI R. BARUA: May I know whether Government is aware that lack of storage accommodation and facilities and inefficient managerial personnel are the main reasons why we face such difficulties in respect of the cooperative marketing

societies? What does the Government propose to do in this regard?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : About storage facilities, it is true that the facilities are small. We have schemes to give subsidy and loans to marketing societies to start godown facilities. We also give assistance for creation of cadres so that the societies may be independent of Government control.

श्री जगदीश्वर यादव : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जो सहकारी समितियां क्रय-विक्रय के लिये कायम की गई हैं, मैं देखता हूँ कि उन से किसानों को कोई मुनाफा नहीं हो रहा है। ये सब चोर समितियां हैं, चोर सहकारी संस्थायें हैं। इन के सुपरवायडजर और इंस्पेक्टर इनका सारे का सारा मुनाफा खा जाते हैं, किसानों के नाम से दूसरों को कर्ज दे देते हैं और इस तरह से बह रुपया अपने यहां रख लेते हैं। इन से किसान ज्यादा कर्जदार होते जा रहे हैं और उनको कुछ भी मुनाफा नहीं मिलता है। इन संस्थाओं से किसानों को कोई फायदा नहीं हो रहा है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि सरकार इन के बारे में क्या सोच रही है।

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : If there are malpractices in the co-operative society, the law is there. The State Government has to take steps in this regard and the Registrar has got ample powers to deal with the situation..... (*Interruptions*). If there are specific instances of embezzlement or misappropriation or any other malpractice and if the hon. Member draws our attention to them, certainly we will take action..... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBIAH : Of course, the Minister has been out-lining many steps which have been taken to strengthen co-operatives in order to serve the public better by giving better prices to the producers and making available goods at a reasonable price to the consu-

mers and trying, as far as possible, to avoid taking more profits. In this process, may I know whether a time has come when, with the progressive expansion of these marketing societies, the small traders and people who are engaged in these things have to go out of their profession? If that is so, does the Government envisage some scheme by which they can as well take the talents and services of these people so that there may be an integrated programme? If these people could be absorbed in them, the marketing societies can be better organised, strengthened and run on efficient lines in which case they can serve the public better.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : One of the goals of these marketing societies is to involve the primary growers in these societies so that they get adequate price for their produce. We want to eliminate the middlemen. If there are petty traders who are going to be eliminated from the field as a result of the marketing operations of these societies, then there are various other avenues open to these traders. But I say that the main purpose of the marketing societies is to provide various services and particularly better prices for the produce of the primary growers.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBIAH : My question was in what manner you will be able to utilise the services of these people who will otherwise be thrown out of their profession?

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY : That time has not come... (*Interruptions*). In future, if such a thing arises, then I suggest there are various other cooperative activities that they can take up in villages. But the essential purpose of giving better price to the primary growers cannot in any way be given up. There are various co-operative institutions which these traders can join.

Pak anti-India propaganda televised from Lahore

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*992. **DR. SUSHILA NAYAR :**
SHRI K. LAKKAPPA :
SHRI A. SREEDHARAN :