

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

[Translation]

Thursday, July 25, 1991 / *Sravana* 3.
1913 (*Saka*)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair.*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Narmada Sagar Project

*142. DR. LAXMI NARAYAN
PANDEYA:

SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA
VERMA

Will the Minister of WATER RE-SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the initial estimated cost and the present estimated cost of the Narmada Sagar Project;

(b) whether the World Bank has agreed to provide financial assistance for the above project;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of funds provided to Madhya Pradesh during 1989-90 and 1990-91 for the purpose.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) The estimated cost of Narmada Sagar Project in 1982 was Rs. 920.91 crores and the present estimated cost of the project is Rs. 1993.67 crores.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) & (d) Do not arise.

DR. LAXMI NARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a very important question has arisen. I am astonished to see that the reply given by the hon. Minister is not correct, because the World Bank Team had inspected the site a number of times and had agreed to provide full financial assistance for it. Yet the reply given by the hon. Minister, "No, Sir". I would like to know the reasons why the World Bank expressed their unwillingness to provide financial assistance?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, some international organisations and some national organisations had raised some objections from environmental angles. Thereupon the World Bank decided to depute its independent expert to examine all these issues. No World Bank assistance would be available for this project till the examination is over. The work relating to this examination is likely to begin soon. We have been told that the question relating to quantum of assistance or whether assistance is to be given or not would be decided only after the examination is completed.

DR. LAXMI NARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know the time by which the expert is expected to come and also the time by which the work relating to the examination would be completed. The project was originally scheduled to be completed in 10 years, but it has not been completed even after so many years. Won't this examination cause unexpected delay? When will this examination be completed and whether this work relating to examination would be completed and its report received during this year?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the examination has not yet started. I think this work will start next month or even before that. We shall request the World Bank to complete the examination as early as possible.

DR. LAXMI NARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question has not been replied. This project was scheduled to be completed in 10 years. I want to know the reasons for the delay in its execution? Will the objections raised by environmental experts cause further delay?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Sir, in reply to the main question of the hon. Member, I had given the reasons for non-completion of the project in 10 years. It will be our endeavour to see that the examination of the project is completed by the World Bank as early as possible so and that the project work could be started.

SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VERMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not correct to say that the World Bank has not agreed to provide financial assistance, I had myself been the chairman of the Narmada River Development Authority and I know that the appraisal team of the World Bank had come and they had said that they would be giving 400 million dollars. But I do not know why did the World Bank retrace its steps in the meantime. I would request the hon. Minister to take up the matter with the World Bank so that we could get financial assistance. My second supplementary question is important. It is stated in the reply that the project cost which was originally estimated at Rs. 900 crores has now gone up to Rs. 1993 crores. When the appraisal team of the World Bank came here, they assured that 400 million dollars would be given. At that time this proposal came up for environmental clearance. They took three years and the estimated cost escalated to Rs. 1993 crore in the meantime. I would like to know whether responsibility would be fixed in order to know as

to how much loss Madhya Pradesh as also the country had to suffer on this account. Being a bureaucrat myself, I dare say that the person who raised these objections has become the Chief Election Commissioner today and the country had to suffer heavily due to the hindrance created by him.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is correct that there has been a delay in it and there were various reasons for this delay. Environmental clearance is one of them. The hon. Member knows that this is a very complex matter. It is beyond our control to overlook the environmental aspect. Had it been confined to us to decide, we would have taken a decision. When the matter came before the officials of the World Bank, they assured to give assistance but they said that they would have to examine the project independently. We requested them to complete this work as early as possible so that there was no further delay.

[English]

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Sir, I would like to point out, and the Hon. Minister also knows, the condition of Madhya Pradesh. The Rajasthan Canal has been considered as a national project and looking to the financial condition of the State of Rajasthan the Government of India...

MR. SPEAKER: It is not related to the main question.

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Yes, Sir, it is related. The Government of India has provided funds for the Rajasthan Canal. Through you I would like to ask.....

MR. SPEAKER: Rajasthan Canal does not start from Narmada Sagar.

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government will consider taking up the Narmada Sagar Project as a national project and provide money from the Government of India fund for this project.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Narmada Sagar Project is also a national project.

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: My question was: would you consider paying for this project out of the Government of India Consolidated Fund.

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Narmada Sagar project and Sardar Sarovar Project are national projects and we attach highest importance to these projects. Therefore, we are anxious that the World Bank help that is to come for this project comes without delay.

As far as its comparison with the Rajasthan Canal is concerned, it is not relevant as you have already held but we will do our best to expedite this project.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has paid that Narmada Sagar Project is a national project. It concerns crores of people of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In February 1986, the then Minister of Water Resources had said that the Centre would formulate a policy under which irrigation projects of national importance would be provided financial assistance. I want to know whether any such policy was formulated and if so, the quantum of financial assistance provided to Gujarat under this policy?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, questions concerning policy matters are not answered during question hour. Since you have allowed the hon. Member to ask the question, I would say that we have decided to provide as much assistance as possible. There is no out in the assistance from our side nor there is any dispute. Financial assistance for this project would be given to Madhya Pradesh which is executing this project and not to Gujarat as has

been stated by the hon. Member. There is neither any dispute nor any question mark over granting assistance from the Centre. Whatever dispute is there, it is from the World Bank side.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: The question is very basic. Agitation regarding environment has caused delay in the Narmada Sagar Project and the result is that assistance from the World Bank is not being received. This is despite our Government's surrender before the I.M.F. I want to know whether government is capable of executing such projects all by itself in view of the atmosphere that has been created all over the world due to the agitation for the protection of environment? If not, the nation must be told in clear terms as to what is the policy of the Government in respect of the money that has been spent so far?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Will it be done without the assistance of the World Bank?

[Translation]

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: The hon. Member has termed it as surrender. There is no question of surrender. This is true that the delay being caused right now is due to the agitation that is going on in the country for the protection of environment. It is not due to the agitations going on in other parts of the world that this delay is being caused. Therefore, the Centre would take a decision on this project of national importance after considering the matter from the national angle.

SHRI ANNA JOSHI: How could the Minister give assurance for reconsideration when the Tribunal had given its award with regard to the height of the Narmada Sagar Dam?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: I have said nothing in this regard.