

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, March, 21, 1995/Phalgun 30, 1916 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Cultivable Land

*101. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large area of cultivable land in the country is lying vacant and unutilized;

(b) if so, the total area of such land; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government to use such land for agricultural purposes?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b). As per 1991-92, land use statistics (latest available), the total cultivable land in the country is estimated as 184.34 million hectares. Out of this total cultivable area 9.85 million hectares are old fallow lands and 15.07 million hectares as culturable waste land.

(c) In order to reduce area under old fallows and culturable waste land, the Government have been implementing various programmes including extension of irrigation facilities and reclamation of waste land.

[Translation]

SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir as the hon. Minister has told that various programmes are being implemented for reclamation of 28 million hectare land and no specific measures are being taken by the Government to make the remaining 160 million hectare of land cultivable. The lakhs of tonnes of foodgrains which could have been produced on this land, if it has been made arable. I therefore, would like to know from the Government as to what steps are being taken in this regard? Whether the Government proposes to provide this land on lease for 10-15 years to unemployed persons or poor farmers for agricultural purposes or afforestation?

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have told just now, 28.5 million hectare culturable wasteland is available and it is being made cultivable under the various schemes launched by the Government. I can read them out if you wish so.

MR. SPEAKER: He has asked that whether this land will be given to landless people for cultivation?

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am also saying that. Sir, so far 28.5 million hectare land has been

distributed through State Governments and all this is being done under the schemes of the Government. I would also like to say that undoubtedly this land is being made cultivable.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that only availability of land is not enough for cultivation. One has to see and study about the type of soil and availability of all other essential means for cultivation. You cannot cultivate fallow land or a land which contains only sand, which is barren and has no facility of water. Our achievements during the last few years is recorded. Today 22 million hectare to 64 million hectare of land is being irrigated and cultivated. We also try our best to reclaim the fallow land with all other means and thus the pace of progress should be adjudged taking this factor into consideration. We cannot cultivate fallow land without any water-facility. But we should be provided with all the means essential for reclamation of the available land so that it could produce crops.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, reply to my first question has not been given.

MR. SPEAKER: The reply has been given. He did not want to go in detail, yet he explained it in detail. Now please be seated.

SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the private owners who have 10-20 acres of land but cannot make it cultivable for scarcity of funds. I would like to know as to what steps the Government is going to take for providing assistance to them alongwith the amount of assistance. I would like to know whether this assistance is given by Central Government or State Governments.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We have different schemes in different States. There are schemes worth Rs. 90 crores which will be implemented during the last years of the Eighth Five Year Plan. This year Rs. 16 crores have been allocated for it and three States i.e., Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra have been selected for it. All these steps are based on the facts that more irrigation facility has been provided so that large area of land could be cultivated.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARI: Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the reasons for a large portion of fallow land lying vacant in the country which is not being made cultivable. My second question is about ravine land in Bind, Morena and Dholpur in the border areas of three States, which is dacoit infested. Whether any scheme has been formulated for levelling of this land to make it cultivable.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, I have all these points in my mind and in this context I would like to tell that in 1950-51 the area of cultivable wasteland was around 23 million

hectare, which has now remained 15 million hectare. The fallow land was 17 million hectare which is now $9\frac{3}{4}$ million hectare. This all is being done in that proportion. We cannot make this land permanently cultivable without providing irrigation facility. You may be aware of the fact that recently cabinet has passed a proposal for providing grants for drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation including 50 percent to general public, 75 percent to the poor, scheduled castes and women, who have land in their names. It will increase the irrigated area and the yield and will reduce the consumption of fertilizers and bring about prosperity in the country.

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Sir while the hon. Minister for Agriculture has conceded that providing irrigation facilities is very essential to bring more culturable wasteland under cultivation, I would like to know specifically from him whether he will recollect and give clear directions to the States to provide subsidy to drip irrigation facility. After all, by drip irrigation, with less quantity of water, you will be able to bring more irrigated land thereby reducing culturable waste. Till now, only two hectares of land is given subsidy. You yourself had accepted earlier that subsidy should be given upto four hectares. The Notification to that effect has not yet come into being. Will the hon. Minister give clear directions in that regard to bring more areas under cultivation?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We have gone much farther than four hectares. I have given exemption and subsidy to the permissible limit, whichever is given as percentage, it may be ten acres or five acres.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: But it has not come into effect.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We have just passed it; it will come into effect. We have got the money to give subsidy to farmers. I will direct all the States and tell my farmer friends to make use of it to the best possible extent because this is epoch-making phenomenon and this will revolutionise the whole concept of agriculture and economic structure of rural sector.

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK: There is some intricate problem in the tribal areas. The tribals have been cultivating adjoining reserve forest over the last more than fifty years.

Sir, at the moment the Government does not have any such programme to conduct or to implement afforestation and all that. They have been deprived of getting the *status quo* of the land as a result of which they are deprived of many such facilities which are given by the Government.

Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether they have been thinking to work out such formula or device as a result of which lands under these categories adjoining the reserve forests can be settled in favour of the tribals. And they are cultivable lands, Sir.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, I don't think we deal

with this. It is the State which takes this up. This is a State Subject.

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK: As far as the forest lands are concerned...

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Forest lands are not cultivated.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Sir, in this country, next to human beings land is the basic resource. Now, unfortunately, both the question and the answer show that there is no awareness as to the importance of land. The question is: "How much of cultivable land is unutilised or lying vacant?" The answer is that out of cultivable land, so much is cultivable as old fallow lands and so much is cultivable as waste land. But out of the land which is now fallow land, which is not waste land, how much land is in fact being utilised fully? And, what is the full utilisation of land? Is it enough to utilise land only once a year? Or can we look forward to utilisation of land twice a year with the intensity of utilisation being 1, 2, 2.5 or 3? Given our climatic conditions and the water which we may make available, if we make an effort to conserve the water and use it for irrigation, what is the target? Has this Government set out a target as yet? From the way the statistics have been given, it does not seem that there is any target.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: So, I am asking the question.

(a) Can the hon. Minister say that there is any target for the amount of the intensity of agriculture and the amount of land which may be utilised if the water resources are properly harnessed? (b) As the hon. Minister has said, irrigation is the most important thing. But the money is diverted to irrigation of very large size.

MR. SPEAKER: No, please, it is not like this. Otherwise there would not be any reply given to your question.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: The question is: Are you giving proper importance to minor irrigation as opposed to large-scale irrigation? What is your opinion about the minor irrigation as opposed to large-scale irrigation?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, the question is very important as far as water is concerned and as far as the utilisation of land is concerned. There are lands which we use for double cropping pattern; there are lands which we use for three crops per year also; and there are old fallow lands and other fallow lands because we take a crop and leave the land vacant; the next crop comes after that. So the intensity of cultivation increases according to the availability of water. That is what we do. We have done it on all fields, I know it. In the olden Days we had three types of lands—one was vacant, one was coming in the Kharif season and one was coming in the Rabi season. Then water came and much flow of water was available. So, we increased the intensity.

Now, we grow two crops per year and that is what we are continuously doing. So, it depends on us and we

are giving the highest priority to irrigation. We have got about 200 per cent increase each year. That is what we want to do in regard to minor irrigation and everything. Then we have got this land reclamation, then we have got watershed programme, water conservation programme. All these things are concentrated on and the highest priority is being given to this subject because without water land is meaningless. If the rain comes, that is also whimsical. You cannot depend on it wholly. So, that is what we do in regard to dryland farming or rainfed farming. That is what we are concentrating on, and future will tell about the results. That is what we have initiated now, it will be making history in the coming years.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: What is the importance given to minor irrigation? How much money is being given for this?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: As I have told you, on reclamation we are spending about Rs. 90 crore. We are depending on some other sources also.

It also depends on the Ministry of Irrigation because they have to provide the requisite funds. I would like to say that the most immediate attention should be given to this aspect. I ask my friends in the Ministry of Irrigation also to look at this problem with a sympathetic eye.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the schemes for reclamation of fallow lands sent by the state Governments to the Central Government are considered here in the Cabinet meetings so that maximum land of the country could be made arable. Besides, there are certain Central Government schemes which are implemented by the State Governments. For example our Gangetic plains extend from Allahabad to Barh and the research of the area has proved that it is the most fertile area in the world but even in these plains there is not adequate arable land and this fertile land is not fully utilised. Therefore, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that even as different schemes of the state governments are considered in the cabinet meetings, directives to the state Governments are sent from here with regard to the implementation of the schemes and many State Governments have submitted their reports and it has also been discussed here that many State Governments do not implement the schemes as per your directives, is there any arrangement for compelling such state Governments to implement these schemes who are not carrying out your directives with regard to implementation of fallow land reclamation schemes, particularly those concerning the Gangetic plains.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: That is a constitutional provision. You cannot help it.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I too have a problem and I think his question will help me. Whatever I allocate to the States, some times a part of even those sanctioned moneys get lapsed. It is very important that we must make full use of the allocated money. This House can recommend to the State Governments to utilise the

allocated funds for a good purpose. I would like to say that we must lay great emphasis on this aspect.

[Translation]

SHRI TARA SINGH: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that in many districts of Haryana where there was fertile land and enough water, deep tubewells have been installed, water is being carried forward by channel bars as a result of which the ground water level has been receding year after year and now such land has been rendered uncultivable. If the hon. Minister is aware of the fact, what arrangements is he going to make in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER: Is your supplementary comes out on the original question?

SHRI TARA SINGH: My question is that on the one hand we want to reclaim the wastelands and on the other we are rendering fertile lands into wasteland.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Though the hon. Member's question is not related to the original question yet I have some information in this regard that water is fed into the canals there and carried forward. Now, that this question is related with the State Government and you are an M.P. from the same state, you may yourself discuss the matter with the State Government. I will also write to them.

[English]

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir,

MR. SPEAKER: I called Shri Yadav and not you. I know who know agriculture.

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: I do know the subject Sir. I am, myself an agriculturist.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to the information I have arrangements for irrigating only about one-fourth of the total arable land available in the country have been made so far and the rest is the fallow land which is yet to be reclaimed. There is no dearth of ground water and surface water in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. I would like to know whether the Government have fixed any targets or time limit for making all the land available in the country arable and to make arrangements for irrigating the unirrigated land?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: One has to cut one's coat according to the cloth available. We need funds also but I would like to tell you something about the expenditure involved in our scheme: The expenditure incurred on the scheme during 1995-96 is as follows:

[English]

"For 1995-96, Rs. 10 crore has been earmarked to reclaim an area of 0.75 lakh hectare. The programme for Eighth Plan is Rs. 86.82 crore to reclaim an area of 3.60 lakh hectare in these three States. Moreover, the programme is also proposed to be extended in the States of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan during the Eighth Plan."

Sir, I may tell you that whatever I have given to Bihar, even 36 per cent of that has not been utilised by them. That is the problem.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister of Agriculture that nearly 50 years have passed since India became independent and the question of reclaiming the fallow land is a long standing one. Have you fixed any target about the percentage of fallow land to be made arable every year? There is a saying—

"Araba satta jyuon ka tyon, sara kunaba dooba kyon." and it is coming true in the case of our country which is predominantly an agricultural country and it is because if anything is grossly ignored here, it is the farming. Therefore, I would like to know the target in terms of percentage of fallow land earmarked for reclaiming into arable land per year.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, from earlier 22 million, it is 64 million now and they say no progress has been made.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is on papers, you may see progress made in the field.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, production of foodgrains has risen from 50 million to 185 million and yet they say nothing has been done. Was all that production made in the air?

Navodaya Vidyalayas

*102. DR. P.R. GANGWAR:

SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

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

(a) the number of Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas likely to be opened during 1995-96, State-wise;

(b) whether any review on the functioning of Navodaya Vidyalayas has been carried out by the Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for the upgradation of Navodaya Vidyalayas so as to raise their educational standard?

[English]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Government have decided to open upto 20 Kendriya Vidyalayas in Civil and Defence Sectors annually for the 5-year period 1993-98 and as many proposals as found suitable under project sector, and upto 50 Navodaya Vidyalayas in a year depending on the availability of suitable proposals from the State Governments/UTs.

Administrations. However, the decision to open the schools within the limit laid down by the Government depends on the receipt of complete proposals including offer for allotment of land for permanent location and for temporary accommodation from the sponsoring authorities.

(b) and (c). The desirability of continuing the scheme was reviewed at the time of review of the National Policy on Education. Presently, out of 346 Vidyalayas only 192 have class XII. Construction of building and related essential facilities is in progress in most cases. As per the Programme of Action-1992, Government intends to subject the Scheme of Navodaya Vidyalayas to a review after such Vidyalayas have been established and consolidated in all districts of the country.

(d) Some of the steps taken for leading these Vidyalayas to acceptable standards of education are as follows:

(i) attempts to maximise allocation of funds for construction of Vidyalayas, hostels and living accommodation for the teachers.

(ii) improvement in the recruitment rules for teachers.

(iii) sanctioning of Zonal Training Centres for inservice training of teachers; and

(iv) more effective supervision and monitoring.

[Translation]

DR. P.R. GANGWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Navodaya Vidyalayas were opened to impart modern education to talented students in rural areas. These were to be opened in every district. But it has not happened as yet. I, therefore, would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many proposals for opening Kendriya/Navodaya Vidyalayas have been received by the Government and how many Kendriya/Navodaya Vidyalayas are functioning in Uttar Pradesh and how many school buildings are being constructed at present. A survey for opening a Vidyalaya at Nahil Village in Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh was conducted in 1993, but school has not been opened as yet. What is the reason behind it? Besides this, I would also like to know by when Navodaya Vidyalayas will be opened in Shahjahanpur and Pilibhit districts?

MR. SPEAKER: Not like this. Hon. Minister should reply to the extent she can possibly reply.

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, the Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas are opened in different manners. The Central Schools were opened to impart education to the children of Central Government employees and Navodaya Vidyalayas were to be opened in every district. So far as the issue of opening Kendriya Vidyalayas during 1995-96 is concerned, we have received 126 proposals in this regard from various agencies. Some of the proposals have been received from hon. Members of Parliament and some others from other areas. First each and every proposal is looked into and then later on it is decided as to where and how many schools should be opened. The procedure of opening Navodaya Vidyalayas is different. The State Governments have to provide land for opening