

Out of 1000 villages there, people of around 700 villages are compelled to drink water containing fluoride. Till today the first phase of the work which was started five years back for the solution of this problem has not been completed. This was shown not only on Doordarshan but on foreign television network also. Today we are standing on the threshold of 21st century.

MR. SPEAKER : You ask question.

DR. PRABHA THAKUR : People are compelled to become humpbacked and disabled by drinking this water. This problem is very serious, and therefore, I would like to know from the Minister of Water Resources the time by which this problem will be solved and the steps he is taking on priority basis in this regard ?

[English]

SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL : Sir, for this purpose, we held the meeting of the State Secretaries and State Ministers. In that connection, we are making some exercise. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have called Shri Manoranjan Bhakta.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT JOGI : Kindly allow half-an-hour discussion on this... (Interruptions).

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Sir, as you know, Andaman and Nicobar Islands is one of the island territories in the country which is facing acute drinking water problem.

Now, the hon. Minister in his reply has stated that it would be the responsibility of the State and the Central Government would supplement to the State. But so far as the Union Territories are concerned, it is the domain of the Central Government. What action have you taken in this regard ? It is because in your statement for all the three years you have mentioned that not a single rupee has been allocated. That is why, I would like to know categorically from the hon. Minister what programme, what action you are going to take for providing drinking water supply to the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL : If this is so, I will consider it.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Thank you Sir.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVNA KARDAM DAVE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, problem of drinking water is acute in my Constituency Surendranagar. All our villages are facing shortage of water and the level of ground water is going down as a result of which the people have to dig deep wells for getting water. There is no other source of water. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This problem is acute for women, hence, they are being given a chance to put questions.

SHRIMATI BHAVNA KARDAM DAVE : When I went to my Constituency women raised this problem with tears in their eyes. They told that for digging ponds machines are required but we do not get those machines. If we can get bulldozer and other machines then we can collect rain water by digging ponds in villages. I would like to know from the government whether machines can be supplied by setting up some Machinery Department so that there is no water

problem in Gujarat ? Can such an arrangement be made and what is the policy of the government in this regard ?

[English]

SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no provision for using such big machines for digging *talaabs*.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ramdas Athawale. Please ask your Supplementary straightaway, otherwise you will lose the reply.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask as to how many people have been benefited under the I.R.D.P. Scheme till date ?

[English]

SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL : Sir, it is not related to this Question.

MR. SPEAKER : If the House is serious about the importance of this subject, we can have a Half-an-hour discussion on this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

MR. SPEAKER : The Question Hour is over now.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Revival of IISCO

*24. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :

SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal for revival/modernisation of ailing Indian Iron and Steel Co. (IISCO) has been inordinately delayed causing significant cost escalation;

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

(c) the present status of the modernisation proposal for IISCO and details of the broad features of the plan proposal finalised, its economics implications and implementation schedule ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK) : Indian Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. (IISCO) was referred to BIFR in June 1994. Various schemes/proposals for revival and modernisation of IISCO were considered but could not be finalised due mainly to fund constraints. A proposal for modernisation of IISCO by utilisation of funds from the Steel Development Fund (SDF) is under consideration of the Government.

As IISCO has been referred to the BIFR, any scheme to be taken up for modernisation will have to be in accordance with the orders of the BIFR in this regard.

Review of Rural Development Schemes

*25. SHRI CHANDU LAL AJMEERA :

SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL :