

Mr. Speaker. Sir, irrigation facilities play a vital role in increasing the agricultural production. The farmers belonging to SC and ST rarely come in the benefited Zone of big dams as after acquiring their lands they are allotted lands out of the benefited zones. Likewise few farmers get benefit from I.R.D.P. programme. Will the Government consider to provide 100 per cent subsidy for pumps and bore-wells to the farmers belonging to SC & ST.

SHRI ARVIND NETAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we provide 50 per cent subsidy at present.

SHRI TARA SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as it has been stated that water management has an important place in increasing the agricultural production. The areas where deep tubewells, are being used to carry water to other areas whether it is good for those areas or not from the point of view of increasing the production? If such points are brought to the notice of the Government, will the Government take action in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER : Disallowed.

Van Gujjars

*945 MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to evacuate Van Gujjars living for generation in the forest cover of Rajaji National Park, Dehradun;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether these Van Gujjars have requested the Government to hand-over the management of Rajaji Park instead of shifting them;

(d) if so, the extent to which Government has conceded their demand; and

(e) if not, the steps taken by the Government to rehabilitate them properly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (e) . A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The Gujjars are not permanent settlers of Rajaji National Park. They are nomadic people who have been seasonally migrating between high altitudes of Himalayan pastures and the foothill forests annually for generations.

The degradation of the ecosystem due to excessive lopping of trees for Gujjars' cattle trampling of grass and other rare and threatened plants by the cattle, and similar other impacts of increased human and cattle production in Rajaji National Park, has adversely affected the areas around gujjars camps and has resulted in problems like heavy soil erosion, silting up of water channels resulting in flash floods in rainy season and acute water scarcity in other seasons, loss of natural fodder for animals leading to crop raiding by elephants, and increased conflict between wildlife and human-being thus affecting other communities living around. The bio-diversity of there has been seriously affected.

In order to protect the forests and wildlife in the Rajaji National Park and at the same time to improve the quality of life of Gujjars and to bring them in the main stream of social life, and prevent their exploitation by milk vendors in urban areas, a scheme of rehabilitation of the Gujjars was formulated by U.P. Government with the approval of the Gujjars. There have been reports in the Press about some people inciting the Gujjars not to move from the Park. However, the Government of India have not received any request from the Gujjars to hand-over to them the management of the Rajaji National Park.

It may be mentioned that the Rio De Janeiro Conference has recognised the fact that loss of bio-diversity has continued to occur from habitat destruction, over-harvesting and introduction of cattle in the habitat and that urgent and decisive action is needed to conserve and maintain gene pool, species and ecosystem. In order to rehabilitate the Gujjars properly, an areas of 80 ha. of Pathari forest has been earmarked for rehabilitating the Gujjars populations form Rajaji National Park. 512 houses with cattle and fodder sheds have been built where they will be provided with amenities like water and electricity, land for growing fodder, school facilities community hall etc. The Gujjars are being persuaded to move to the Pathari Colony.

[*Translation*]

MAJOR GEN. (RETD) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the problem of Gujjars in Rajaji National Park is aggravating and it has taken a serious turn. The reply given by the hon. Minister shows that this problem is not being tackled in serious manner. Often reports appear in newspapers in this regard. He has stated in his reply that an effort is being made to remove them form there. Under the policy of Government, the people, who are displaced are not consulted. Today buildings worth Rs. 3 crore have been built in Pathari along but Gujjars are not ready to shift there. I want to know whether the Government is framing any policy in this regard. Whenever the government wants to shift people from the forests, it must consult them so as to avoid any agitation and the Government do not suffer any loss on this accounts as I have told you that there is a loss of Rs. 3 crore. Secondly, have the Gujjars told the hon. Minister that they would like to remain in hilly areas instead of Pathari Colony in Dehradun?

[*English*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Sir, National Park is an area of higher status of protection that can be provided under the Wild Life Protection Act. The

right to graze can exist in a Wild Life Sanctuary while no such right can be allowed to exist in a National Park.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Member has asked a question whether any discussion is held prior to setting up of a National Park. Previously when such Sanctuaries and National Parks were set up situation was quite different but now due to the population as well as the development pressure whenever there is a proposal of setting up of a National Park or a Sanctuary the concerned State Government and the local people are also consulted. This is true that when a sanctuary is declared as a National Park, it may create some difficulties to the local people. So far as the question of Rajaji Park is concerned, the U.P. Government had prepared a scheme in consultation with the Gujjars living there and for making alternative arrangements for the local residents, an amount of Rs. 3 crore was spent for their rehabilitation. Some people even objected to it. Now a dialogue is going on with them so that they may accept the previous agreement and shift to the houses constructed for them and their cattle.

MAJ. GEN (RETD) BHUWAN CHANDRA KHANDURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister in reply to my question has stated that he has not received any proposal of community management of forest from the Gujjars. I want to submit that during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in which the hon. Ministier had played a good role, a discussion on community management forest was held and accepted. As you know that like this area, there is a problem of fuel, fodder and grazing in hilly areas also. If good concepts like this emerge it will facilitate the people there. What is happening today. Illegal de forestation creates problems for the people. I want to know whether you have discussed the concept of community management of forest at the national level. Are you going to adopt such policy at national level, if so, give the details in this regard.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: Mr. Speaker, Sir,

Community Management of Forest and Community Management of National Parks are two different things. The hon. Member has rightly said that during the Rio de Janeiro summit it was mentioned that involvement and participation of community is must for our forests. Merely rules or officers or law for that matter are inadequate to protect the forests. The subject of the management of National Park is technical and the main issue in this regard is concerning Rajaji National Park. There is a problem of overgrazing, which poses a problem for the Gujjars living there and production of bio-mass goes down. A policy of community participation has been prepared and a circular in this regard has been sent to all State Governments. There is no scheme regarding Joint Management of National Parks.

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS : I have seen that along with Gujjars, tribals are also living in the National Park. Every Indian has a fundamental right to live, so when you displace them from the park why do you rehabilitate them compulsory and provide employment to them..(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER: Mr. Das, this question only relates to Rajaji Park.

SHRI ANADI CHARAN DAS : I am also referring to the same. Why do not you provide employment opportunities to the people living there, so that they may lead their life in a better way. These people, whether they are in a park or rehabilitated by the forest administration, are thrown to such a place where life becomes difficult for them. Now what does the Government intend to do for them? The Government says that it intends to rehabilitate them, would you give details in this regard?

SHRI KAMAL NATH : There is a difference between a sanctuary and a National Park. So far as the question of sanctuary is concerned, there is no restriction on the people living there or on the outskirts of it until there is a settlement

in this regard, there is no restriction on their existing rights. So far as question of National Park is concerned, it is not like as the se are protected areas. I have said in the beginning...(Interruptions) we have received some complaints regarding some sanctuaries declared as National Parks but it will be our efforts in the future that only after consulting the affected parties we will make declarations.

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, than you for providing me an opprotunity for the first time. The Dudhwa National Park falls in an Assembly segment of the Parliamentary Constituency...

MR. SPEAKER : This question is about Rjaji Park. You may read it.

DR.G.L. KANAUIA : Sir, the hon. Minister has said about the problems of Gujjars. Dharus and elephants and I also would like to ask question relating to it. The hon. Minister has said that Gujjars is migrating community, it is true but they have been living there for centuries and now they are being evacuated form there, so I would like to know about the scheme of the Government to habilitate them. Secondly, the hon. Ministers has mentioned in his reply about the problems of elephants so in this regard I would like to say that last year about 100-150 elephants came to Dudhwa National Park and destroyed the entire crops, so I would like to know the steps being taken by the Government in this regard? It is an adjoining area to Nepal.

SHRI KAMAL NATH : I will tell the hon. Member about the Dudhwa National Park also but first of all I would like to say about Rajaji Park that as per the record, there were 512 Gujjars families in that area. They do not have their permanent houses and they migrate from one place to another along with their cattle. A site was selected and houses with a cost of Rs. three crore were constructed there with their consent to that they may live there permanently. Besides, some nearby area were also identified for

grazing their cattle but due to one reason or the other, they have rejected the scheme. The Supreme Court has stated in its judgement that Gujjars have to accept this agreement. Efforts are being made to habilitate them with their consent. So far as the question of Dudhwa is concerned, we have received so many complaints about the crops being raided by elephants. Such complaints have also been received from Assam. If the hon. Member has any more information about it, he may tell us.

Railway Sleepers

946 SHRI RAMPRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the priority proposed to be given for the selection of different types of sleepers for railway tracks;

(b) the norms followed in the purchase of railway sleepers;

(c) the value of the railway sleepers purchased during each of the last three years;

(d) whether wooden sleepers of superior quality were purchased from the neighboring countries in the past; and

(e) the steps taken to ensure that track renewal work undertaken on planned basis is as per norms laid down?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IS THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA):

(a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) Railways select the sleepers on the basis of traffic density carried by the particular

section and speed. For sections carrying traffic of 10 GMT per annum and more, Prestressed concrete sleepers are normally used whereas in sections having lower traffic density, Steel/Cast Iron sleepers are preferred because of problems of machine maintenance.

In all other cases of lighter traffic density and slower speeds, Cast Iron sleepers are being used. Use of new wooden sleepers has completely been stopped.

(b) Based on the detailed planning, the annual requirement of different types of sleepers is assessed. Procurement norms are as follows:

i) Steel Trough Sleepers are purchased from Durgapur Steel Plant, a Govt. of India Undertaking at mutually agreed rates.

ii) Cast Iron sleepers are procured from established manufacturers, more than 70 in number at present, by tender system.

iii) Prestressed concrete sleepers are purchased from Plants already established. For requirement in areas where established plants are not available, new plants are established in private sector generally through open tenders and sometimes through limited tenders as per the established procedure.

iv) Wooden Specials are being procured only from the Govt. Corporations Agencies at the rates fixed by the Ministry of Environment & Forest. Allotment to various agencies corporations is also made by the Ministry of R&F.

Fresh intake of wooden track sleepers has already been stopped w.e.f. 1.11.91 and intake of wooden specials for turnouts and bridge is also being reduced progressively.

(c) Approximate value of purchase for different types is as follows:-