

**LOK SABHA**

Tuesday, May 9, 1995/ Vaisakha 19, 1917 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : Sir, today is the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism. A reference from the Chair should be made as this is a very important event.

MR. SPEAKER : You discuss this between the Leaders and then come back, and we will see about it; but not like that, please.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Sir, nobody will object to it. Everybody will support it.

MR. SPEAKER : It is better if you take everybody into confidence.

(Interruptions)

11.02 hrs.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**Support Price of Foodgrains**

\*481. SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal under consideration to increase the support prices of various foodgrains particularly in the case of wheat and rice during the year 1995-96; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the increases proposed therein?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) and (b). There is no proposal under consideration to increase minimum support prices already announced for Rabi crops viz., Wheat, Barley, Gram, Rapeseed/Mustard and Safflower of 1994-95 to be marketed in 1995-96 season. The price policy for Kharif crops viz., Paddy, Coarse cereals, Pulses, Oilseeds, Cotton and Tobacco of 1995-96 is under the consideration of the Government.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been the policy of Government to take into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural costs and prices, the views of the State Governments and different ministries of the Union Government and

other relevant factors which in the opinion of the Government are important to determine the support price before declaring the support price of the agricultural products. But increase of Rs. 10/- in the support price of wheat is not sufficient in comparison to the increase in the prices of fertilizers, seeds, electricity and water. In the year 1993-94 the price of wheat was Rs. 350/- per quintal and the support price announced in 1994-95 for wheat and the procurement in 1995-96 will be made at Rs. 360 per quintal. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether before determining the support price of wheat the increase in the prices of fertilizers, the labour put by the farmer and cost of other important inputs were kept in mind or whether ignoring all these things, you considered that the increase of Rs. 10 in the support price of wheat will be sufficient for the farmers because they will not start any agitation. I would like detailed information in this regard.

SHRI ARVIND NETAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the points raised by the hon. Member about increase in the prices of fertilizers, electricity and power are definitely considered by the commission for Agricultural costs and prices while recommending the increase in the prices of agricultural production and the Central and State Government after considering these recommendations take decision in the matter. It is not correct to say that Agricultural Prices Commission does not consider these factors.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Member may recollect that this question has been replied to many a times in the past also and I have given full details in this regard. I am prepared with your permission, Sir, to inform the hon. Member that all the relevant factors have been considered, viz. the cost of land, prices of seed, water, electricity, insecticides, labour and depreciation while taking the decision on the support prices of agricultural products. It may be noted that our Government have done a lot for the farmers during the last three years. We have given the rate of Rs. 135 per quintal. We have given Rs. 100/- for coarse grain; Rs. 100/- for maize Rs. 280/- for pulses like moong and urad; Rs. 300 for sunflower seed; Rs. 250 for soyabeans; Rs. 450/- for cotton. This was never done before...(Interruptions). All this has been done in accordance with the cost of the production. How do you say like this has any body done so before?

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : How much the prices of electricity, water, fertilizers have been increased during the last three years including the labour?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Whatever has been done in incomparable and was never done in the past and nobody else will be able to do in future...(Interruptions). Every thing from 'A' to 'Z' has been taken into account...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Agriculture Minister has become rather emotional

and has said that none has done such a good thing before and will not be able to do in future also. Support price of wheat in 1991-92 was Rs. 275/-

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Rs. 215.

SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL : You have shown Rs. 275/- in the year 1991-92. What was the price of fertilizers at that time. You are not taking this into consideration. The support price of wheat has not been increased in proportion to the increase in the prices of all these things. If the cost of the labour of the farmer is included all your figures would prove wrong. I will not be wrong to say that you do not consider the cost of labour of the farmer. A class IV employee gets Rs. 1500/- per month as salary. But you even do not consider the labour of the farmer so much. I would request the hon. Minister to give special attention to the agriculture. Agriculture is the base of the country. Being a farmer you are a specialist in agriculture. If you challenge that nobody can do whatever you have done for the farmers then all the farmers of the country will become hopeless, we all will become hopeless. I would request you to please ensure that the concession which were being given to the farmer till 1991-92 are restored to him. Only then I will accept your claim.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an old saying that only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches. He does not know the difficulties of the agriculturists. How farmer faces the scorching heat, severe cold, drought, floods etc. I have considered all these things including water and fertilizers ....(Interruptions).. Why do you disturb? Please listen to me at least as a courtesy?

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : How much it has been increased during the last three years?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : First listen to me. It is not good to speak before listening to others. Every thing is done according to rules. So far as implements are concerned, seeds are concerned; I too want that and I shall do that. I will put all my efforts in this regard.

SHRI UMRAO SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, adequate and sufficient price for superfine quality of paddy was not given to the farmers in Punjab last year. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether Government is considering to give sufficient price for superfine quality of paddy to the farmers? The present crop of wheat is not being lifted in the markets because of shortage of storage capacity. I want to know whether it is in the notice of the hon. Minister that farmers are facing the difficulties due to non lifting the wheat from the markets?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is a question of prices, not of storage.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : What should I reply to this question?

[English]

SHRI SOBHANANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : Through you, I would like to raise a very important question. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, while computing the cost of production, is ignoring the element of risk involved in agricultural production because of floods, drought, cyclones, hailstorms, pests and diseases. Several times the crop is lost. Sometimes it is totally lost. Now it is a fact that for the last three to four years, the prices have been slightly better because of some changes in the formula that was made when the previous Government was there. I am happy about it. But, at the same time, particular element of risk is ignored. That is not doing justice to the farmers.

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask a simple question whether the element of risk is involved in computing the price or not. Otherwise, it becomes very complicated.

SHRI SOBHANANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : I am not extending it. The other thing is in respect of industrial products the transport cost also will be taken into consideration whereas in the case of agricultural production, the transport charges require to take the inputs to the farm and the agricultural production to the markets. That aspect is also not taken care of.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether things will be taken care of.

MR. SPEAKER : Now you have asked the question. You sit down and get the reply. Please sit down now. It is a very good question - the risk element and the transport cost.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : In every walk of life, there is risk. There is a couplet in Urdu :

Zindgi Kashmakashon Ka Hajoom Hai

Zindgi Hai Tau...(Interruptions)

[English]

We are evolving a new formula. There is our insurance policy up to Rs. 10,000/-. We are going to implement a new policy which will be comprehensive for all crops as in other cases of life.

SHRI SOBHANANDREESWARA RAO VADDE : For the last two years you are saying it. But it is not being implemented in any way.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : It should be a workable thing. We are trying to find out a policy without any lacuna. I am also trying to contact and discuss with experts in every walk of life - agriculturists and insurance people, but still it is in the Cabinet Committee.

MR. SPEAKER : If you don't mind, there are two element - risk element and the cost of transport. Will it be considered while computing the price?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : As I replied to the hon. Member, from A to Z we consider everything and expedite it.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE : These are not under consideration.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : The hon. Minister's reply is that the price fixed is cost plus. All the elements of costs are taken into account and then a certain percentage of profit is calculated.

I am a little really surprised by that answer because there are several other elements which the farmers as well as the scientists in agriculture science are persistently asking for. One such thing is that if you want to induce a change in crop pattern, then you are to have a shift in relative prices among the crops. Do you take into account? That is number one because, on the one hand, we see that despite per capita reduction in foodgrains, we have a bulging stock. I would like to know whether or not this is taken into account.

Secondly, there is a persistent demand that the terms of trade between agriculture and industry should change and, therefore, not only the cost, but the cost of living as between the industrial sector and the agricultural sector should also be built into the price structure. I would like to know whether that also is done.

The third thing is, when you talked about cost, you just mentioned the outlay. But you fixed up the price per unit, whether tonne or KG or whatever it may be and this means, you are trying to accept an output also. Otherwise, just this outlay does not lead you anywhere. Is that also taken into account?

The last part of the question is whether or not your issue prices bear a constant relation to the support prices.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Sir, the hon. member is wise enough. He must have realised it if he has gone through all the stuff provided to him. I think that will show that the quantum jump in oil-seed production is only due to the incentives given to the farmers. If you have not given them incentives, they would not have produced that much. That is what we did. That is going to be done in the future also.

Secondly, about the terms of trade, we have taken into account that aspect. That is one of the prime requisites for fixing the prices.

Thirdly, we have given diversification plus value-addition to the crops. That is the new policy which we are going to pursue so as to have not just a raw-material as it is because marketing is the biggest deficiency we have in the agricultural sector. It is the middleman who enjoys the fruits. We are trying to do something. We have established some new patterns so that we can have value-addition to the crops and it is not sold as it is in the raw-material shape just like fruits,

vegetables and others which are just perishable products and we cannot keep them, we cannot process them. Their loss is to the extent of 20-30 per cent. So, we are going to avoid that.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Does it include cost of living?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : It includes cost and everything.

MR. SPEAKER : I think the agriculturists should ask the question.

Shri Virendra Singh.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a question of prices of foodgrains and it is always said that India is an agricultural country. Policies are formulated for the progress of the farmers. The question is of fixing the support prices of wheat and Paddy. The Government has been making promises that to improve the lot of the farmer it has been increasing the prices of the foodgrains he grows in the fields. But I want to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, that what are the reasons that the farmer of India becoming poorer where the people who put less labour and work in factories producing agricultural implements get more money than the farmers. The prices of inputs are fixed much more in comparison to the agricultural produce. I would like to know the basis on which the prices of these inputs and implements, the farmer uses, are fixed. The prices of these agricultural implements are always higher than the prices of the agricultural produce? Why it is so?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : The support price is given to the farmer so that he is not compelled to go for distress rule. There is no binding on the farmer to sell his products on the support prices. He is free to sell it at higher rates and if he gets lower price in market then he can sell his foodgrains to the Government. The position today is that barring one or two products, he is getting higher price in the market, for instance, in the case of cotton he is getting double the price in the market. Same is the case with mustered and groundnut oil. There is no binding on the farmer to sell his produce to the Government only.

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH : Why the products manufactured in factories fetch higher prices than those of agricultural productions?

MR. SPEAKER : The reason is that the things produced in the factories are lesser in quantity whereas the production of the farmer is much higher in quantity.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, if things are discussed in the House in such a manner then nobody can save the interests of the farmers.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : If Government do not fix minimum support price the rates will fall down in the market and the farmer will be the loser. That is why it is necessary to fix the price to save the farmer. But he is free to sell his produce to anyone.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, My question is very simple the answer of hon. Minister will also be in the affirmative. You have mentioned about last three years that you have increased. The production of wheat and paddy. Now my simple question is that in 1965...

MR. SPEAKER : Your every question is simple.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Prices of wheat and Paddy remained static. There has been only 3 time increase in the prices of wheat and rice but there is 5 times, 10 times or 20 times increase in the cost of the inputs since 1965 either it is implements, labour, electricity or fertilizers whereas the prices of agricultural productions have been increased by three-times only. What is the reason of this?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, his question is as straight as 'Jalebi' sweet...*(Interruptions)*... You can make comparison of price-increase. But you just compare the quantum of production increased per acre and the support prices are fixed in the same proportion...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Sir, there is no revolution during the last fifteen years other than the green revolution.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : There has been a revolution. All this increase is nothing but revolution. If we increase 10 times more, people will revolt.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : This is why the farmer is badly affected?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : It is not correct ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you are not allowing us to speak. You are giving time to the front benches only. Sir, give opportunity to us also ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI : Let me reply to that.

I have first time got a chance to speak in this session today. You can check from the records...*(Interruptions)*

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : We are also elected members of Parliament of this August House...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please resume your seats.

*(Interruptions)*

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : You can expel us from the House.

MR. SPEAKER : I will do that also. Do not shout.

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI : Sir, it has been clearly asked in the question as to whether there is any proposal under consideration to increase the support prices of wheat and paddy. The price of superfine quality of rice is fixed at lower rates as compared to its production cost. When market rate is lower the production cost becomes higher.

There are many qualities of rice which are exported such as Basmati and Parmal or other qualities of rice.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether Government propose to give subsidy on the production of superfine rice to the farmers to boost the production and export of rice.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think it is required.

*[Translation]*

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : It is done after much consideration...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask relevant question...

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask question if it is a relevant one.

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : We are asking the same. The hon minister has just delivered his speech. He had been our hon. Speaker. You just smile at our question and do not give proper reply. I have seen the figures of production cost on 5 acres of land, the cost of labour, consumption of fertilizers, etc. I have also calculated the productions cost. The production cost fixed by you is not even one-third of the actual production cost the farmer bears-your figures are all misleading ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : You please hear me first. Let the question be relevant, please.

*[Translation]*

It is the job of Price Commission; not that of a Minister...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Please understand it first.

*[Translation]*

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the support price fixed are lower or higher, and whether this benefit is given in full to the farmer? In my constituency the wheat is being sold at Rs. 20 to 40 rupees less than the support price. Whether the hon. Minister is aware of this fact? If not, the reasons therefor?...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : It do happy when a medical professional asks question on agriculture?

(Interruptions)

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : It is not so. You have fixed lower support price and whatever has been the increase in the support price that is not given to the farmer. Please make enquiry about this in our four districts of Shahjahanpur, Sitapur...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The question is irrelevant. I will disallow it if you do not come to the proper question.

[Translation]

DR. G.L. KANAUIA : The fertilizers being supplied There is adulterated. Salt and soil is mixed in that. It is inferior inequality...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. I do not think it is relevant. Even then, you reply.

[Translation]

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : I will request the hon. Member not to lose temper. Your concern is that the rates are falling. I am giving the answer to the question of Shri Virendra Singh. If there is no support price farmer gets lower price. Shri Ajit Singh ji is present here. I will request him to see that there is no such complaint about the non-purchase of wheat...(Interruptions)

PROF. PREM DHUMAL : Can a Cabinet Minister give order to his colleague in the House?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : I am not giving Orders...(Interruptions) Why are you angry?

PROF. PREM DHUMAL : I am not angry. I am raising a very relevant question. You had been a speaker. You must know...(Interruptions)

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : You are shirking from your responsibility.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Sir, you have been a judge. You are also saying this...(Interruptions). This is not so. FCI procures foodgrains and that is why I am requesting him to work into the matter. As regards fertilizers we shall look into the aspect of conducting an enquiry.

MR. SPEAKER : This question has consumed half an hour. So this has become a half-an-hour question.

SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA : The hon. Minister has just now said that they have declared support price on agriculture during the last 30 years. This is correct. The hon. Minister is also a farmer. He knows that the entire agricultural produce of the farmer comes in the market at one time. So he must get support price, which he does not get. The industry prepares its own chart daily and produces daily. So the prices of agricultural

products are always lower than that. Some times they produce less and make more money. But the farmer does not do that because his entire production of foodgrain is brought in the market at one time. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he proposes to link the agricultural production with price index like the dearness allowance of Government employees which is linked with price index so that farmer gets the benefit of price hike automatically. If this is done the farmer will get benefit.

MR. SPEAKER : If the Government procures entire agricultural production then it could be done.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Every thing is there. Every aspect has been considered while fixing the prices...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please let him ask about sugar.

(Interruptions)

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, I wanted to ask the Hon. Minister...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This question does not pertain to coconut.

DR. RAMKRISHAN KUSMARIA : Wheat and rice are grown in the hope of remunerative price. The support price offered by you does not give remunerative price to the farmers. The production cost which includes cost of agricultural inputs right from tilling of land to taking of yield to the barn and thereafter to the market...

MR. SPEAKER : That has been asked by Rawatji.

DR. RAM KRISHAN KUSMARIA : How your scientists have calculated and assessed that the support price offered to the farmers for the current year is profitable or not?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR : Of course, it is remunerative. Support price carries no meaning sans element of profit. Support price means remunerative price and that is determined after taking every aspect in view.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA : Hon. Speaker, Sir, there is a difference between the support price and remunerative price...(Interruptions)

[English]

#### District Primary Education Programme

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\*482. SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA :

SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAIISI :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have reviewed the District Primary Education Programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;