

EC NO.1415

THIRD REPORT

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(2004-2005)**

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

**(Action taken by Government on the recommendations
contained in the Seventeenth Report of Estimates
Committee (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) on the
Ministry of Home Affairs –
'Relief and Rehabilitation Measures in
Natural Calamities')**

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 02.12.2004

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December ,2004/Agrahayana , 1926(S)

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COMPOSITION OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(2004-2005)

Shri C. Kuppusami - CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS

2. Shri A. Sai Prathap
3. Shri B. Vinod Kumar
4. Shri Chander Kumar
5. Shri Lalmuni Chaubay
6. Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
7. Shri Anant Gudhe
8. Shri Jai Prakash
9. Shri N.N. Krishnadas
10. Shri Samik Lahiri
11. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
12. Shri Sunil Kumar Mahato
13. Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal
14. Shri Zora Singh Mann
15. Shri Prabodh Panda
16. Shri Mahendra Prasad Nishad
17. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
18. Shri Annasaheb M.K. Patil
19. Shri Harikewal Prasad
20. Prof. M. Ramadass
21. Shri K.S. Rao
22. Shri Iqbal Ahmed Saradgi
23. Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia
24. Shri Manabendra Shah
25. Shri Laxman Singh
26. Shri Sartaj Singh
27. Shri M.A. Kharabela Swain
28. Shri Akhilesh Yadav
29. Shri V. Kishore Chandra S. Deo
30. Shri Vijay Krishan

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri John Joseph - Additional Secretary
2. Smt. P.K. Sandhu - Joint Secretary
3. Shri A.K. Singh - PCPI
4. Shri Cyril John - Under Secretary
5. Shri Hoti Lal - Committee Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Estimates Committee, having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Third Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Seventeenth Report of Estimates Committee (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Home Affairs - 'Relief and Rehabilitation Measures in Natural Calamities'.

2. The Seventeenth Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) was presented to Lok Sabha on 30th April, 2003. The Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the Report on 7th January, 2004. The Draft Report was considered and adopted by Estimates Committee (2004-05) at their sitting held on 27th September, 2004.

3. The Report has been divided into the following Chapters:

- I. Report;
- II. Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government;
- III. Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies;
- IV. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee; and
- V. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.

4. An analysis of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Seventeenth Report of Estimates Committee (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix II. It would be observed therefrom that out of 24 observations/recommendations made in the Report, 14 recommendations, i.e. 58.4% have been accepted by Government and the Committee do not desire to pursue 2 recommendations, i.e.8.4%, in view of Government's replies. Replies of Government in respect of 4 recommendations, i.e. 16.6% have not been accepted by the Committee. Final replies of Government in respect of 4 recommendations, i.e. 16.6%, are still awaited.

NEW DELHI
December 1, 2004
Agrahayana 10, 1926(S)

C.KUPPUSAMI,
Chairman,
Committee on Estimates.

CHAPTER 1

REPORT

1.1 This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Seventeenth Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Home Affairs – ‘Relief and Rehabilitation Measures in Natural Calamities’.

1.2 The Committee’s Seventeenth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 30th April, 2003. It contained 24 observations/recommendations. Action Taken notes on all these recommendations/observations have been received from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

1.3 Replies to the observations and recommendations contained in the Report have been categorized as under :-

- (i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government :
Sl. Nos. 1 to 6, 9,10,14,15,17,19 ,22 and 23
(Total 14, Chapter II)
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government’s reply :
Sl. Nos. 13 and 16
(Total 2, Chapter III)
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government’s replies have not been accepted by the Committee :
Sl. Nos. 7,8, 21 and 24
(Total 4, Chapter IV)
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited :
Sl. Nos. 11,12, 18 and 20
(Total 4, Chapter V)

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by Government on some of the recommendations.

Delay in processing and releasing assistance from NCCF
(Observation/Recommendation Sl. No.7, Para No. 6.7)

1.5 Commenting on the inordinate delay on the part of Central Government to release assistance from Natural Calamity Contingency Fund during natural calamities, the Committee recommended as under :

“Inordinate delay on the part of the Central Government to process the request and to release the needed assistance would only defeat the very purpose of setting up a fund like National Calamity Contingency Fund. When the disaster is of an unprecedented magnitude, relief is needed immediately without which the State Government would not be able to cope up with the emergent situation. The Committee deprecate the very approach of the Ministry towards an issue of such vital importance in a welfare State. There is an emergent need for attitudinal change and building the culture of quick response to natural calamities in the country. The Committee, therefore, emphasize that the guidelines drawn up by the Ministry for operation and management of NCCF should be revised suitably to include a time-frame for submission of Memorandum by the State Government after the natural calamity occurs and deputing the Central Team and sanctioning and disbursal of relief from NCCF. The Committee would like to be apprised of the specific steps taken by the Ministry in this regard within three months from the time of presentation of the Report.”

1.6 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs has stated as follows :

“It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government concerned to provide relief in the wake of natural calamities. The Ministry of Home Affairs, as the nodal Ministry for natural calamities other than drought and the Ministry of Agriculture for drought, remain in constant touch with the State Government and provide necessary logistic and financial support, wherever needed. The States take time to submit the Memorandum because they need to assess the damage in various sectors and the requirement of assistance, after taking into account the funds available with them under CRF and other heads. The Central Team is dispatched as soon as the Memorandum is received. At times, in urgency, the Central Team has been deputed without waiting for the Memorandum with the instructions that the Memorandum be handed over to the Team on arrival.”

1.7 The Committee regret to note that the reply of the Government only reiterates the view-point placed before the Committee earlier during the time of examination of the subject. The Committee are not satisfied with the reply. It was with much concern about the delay in processing and releasing Central assistance for natural calamities that the Committee had recommended that guidelines for operation and management of the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) be revised suitably to specify a time-frame for submission of Memorandum by the State Government after occurrence of the natural calamity, deputing Central Team by the Union Government, sanctioning and disbursal of relief from NCCF, etc. The reply is silent about the steps taken by Government on the recommendation of the Committee. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and stress that the procedure be streamlined so as to ensure prompt Central assistance in the case of natural calamities of rare severity. They would like to be apprised of the action taken by Government in this regard.

Norms for Assistance from CRF and NCCF
(Observation/Recommendation Sl. No. 8 Para No. 6.8)

1.8 Expressing their concern that the quantum of assistance prescribed for relief in natural calamities is too inadequate, the Committee recommended as follows :-

“As per the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, a Committee of Experts was constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation) under the chairmanship of the Central Relief Commissioner to review and finalise the list of items and norms of expenditure to be followed for availing assistance from NCCF for the period between 2000-2005. From the norms of expenditure for assistance from CRF and NCCF drawn up by the Experts Committee, it is seen that the Quantum of assistance for relief in natural calamities prescribed is too inadequate. For example, ex-gratia payment to families of deceased persons is Rs.50,000/- per deceased, for grievous injury requiring hospitalisation for more than a week, it is Rs.5,000/- per person, agriculture input subsidy when crop loss is 50 % and above for rainfed areas is Rs.1,000/- per hectare, etc. The Ministry was candid in admission that “Government is aware of the difficulties experienced by the State Governments and feels that the corpus of CRF and NCFR (now NCCF) for 1995-96 to 1999-2000

was inadequate.” The Committee emphasise that despite the resource constraints, disaster mitigation deserves utmost priority and should be the concern of one and all. They desire that the norms of assistance from CRF and NCCF should be suitably revised with a view to help the victims of calamity to tide over the hardships at least partially”.

1.9 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs has stated as under :-

“The Ministry of Agriculture, as a follow up of the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, had constituted a Committee of Experts in November, 2000 to review the norms and items of expenditure from CRF/NCCF. Based on the report of the Committee, the scale of assistance was laid down. Later, the Home Affairs, now the nodal Ministry, had also constituted a Committee of Experts and revised the norms inter alia in the context of preparedness and mitigation. The revised norms now provide for training to specialist multi-disciplinary groups/teams of the State personnel, procurement of essential search, rescue and evacuation equipment including communication equipment subject to the ceiling 10% of the CRF allocation of the year.”

1.10 The Committee are constrained to note that the reply of the Government is evasive. The Committee had felt that the quantum of assistance prescribed for natural calamities from CRF and NCCF was quite inadequate. On the basis of the recommendations of a Committee of Experts, ex-gratia payment being made to families of deceased persons is Rs. 50,000/- per deceased, assistance for grievous injury requiring hospitalisation for more than a week is Rs.5,000/- per person, agriculture input subsidy when crop loss is 50% and above for rainfed areas is Rs.1,000/- per hectare, etc. Therefore, the Committee had desired that the norms of assistance from CRF and NCCF should be suitably revised so that the victims are able to tide over the hardships on account of the calamity. While expressing their displeasure on the casual approach towards the recommendation of the Committee, they desire that the recommendation be pursued with the required seriousness and the action taken thereon be intimated to the Committee.

Measures to Strengthen Advance Warning System
(Observation/Recommendation Sl. No. 21, Para No. 6.21)

1.11 Emphasizing the need for strengthening Advance Warning Systems for natural calamities, the Committee recommended as under :-

“When the Committee enquired about the disaster forecasting system available in the country, the Ministry informed that a Conference of Relief Commissioners of all the States and Union Territories, representatives of concerned Ministries, Departments and organisations is held annually before the onset of South-West monsoon to review the status of preparedness and disaster reduction related activities. It has been stated before the Committee that the country has elaborate cyclone detection and tracking system and flood forecasting and warning systems covering major rivers. Emergency measures taken by the State Governments, after warning about a natural calamity is received, include evacuation of the people to safer places, identifying safe shelters and keeping the people informed about the situation. While the Committee are in agreement that some calamities like earthquake do not give any advance warning, Government should take more concrete measures to strengthen advance warning systems for other calamities like, cyclone, floods, drought, etc. It may not be possible to prevent some of the natural

calamities, but there is no denying the fact that their adverse impact can be reduced substantially by undertaking adequate disaster preparedness and mitigation measures. The Committee trust that the Government will take all possible steps for upgrading and strengthening advance disaster warning systems in the country”.

1.12 In the action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated as under:-

“The recommendations of the Committee have been noted. The Ministry of Home Affairs have discussed the current status of the early warning system in the country with the India Meteorological Department, Central Water Commission and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting and requested them to identify the areas which need strengthening.”

1.13 The Committee are not satisfied with the reply furnished by the Government. They express their displeasure at the casual manner in which recommendation of the Committee on a vital issue like strengthening of disaster preparedness and mitigation measures has been dealt with. The Ministry of Home Affairs should have identified areas which need to be strengthened for advance warning of natural calamities, upgraded the facilities in consultation with the India Meteorological Department, Central Water Commission and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting and thereafter reported the matter to the Committee. As nothing concrete has been done in this regard, the Committee reiterate their recommendation and desire that Government take all possible steps for upgrading and strengthening advanced disaster warning systems in the country and the action taken be intimated to the Committee within three months from the date of presentation of the Report to the House.

Insurance Scheme for Crops

(Observation/Recommendation Sl. No. 24, Para No. 6.24)

1.14 Stressing the need to implement Insurance Scheme for crops, the Committee recommended as under :-

“Although loss of crop and cultivation through pest disease is not considered a natural calamity as stipulated by the Eleventh Finance Commission, the Committee note with concern that many farmers suffer heavy losses on account of pest disease. The only way to safeguard the interests of farmers is by implementing National Agriculture Insurance Scheme by all States. The Committee, therefore, desire that State Governments should be impressed upon to implement Insurance Scheme for crops to provide insurance cover to farmers against pest disease. They also suggest that steps be taken to notify disaster prone and hazardous areas and make insurance in such areas mandatory.”

1.15 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated as follows :-

“The National Agricultural Insurance Scheme for natural calamities also covers pest and diseases. The scheme is optional for the States. However, continuous efforts are being made by the Ministry of Agriculture to bring all the States in the fold of this scheme.”

1.16 Keeping in view the seriousness of the menace of pest disease and consequent loss of crop and cultivation, the measures taken by Government in this regard are not satisfactory. The issue needs to be addressed more seriously. As pest disease is not considered a natural calamity, the only way to safeguard the interests of farmers from pest disease is by implementing Crop Insurance Scheme. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that remaining State Governments should be impressed upon to implement Insurance Scheme for crops. Steps should also be taken to notify disaster prone and hazardous areas in the country. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete steps taken by Government in this regard.

Implementation of Recommendations

1.17 The Committee would like to emphasise that they attach the greatest importance to implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Government. They would, therefore, urge that the Government should keep a close watch so as to ensure expeditious implementation of the recommendations accepted by them. In case it is not possible to implement the recommendations in letter and spirit for any reason, the matter should be reported to the Committee with reasons for non-implementation.

1.18 The Committee desire that replies in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter V of the Report may be finalised and final replies of the Government furnished to the Committee expeditiously.

NEW DELHI
December 1, 2004
Agrahayana 10, 1926(S)

C.KUPPUSAMI,
Chairman,
Committee on Estimates.

APPENDIX-I

MINUTES OF SITTING OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

(2004-2005)

SECOND SITTING

The Committee sat on Monday, the 27th September, 2004 from 1100 hours to 1250 hours.

PRESENT

Shri C. Kuppusami - **CHAIRMAN**

MEMBERS

2. Shri B. Vinod Kumar
3. Shri Lalmuni Chaubay
4. Shri Jai Prakash
5. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
6. Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal
7. Shri Prabodh Panda
8. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
9. Shri Annasaheb M.K. Patil
10. Prof. M. Ramadass
11. Shri K.S. Rao
12. Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia
13. Shri Laxman Singh
14. Shri M.A. Kharabela Swain

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt.P.K. Sandhu - Joint Secretary
2. Shri A.K. Singh - P.C.P.I.
3. Shri Cyril John - Under Secretary
4. Shri M.K. Madhusudan - Assistant Director
5. Smt. Manju Chowdhary - Assistant Director

ANNEXURE

Modifications made by the Estimates Committee in the Draft Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Seventeenth Report of Estimates Committee (13th Lok Sabha) on Ministry of Home Affairs - 'Relief and Rehabilitation Measures in Natural Calamities.'

<u>Para</u>		<u>Modifications</u>
1.10	<u>For</u>	“While expressing their displeasure.....to the Committee.
	<u>Read</u>	“While expressing their displeasure on the casual approach towards the recommendation of the Committee, they desire that the recommendation be pursued with the required seriousness and the action taken thereon be intimated to the Committee.”
1.16	<u>For</u>	“The Committee, therefore, this regard.”
	<u>Read</u>	“The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that remaining State Governments should be impressed upon to implement Insurance Scheme for crops. Steps should also be taken to notify disaster prone and hazardous areas in the country. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete steps taken by Government in this regard.”

APPENDIX II

(Vide Introduction to Report)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE SEVENTEETH REPORT OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

I.	Total Number of Recommendations/observations	24
II.	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government (Nos.1 to 6, 9,10,14,15,17,19,22 and 23)	14
	Percentage	58.4%
III.	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies (Nos.13 and 16)	2
	Percentage	8.4%
IV.	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee. (Nos.7,8,21and 24)	4
	Percentage	16.6%
V.	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited. (Nos.11, 12,18 and 20)	4
	Percentage	16.6%