

(f) the targets fixed for the generation of employment for the drought affected persons, State/Union Territory-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (f). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

Drought conditions in some parts of the States of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur and Rajasthan have been reported by the State Governments.

2. According to these reports, crop areas to the extent of 8.12 lakh hectares in Karnataka, 1.12 lakh hectares in Kerala, 27.42 lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh, 58.60 lakh hectares in Maharashtra and 77.99 lakh hectares in Rajasthan have been affected. The Government of Gujarat has reported an estimated loss of 10.42 lakh MT in the production of Kharif foodgrains, 11.71 lakh MT kharif oil seeds and 7.37 lakh MT of Cotton. Government of Manipur has estimated a crop damage of Rs. 148.00 crores. No loss of livestock has been reported by any of these States.

3. The State Governments of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur and Rajasthan have submitted memoranda seeking additional Central assistance to the tune of Rs. 650.00 crores, Rs. 50.00 Crores, Rs. 138.47 crores, Rs. 295.00 crores, Rs. 789.41 crores, Rs. 3.15 crores and Rs. 171.91 crores respectively for undertaking relief measures.

4. Under the existing scheme of financing relief expenditure, the State Governments are required to undertake relief measures in the wake of natural calamities, using the corpus of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). The Central Government need provide additional assistance only in the case of calamities of 'rare severity', warranting handling at the national level. The requests from

the above State Governments for additional Central assistance in the wake of drought conditions have been considered in the light of the existing scheme for financing relief expenditure.

5. Central Teams were deputed to the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan to assess the drought situation and the quantum of additional Central assistance required to be provided in the present framework. As the drought situation in the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra is not considered of 'rare severity', it has been decided that no additional Central assistance is required to be provided to these States. The report of the Central Team which visited Rajasthan and the memorandum from Government of Manipur which have been received a few days back are under consideration.

6. In order to augment the resources of the State Governments, towards relief measures, Government of India however has sanctioned advance releases of the central share of the CRF and certain other plan schemes. The entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund for 1992-93 amounting to Rs. 63.25 crores and Rs. 33.00 crores to Gujarat and Maharashtra respectively and 3 instalments amounting to Rs. 17.43 crores and Rs. 20.81 crores to Kerala and Madhya Pradesh respectively have been released in advance.

7. On the basis of reports received, the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan are implementing schemes to generate employment on an average to 4.22 lakhs, 9.94 lakhs, 7.00 lakhs and 6.00 lakhs persons per day respectively.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am really sorry to say that the reply to this important question has been given in a very casual manner. The question is very specific but the reply is given in such a manner that even all the Union Territories, all the States, which have been affected, have not been properly mentioned here.

Secondly even the loss of the crops, which has been mentioned, is also not in accordance with that. The magnitude of the problem of the drought as reported in the newspapers is a big one. Seventy million population of this country has been affected. Agro-economic States are also affected in it. As per the newspaper report Kharif crops of about Rs. 3,000 crores and Cash crops of about Rs. 5,000 crores have been affected. Eighteen million hectares of agricultural land has also been affected. The hon. Minister has not even mentioned the names of all the States which have been very badly affected, particularly he has not mentioned about West Bengal which also suffered on account of jute crops etc. Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have been mentioned. (*Interruptions*)

I would like to know from the hon. Minister that when the magnitude of the drought and suffering of the people is so much, what action the Government is taking. I may mention that on 18th May more than 30 top agricultural scientists met in Delhi and suggested to the Government to combat with this drought situation effectively. If it is so, I would like to know what are these suggestions and what action the Government has taken to combat this drought situation.

I want to know whether the drought is due to poor water management and if it is so what the Government is going to do. Will the Ministry of Agriculture co-ordinate with the Ministry of Water Resources and take effective steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): We have given figures and facts in aspect of the States which were highly affected like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Manipur, and Kerala. We have given all the details about it. (*Interruptions*). All these States which sought assistance or where the teams have been sent from the Center have been mentioned here. All those States which came here with representation have been mentioned. I can enquire about

Bihar and rest of the States. If you want, I will get back to you. (*Interruptions*). I have got the information about the States which sought assistance. (*Interruptions*).

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Why have the names of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar been omitted in this list? (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Even if you listen or not, the question remains. We provide for Calamity Relief Fund. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL: Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala are there, but not Bihar, why is it so? (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Before deciding anything, you have to listen. First listen and then we will see. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL: Sir, the whole country is in the grip of drought. It is not the question of Gujarat, Kerala and Maharashtra alone, it is a question of the whole country.

[*English*]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The Ninth Finance Commission has given full autonomy to States in relief assistance. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, how the hon. Minister forgot Bihar and Uttar Pradesh? Has he got no information of drought in these States?

[English]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We had calculated the money that is awair with us according to the ten years' average and allocated to each State in four instalments. It is up to the States to distribute that money, use that money for rehabilitation, for any relief work or for anything which they like under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of the State. That is what it is. If there is any other sort of a Commission which provides, as we used to do before, then it could have been otherwise. That is the simple reason.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Manoranjan Bhakta...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Not like this...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not a question on Bihar, this is a question on all States. If you are interested, you can ask a question on Bihar. Do not shout like this without reading...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down now.

[Translation]

SHRI BRISHIN PATEL: He should collect the data and present it the next day.

MR. SPEAKER: If you have to ask, you may ask. You have not read the question and you go on speaking.

[English]

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement in para 5 says: "The Central teams were deputed to the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan to assess the drought

situation and the quantum of additional Central assistance required." I would like to know why central teams were not deputed to all the affected States. The second point is that in view of the huge magnitude of the problem, will the government consider bringing under insurance cover all the drought-prone areas which have been identified so far, and if not identified, will the Government like to identify them and then bring them under the insurance cover so that the farmers will be benefited? Part (b) of my question is that in most of the cases we have seen that...(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Let it be a question please. It is becoming a speech. We have covered only two questions in twenty minutes.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: I am asking a specific question that the relief assistance is normally paid much after the incident happens. So, I would like to know whether any methodology will be evolved to see that when the drought is continuing, immediately relief is provided to the affected people. I remember, in my constituency, in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in 1989 cases the money is not yet disbursed. So, that is what I would like to know.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, we sent teams only to those States which made a request for that. That is why I mentioned these States only because they have sought Central assistance. Secondly, what we provide is simple in this formula. Time and again I have given full explanation for that after the Ninth Finance Commission, there is no money left with the Centre to provide for. As a matter of fact, we have provided additional foodgrains for drought affected states. For Gujarat we allocated a wheat increase by five thousand tonnes and for Madhya Pradesh we allowed 7000, tonnes of rice. In the same way, we allowed to Manipur about one thousand tonnes. To Karnataka we allowed 23,500 tonnes, to Rajasthan we allowed 26,500 tonnes of wheat under RPPS and to Maharashtra we allowed about 7,000

tonnes of wheat and 7000 tonnes of rice under RPPS Like this we have given additional assistance... (*Interruptions*). Just listen... (*Interruptions*).

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: What about Uttar Pradesh? What in the government doing for Uttar Pradesh?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: You do not care to listen. You will know if only if you listen.

[*English*]

Those States which have approached the Centre, we sent teams to them only and not to any other State. We can give Central Assistance only to those States where a national calamity is declared, and national calamity is declared only in extra-ordinary circumstances. So, that is the problem. No national calamity was declared in those States. And I have nothing more left with me in the Centre. So, the only thing we can do is to tell the State Governments that we can give an advance release of this Calamity Relief Fund, which we have done in the case of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and in so many other cases, We are still ready to do whatever we can. (*Interruptions*)

DR. AMRIT LAL KALIDAS PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not happy with the reply given by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. It is totally wrong. It is reported that there is drought in some parts of Gujarat. I come from Gujarat. The whole of Gujarat, excepting one district, is affected by drought. To my knowledge this wrong reporting of drought situation is because of adoption of the out-dated method of wrong 'Anavari' method, which is a 100-year old method of ascertaining the drought situation.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

DR. AMRIT LAL KALIDAS PATEL: My question is that whether the Government would consider to change the old, out-dated

method of 'Anavari' to ascertain the drought situation. The whole of Gujarat except one district has been affected. It is mentioned here that some parts of Gujarat is affected by drought which is wrong.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I may submit that our media of information is only State Government. We have got no other agency with us. We have to rely upon them. Whatever they provide to us, we provide to you.

DR. AMRIT LAL KALIDAS PATEL: What about the 'Anavari' method?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: It is for the State Government to change it. It is their domain and they have to do it. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Patel, you cannot go on doing like this. You asked a question and the reply has been given. I have called Shri Nitish Kumar.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Agriculture has just stated in his reply that help is being provided only to those State Governments which put forth a demand. I would like to know from the Government whether the Agriculture Ministry has a separate Department or any agency to know the state of rain and to know the movement of monsoon? Is the Central Government able to know through them as to which parts of the country experience less rain or no rain at all? Whether you are interested to take steps or not by giving an advance thought, in the States from where the report is coming that there is no rain, meaning thereby that the Kharif crop will be destroyed, particularly in the States mentioned by you. Moreover, more or less the same situation prevails in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the kharif crop is badly affected there for want of rains. In his reply the hon. Minister has said- (*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER: There should be no comments on his reply.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: I would like to know regarding that reply. The hon. Minister has referred to it again and again that a Calamity Relief Fund has been raised on the basis of the 9th Finance Commission and money from that very fund is being released. A fund of 32 crore has been allocated for Bihar. Every citizen of this country is well aware that every year there is devastation by flood and drought and Calamity Relief Fund of Rs. 32 crores means Central assistance of Rs. 24 crore which is just not sufficient to combat such calamities. Keeping in view the present state of affairs. I would like to know from the Government whether it would make any term appraisal to raise the amount of the Calamity Relief Fund so that maximum help may be provided to those States which are getting lesser amount of money whether the Government contemplates to take some measure in advance keeping in view the bad state of crop in the States from where reports are received as also in the States which have not sent the report.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we do keep obtaining information, but the point is that the needy must approach... (*Interruptions*)... as regards the second question I have full sympathy for you in the sense that an amount of 35 crore of rupees is not sufficient. But what is the solution? The only solution is to change the very system formed by the Finance Commission. The Tenth Finance Commission is constituted, if you want to make some changes in it, because it was the States which impressed upon the centre that we should transfer this responsibility to them, because that money come from States. The Centre agreed to it and transferred the responsibility to the States. Now what is the solution when it goes against them. Now the Tenth Finance Commission has met again. I also support you here because we receive applications seeking help by particular States but generally we do not have funds and merely sending a team does not serve any propose.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Agriculture has said that he has his own limitations

because the States have already taken their share of funds from the Centre. When there is more crisis, the problems also multiply but if the question of States is put aside, there is a drought in the whole country and the department of Meteorology has not been able for the last seven to ten days to forecast whether the monsoon would arrive or not. The whole country is in the grip of drought, a severe famine is to break and a crisis of drinking water is at hand. Sufficient wheat has not been stored. Is the Government of India framing some emergency scheme or it will wake up when the people would start starving and the news of crisis will start pouring in from States? So, the hon. Minister of Agriculture should not wait for the Tenth Finance Commission and keeping in view the weather and other conditions, schemes should be launched to awaken the whole nation to face any crisis to come. Is there any plan to collect money from States and the Centre to face that situation or should we wait for one or two years for the report of Tenth Finance Commission. Till then the Government will wait to see people dying of hunger and thirst?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I fully agree with the views expressed by Chandra Shekharji and I am much more concerned over the fact that if the monsoon doesn't arrive in time, it can worsen the condition of our farmers... Certainly it will arrive, but nevertheless we are having detailed discussions to prevent any calamity. We are competent enough to take remedial steps both at the Central level and in co-operation with the States.

SHRI BRAHMANAND MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, today the largest State of the country, i.e. Uttar Pradesh is in the grip of a drought and I would like the hon. Minister of Agriculture to inform whether the Uttar Pradesh Government has apprised the Centre of the actual drought situation in the State or whether it has sought any financial assistance from the Centre? I request you to give a specific answer in this regard.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: When it is done, I will let you know.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: You are also aware of last year's drought in Maharashtra. The State Government took a decision last year to provide employment to 1,65,000 persons on daily wages in my district and there alone Rs. 65 crore was spent on self-employment schemes. The State Government also incurred an additional expenditure of Rs. 10 crore on drinking water and other problems. The State had sought Central assistance to the tune of Rs. 790 crore. A Central team visited the State, including my district to assess the situation and it presented its report, but with deep regret, I quote from it:

[English]

"As the drought situation in the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra is not considered of 'rare severity', it has been decided that no additional Central assistance is required to be provided to these States."

[Translation]

Now work is being provided to 1,65,000 people in one District under the Employment Guarantee Scheme and the State Government has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 75 crores in another district. Despite that the Central team observes that the situation is not considered of 'rare severity' and it is not serious.

MR. SPEAKER: Please come to the question.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please try to understand that the situation there is very serious. I don't want to deliver a long speech here but to express our agony.

MR. SPEAKER: If you do not ask the question, you may not get a reply.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Mr. Speaker,

Sir, this question was raised during the last session also and on our demand the Government despatched a Central team. Now the team, has returned and it considers that the situation is not of 'rare severity'.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I would like to know whether the Government will change the definition of the term 'severity'? If it proposes to do so, then is the Central Government prepared to review the State Government's plea for an assistance of Rs. 800 crore?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, all these matters are decided by the Cabinet. We haven't even considered the plea of Andhra Pradesh yet.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister give a detailed statement on the monsoon situation particularly, the reasons for delay, the extent of delay, its fallout, its impact on agriculture and the steps proposed to be taken to tackle the acute shortage of drinking water in many areas? The people are not getting any message of hope or solace from the reply being given to the questions raised here. Will the hon. Minister give an assurance to the House, that the Government is taking steps and will take further steps to tackle the situation, arising out of the delay in the onset of monsoon? But, the Government is not giving any such assurance. This would lead to famine conditions across the country. The nation is facing serious crisis and Chandra Shekharji has rightly said that it is also an important aspect. If the Government doesn't send right signals of hope and assurance, the situation will have its repercussions as rumours are being spread and the traders will take advantage of it. The people will also start hoarding foodgrains in their houses. It would be most unfortunate, if a negative message is conveyed through the reply to this question.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is nothing in it which should cause anxiety. We are very much alert and working