

SEVENTEENTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE
(2001)

(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2000-2001)

*[Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/
Observations contained in the Tenth Report of the
Standing Committee on Agriculture (1999-2000)]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on.....

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 24 MAR 2001

14 MAR 2001



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

March, 2001/Phalguna, 1922 (Saka)

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE FOR THE YEAR-2001

Shri S. S. Palanimanickam — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

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2. Shri Ram Tahal Chaudhari
3. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
4. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
5. Shri Ramdas Rupala Gavit
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39. Dr. A.R. Kidwai
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42. Shri Yadlapati Venkata Rao
43. Shri Sharief-Ud-Din Shariq
44. Shri Devi Prasad Singh
45. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. (Smt.) Paramjit Kaur Sandhu — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri Raj Shekhar Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Smt. Anita Jain — *Under Secretary*
4. Shri Ramesh Lal — *Senior Executive Assistant*

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (2001) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Seventeenth Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1999-2000) (Thirteenth Lok Sabha), on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Water Resources.

2. The Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1999-2000) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Water Resources was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.4.2000. The Ministry of Water Resources was requested to furnish action taken replies of the Government to recommendations contained in the Tenth Report. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received.

3. The Committee considered these action taken replies furnished by the Government in its sitting held on 22nd February, 2001, approved the draft comments and adopted the Seventeenth Report. Minutes of the sitting are placed in Appendix I.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Tenth Report (13th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
28 February, 2001
9 Phalguna, 1922 (Saka)

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S.S. PALANIMANICKAM
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

CHAPTER-I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Agriculture deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Agriculture (1999-2000) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Water Resources which was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19th April, 2000.

1.2 Action taken replies have been received from the Government in respect of all the 19 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorised as follows:

- (i) Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government (Chapter II of the Report)

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 & 14.

(Total 9)

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies (Chapter III of the Report)

Recommendations Sl. No. 19

(Total 1)

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which reply of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Chapter IV of the Report to be commented upon in Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendations Sl. Nos. 8, 12 & 18

(Total 3)

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Chapter V of the Report)

Recommendations Sl. Nos. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16 & 17

(Total 6)

1.3 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some other recommendations.

National Water Policy

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

1.4 The Committee were unhappy to note that the draft revised National Water Policy which was finalised by National Water Board on 29.10.98, had till not been placed before National Water Resources Council for consideration and adoption. The Committee were earlier informed that the meeting in this regard was scheduled to be held on 3rd April, 2000. Now, the Secretary, Water Resources informed the Committee during evidence that the meeting was being postponed due to some administrative reasons. The Committee were very much concerned about the delay in the finalisation of the National Water Policy, as the existing policy was not able to address fully to the new challenges that the country was facing in the sector.

The Committee had, therefore, strongly recommended that the Ministry should finalise the Draft National Water Policy without any further delay so as to have a consolidated and sustainable development of our water resources and also to settle water related disputes of the States promptly and amicably.

1.5 The Government in their reply have stated that the Draft National Water Policy (1998) and the Draft National Policy Guidelines for water allocation among States, as finalised by the National Water Board, were placed before the National Water Resources Council (NWRC) headed by the Prime Minister and with Chief Ministers/Lt. Governors of States/Union Territories as Members for consideration and adoption in its 4th Meeting held on July 7, 2000. There was a general consensus among the states on most of the important issues contained in the Policy. However, some areas of differences continued to remain. It has been decided by the NWRC that both the documents be referred to a Working Group headed by Union Minister for Water Resources, with members drawn from the States, to sort out the differences and bring about a consensus.

Comments of the Committee

1.6 The Committee note that the National Water Resources Council (NWRC) in their meeting held on July 7, 2000 has decided to refer Draft National Water Policy (1998) and the Draft National Policy Guidelines to a Working Group headed by Union Minister for Water Resources, with members drawn from the States. The Committee desire that the Constitution of working group should be expedited so as to sort out the differences among the States and bring about a consensus on all disputed issues without any further delay.

Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8)

1.7 The Committee had noted with concern that there were 162 major, 240 medium and 74 ERM (Extension, Renovation and Modernisation) on going irrigation projects in the country at various stages of construction at the end of VIII Plan with spillover cost of Rs. 79,321.39 crore. Out of these total projects some projects were going on for the past 30 to 35 years which were started during second and third plan period. The Committee had found that the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) started in 1996-97 to accelerate these projects had been able to complete only 7 projects out of 80 projects included under the scheme although almost Rs. 3959.07 crore had already been utilised upto 15th March, 2000. The Committee had noted that the additional irrigation potential created through components of projects covered under AIBP was only 5,79,834 ha against the ultimate irrigation potential of 1,38,22808 ha of projects covered under the programme. The Committee were not satisfied with the slow pace of work and had recommended that an evaluation of results achieved in the project be done to find out the shortcomings in the programme.

The Committee were very unhappy to find that the Plan budget estimates for 1999-2000, which were pegged at Rs. 16000.00 crore, had been scaled down to Rs. 1400 crore at the revised estimates stage by Ministry of Finance without even consulting the Ministry of Water Resources. The Committee had expressed their strong disapproval that funds approved by Parliament for an important scheme had been unilaterally reduced by Ministry of Finance without assigning any

tangible reasons. As the funds for the AIBP Scheme were provided in the budget of the Ministry of Finance, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry of Finance with the recommendation of Ministry of Water Resources should release full funds allocated for this scheme during 1999-2000 to the States. The Committee had, further, recommended that the funding pattern under AIBP for special category States and KBK which is 3.1 (Centre: State) be further relaxed so as to make it 100% grant.

1.8 The Government in their reply have stated that a large number of river valley projects, both multipurpose and Irrigation, have spilled over to the successive Plans mainly because of the financial constraints as being faced by the State Governments. As a result of this, despite huge investments, having already been made on these projects, the country is not able to derive the desired benefits. There were 162 major, 240 medium and 74 ERM on-going Irrigation Projects in the country at various stages of construction at the end of the VIII Plan (i.e. end of 1996-97) with spillover cost of Rs. 79,321.39 crore. This was a matter of grave concern for the Union Government, and ways and means for the expeditious completion of such projects, completion of such projects, which were in advanced stage of completion, were explored. This resulted in the introduction of the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) in 1996-97.

The Ministry of Water Resources further made a critical review of the various on-going irrigation projects and advised the State Governments in September, 1999 to make concerted efforts to complete the on-going Major and Medium Projects, which were in advanced stage of construction, in one or two years and certainly by the end of the IX Plan. Subsequently, Chief Secretaries of all the States concerned were also addressed during November, 1999 for completion of the pending projects, which were in advanced stage of construction and were identified by this Ministry for completion during the IX Plan. They were also requested to send the Action Plan so prepared and the progress reports on the same, on a monthly basis. During January, 2000 the matter of early completion of the on-going Major and Medium Projects was also taken up at the Minister (WR) level with the State Chief Ministers. Eleven States have already sent the schedule of completion. The matter is also being pursued with the remaining States. Ministry of Water Resources have identified 179 projects (66 Major and 113 Medium) for completion by the end of the IX Plan. As reported by the State Governments, 22 projects covered under the AIBP were scheduled to be completed upto 1999-2000. Besides, the State

Governments had also reported that 15 of such projects were likely to be completed during 2000-2001 and another 22 projects during 2001-2002. It may be pertinent to add that a large number of projects, even though not yet complete, have already started yielding benefits and an irrigation potential of 9299 thousand hectares had been created upto the VIII Plan from such projects. Yet, another 6948 thousand hectares of irrigation potential is likely to be created during the IX Plan, thus a total of 16,247 thousand hectares, as against their ultimate irrigation potential of 26,172 thousand hectares will be achieved by the end of the current plan.

The Irrigation potential of projects covered under the AIBP is of the order of 1,32,21,011 ha. Against this, irrigation potential of 48,47,561 ha. had already been created through them before launch of AIBP in 1996-97. Out of the balance potential of 83,73,450 ha., an additional irrigation potential of 8,79,834 ha. (provisional) has been created upto 1999-2000. The progress of potential creation as also the completion of projects has been affected mainly due to the fact that most of the States have not been able to contribute their share and thereby utilise the funds allocated to them. The reduction in budget allocations of AIBP during 1999-2000 from Rs. 1600.00 crore to Rs. 1400.00 crore was made at the R.E. stage. Finally, however, the Ministry of Finance had cleared all the proposals recommended by this Ministry and an amount of Rs. 1460.60 crore has been released as CLA under the AIBP during 1999-2000. There is a budget provision of Rs. 1712.00 crore under the AIBP during 2000-2001.

Comments of The Committee

1.9 The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Government. According to the Ministry of Water Resources, they have identified 179 projects (66 Major and 113 Medium) for completion by the end of IX Plan. However, the number of projects that will be completed upto 2001-2002 as reported by State Governments are only 59. Against the ultimate irrigation potential of 26,172 thousand hectares to be created by the end of IXth Plan, only 16,247 hectares irrigation potential is likely to be created. The Ministry have not clearly spelt out the reasons for this below par performance of AIBP, which is affecting overall irrigation potential of the country. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that shortcomings in AIBP programme should be identified and remedial steps taken and also brought to the notice of Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance for these to be seen and appreciated in proper perspective.

The Ministry have also not taken any action on the suggestion of the Committee that the funding pattern under AIBP for special category States and KBK be relaxed and made 100% grant. The Committee would like to know the conclusive action taken by the Government in this regard within 3 months of the presentation of this Report to Parliament.

Delay in Clearance of Investigation and Development of Ground Water Resources Schemes in Eastern States

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)

1.10 The Committee were distressed to find that Centrally Sponsored Scheme for investigation and development of ground water resource in Eastern States which was formulated at the behest of Planning Commission in 1992 as VIII Plan scheme was pending with Planning Commission for approval for the last eight years. The scheme aimed at utilising the ground water resources by shallow tube wells in Eastern States. The Committee had found that it was a very useful scheme as it would greatly benefit the farmers in that region and had a good impact on the crop production. The Committee had, therefore, recommended to the Planning Commission to urgently clear the scheme, which had already been inordinately delayed, so that it could be taken up for implementation during the year 2000-2001. The allocation, therefore, be made at Revised Estimate stage.

1.11 The Government in their reply have stated that this scheme envisages developing additional irrigation potential of 1.96 lakh ha. through 16,125 shallow tubewells and 1100 medium tubewells in the Eastern States comprising Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs. 178.60 crore. The Central Ground Water Board's scheme on "Investigation and Development of Ground Water in Eastern States" was discussed in the meeting held between the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the Union Minister for Water Resources on 4.4.2000. The Ministry of Water Resources have also written to the Planning Commission on 8.5.2000 to clear the scheme expeditiously. The views of the Standing Committee have also been brought to the notice of the Planning Commission for expediting the clearance of the Scheme.

Comments of the Committee

1.12 The Committee are unhappy to note that the Planning Commission has not cleared one of the most useful centrally sponsored scheme for Eastern States *i.e.* Investigation and Development of Ground Water Resources in Eastern State which is pending before the Planning Commission for approval for the last eight years. Although the scheme itself was formulated on the initiative taken by the Planning Commission. The Committee would like to know the reasons for the inordinate delay in clearing this scheme by the Planing Commission. They also desire that the scheme be cleared expeditiously in order to accelerate development of Ground Water Resources in the Eastern States.

National Project Construction Corporation Limited

Recommendation (Sl. No. 17)

1.13 The Committee were disappointed to note the continued uncertainty in regard to the fate of National Project Construction Corporation. It was a sick public sector company having 950 surplus manpower and was incurring heavy losses year after year. The Committee had time and again recommended for Revival Plan for this corporation to be implemented at the earliest. The Committee had been informed that the NPCC Ltd. had been directed to get the Revival Plan as suggested by M/s. Batliboi & Com. evaluated by IDBI. The Committee deplored the delay in taking a final decision on the fate of NPCC, as it was adversely affecting the performance of the Company. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that evaluation work by IDBI be expedited and issue of revival of NPCC Ltd. should be decided immediately.

1.14 The Committee in their reply have stated that in pursuance of the directions of the Prime Minister's Office, M/s. IDBI has been assigned with the task of evaluating the report of M/s. Batliboi & Co. on revival of National Project Construction Corporation Ltd. On receipt of its evaluation report, further action will be taken expeditiously on the issue of revival of NPCC Ltd. as directed by the Committee.

Comments of the Committee

1.15 The Committee desire that the Department should ask the IDBI to expedite the submission of the evaluation report so that appropriate follow-up action can be taken by the Government for the revival of NPCC Ltd.

Farakka Barrage Project

Recommendation (Sl. No. 18)

1.16 The Committee had found that Farakka Barrage Project had been given a share of Rs. 17.50 crore in the Rs. 100 crore scheme of Critical Anti Erosion Works in Ganga Basin States. The Committee were of the view that erosion of left bank of Ganga in Farakka Barrage Project was a gigantic problem and the sum of Rs. 17.50 crore provided

was too meagre to undertake all the anti-erosion works required in the project. They wish to point out that the Expert Committee constituted by Planning Commission had recommended undertaking of short term measures costing Rs. 315 crore and long term measures costing Rs. 612 crore for critical anti erosion work in the project. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that necessary allocation for anti erosion work as per the Expert Committee's Report be made to Farakka Barrage Project to meet the serious challenges of erosion.

The Committee had found that Bhagirathi-Hooghly System also faced severe erosional problem at different points affecting National Highways, Railway Tracks, historical, religious and important towns. The Bhagirathi/Hooghly and Ganga/Padma had already been declared as National Waterway No. 1. The maintenance of the navigable channel along this riverine route was the responsibility of the Central Government. The Committee had also recommended that Government of India should provide adequate fund for undertaking anti-erosion measures in the districts of Malda and Murshidabad and Nadia and that of Bhagirathi-Hooghly System which covers 7 more districts, upto the Hooghly estuary.

1.17 The Government in their reply have stated that an amount of Rs. 30.00 crore has already been provided as special additional Central Assistance during 1998-99 by the Planning Commission to Government of West Bengal under State Plan funds to mitigate the anti-erosion works of Ganga/Padma in Malda and Murshidabad districts. The expenditure incurred so far by the Government of West Bengal on these works is Rs. 76.42 crore.

In addition to this, the Government of West Bengal has undertaken some additional works on the left bank of Ganga on the upstream amounting to Rs. 30.00 crore. This includes construction of retirement bound and strengthening works of existing spurs.

An EFC memo. for a scheme with an outlay for Rs. 146.67 crore (Rs. 110.00 crore as Central Share + Rs. 36.57 crore as State Share) has been formulated and submitted to the Central Appraisal Agency. The funding pattern proposed is 75% (Central Grant): 25% (State Share). The Planning Commission has already given "in principle" approval

to this scheme. In this scheme, an amount of Rs. 30 crore has been provided for Anti-erosion works of West Bengal. In addition to this, Central Government propose to undertake anti-erosion schemes, through the Farakka Barrage Project Authority, amounting to Rs. 17.50 crore with Central funding, in areas under their jurisdiction.

Comments of the Committee

1.18 The Committee are dismayed to find that urgent need of executing critical anti-erosion works in Malda and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal is not receiving due attention of the Central Government. The Government appear to have totally ignored the Expert Committee's Report which had recommended undertaking of short term measures costing Rs. 315 crore and long term measures costing Rs. 612 crore for critical anti-erosion works. They have instead proposed schemes with outlays of Rs. 146.67 crore and 17.50 crore to Planning Commission which is still to be finally approved by them. The Committee, while appreciating the Government of West Bengal for undertaking anti-erosion works for which the State Government incurred an expenditure of Rs. 76.42 crore and additional work amounting to Rs. 30 crore, reiterate that Union Government should also make available funds to West Bengal as per Expert Committee's Report to overcome the erosion problem in the two districts.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Less Allocations for 2000-2001

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1)

2.1 The Committee note that the plan budget allocation for the Ministry of Water Resources for (2000-2001) has been increased to Rs. 475.42 crore as compared to allocation of Rs. 370.00 crore made in the B.E. (1999-2000). Though it represents 22% increase over the allocation for 1999-2000, the allocation of B.E. (2000-2001) is less than the minimum allocation of Rs. 582.00 crore proposed by the Ministry in the Annual Plan.

The Committee are perturbed to note though there has been substantial increase in allocation for Minor Irrigation and Flood Control Sector, the Plan budget allocations of important sectors like Major and Medium Irrigation Project and Command Area Development Programme have been reduced to Rs. 50.60 crore and Rs. 159.98 crore as compared to Rs. 52.51 crore and Rs. 177.00 crore provided in B.E. (1999-2000).

The Committee wish to point out that these sectors are very important as they have a major role in creation and effective utilisation of irrigation potential which is one of the major inputs for agriculture production. The objective fixed in the National Agenda by the Government to double the foodgrains production in the country in the next ten years cannot be achieved without the development of irrigation potential. In this context, the Committee take a very serious view of these reduced allocations under the above mentioned schemes.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance that they should increase the Plan outlay at Revised Estimate stage for the Ministry of Water Resources to Rs. 582.00 crore as originally proposed by them.

Reply of the Government

2.2 The observations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture have been brought to the attention of the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance through a D.O. letter written at the level of Secretary (WR) to Secretary, Planning Commission and Finance Secretary, Ministry of Finance with the request to enhance the Annual Plan 2000-2001 outlay of the Ministry to the level of Rs. 582.95 crore as was originally proposed by this Ministry. (Annexure—I & II).

Poor Utilisation of Overseas Assistance

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)

2.3 The Committee are dismayed to find the poor utilisation of funds in many projects undertaken by the Ministry with overseas assistance. In two overseas assisted projects like, Kerala Minor Irrigation Project and Community Irrigation Project, proposed to be completed in 2000, the fund utilisation is found to be only between 24 to 28%. The two projects proposed to be undertaken with French assistance in Gujarat and Manipur have also not made any headway likewise in case of some projects which were to be completed in 1999, the fund utilisation was around 80%. The Committee are unhappy at the low utilisation of assistance and recommend that the Ministry should take up the matter with State Government vigorously to ensure that funds are fully utilised within stipulated period of time. In this connection, they also desire that the Ministry should give technical and any other assistance possible to States in implementing the projects.

Reply of the Government

2.4 The overseas assisted projects are being implemented by the respective State Governments and, the role of the Ministry of Water Resources is of a facilitator for availing of overseas assistance and, consequently to carry out monitoring of these projects for their improved performance.

Monitoring of overseas assisted projects is being done regularly at quarterly intervals. In case of Major and Medium Irrigation projects as being funded by the World Bank, JBIC-Japan and the EEC, the Central

Water Commission (an attached office of this Ministry and an apex technical organisation in the water resources sector) is physically monitoring the projects and sending its findings to the State Governments and this Ministry. Besides, Missions consisting of experts, are also sent to the project sites by the World Bank for regular monitoring of the projects being assisted by them and they submit their findings to the State Governments and the Government of India. In the case of Minor Irrigation projects as being funded by EEC, Netherlands and KfW-Germany; the donor agencies have posted their consultants at the projects headquarters, who regularly monitor the projects along with the Project Director and send the reports to the State Governments.

The Ministry of Water Resources monitor all the projects on quarterly basis based on reports received from the various agencies as mentioned above, and the returns received from the State Governments; and, where the physical and financial progress is not found to be satisfactory, the matter is taken up with the Chief Secretary/Secretary (Irrigation/Water Resources) of the State Governments advising them to improve the projects performance accordingly.

As advised by the Hon'ble Committee, the matter is being taken up with the State Governments again at the highest level where utilisation of external assistance is low, advising them to programme the project implementation in such a way as to achieve utilisation of external assistance as per schedule. And, with the efforts made by the Ministry, the amount of assistance in rupee terms received from external donor agencies in the Water Resources Sector being looked after by the Ministry, has increased from Rs. 709.00 crore during 1998-99 to Rs. 898.92 crore during 1999-2000.

Hydrology Project

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5)

2.5 The Committee note that the Hydrology Project is being implemented with World Bank assistance under a credit agreement with Government of India. The total cost of this project is estimated at US\$ 180.9 million. This is a six year project which will come to an end on 31st March, 2002 and four years have already elapsed since this project was started. The Committee have been informed

that almost 43% expenditure has already been incurred from the cost base and along with that the Ministry has sorted out all the initial problems. The Secretary (Water Resources) during evidence has assured the Committee that they would be able to utilise these funds in next two years fully as the whole project was fully geared up. The Committee are happy to note that the works on the projects have been speeded up on account of better monitoring by the Ministry.

The Committee, however, recommend that since two years are left for completion of the project and 57 per cent funds are still to be utilised, the Ministry should further intensify the pace of the project by intensively monitoring on the project at every stage. At the same time, in case some delay is anticipated in completion of the project on schedule they should pursue with World Bank for extension of the Project.

Reply of the Government

2.6 The Ministry of Water Resources have advised the participating project agencies to prepare a realistic Action Plan for their component for the balance two years after taking into consideration their past progress and progress anticipated in the remaining period. M/s. HP Consultants, Consultant to the Project, have also been asked to assist the agencies in this regard. The Ministry, thereafter, in association with the World Bank will carry a desk review and finalise the plans of each agency.

A computerised Management Information System (MIS) is currently being developed through which the Ministry will monitor the implementation status of each agency *vis-a-vis* their Action Plan, on a quarterly basis. Besides, the progress of implementation will be monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Project Coordination Secretariat (PCS) of the Ministry. M/s. HP Consultants will also be assisting the PCS in this regard.

All out efforts thus will be made to utilize the credit extended within the balance period, and as advised by the Hon'ble Committee, the Ministry will take up the matter of extension of project period with the coming Bank Supervision Mission, if warranted well in time to avoid surrendering the unspent credit.

Research Work under Major and Medium Irrigation

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6)

2.7 The Committee are distressed to note that for research work under Major and Medium Irrigation, against an outlay of Rs. 4.30 crore proposed by the Ministry only Rs. 1.70 crore has been provided in budget outlay for 2000-2001. This is even less than Rs. 2.70 crore provided in BE (1999-2000).

The Committee have been informed that during 1999 several changes have been made to improve the implementation of R&D programme. A new concept of invited research is envisaged where R&D proposals will be invited by the Ministry of Water Resources on topics of immediate importance. The Committee command that new concept and desire that concerted efforts should be made to get more work under the R&D programme. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take up the matter with the Planning Commission for providing more funds for this scheme as demanded by them so that more R&D works as envisaged by the new concept are taken up. They also desire the Ministry to take up research work on Saline water.

The Committee further find that the Ministry is providing various types of training facilities for their service engineers at the Central as well as State level. The Committee desire that regular refresher courses should be conducted for these engineers so as to acquaint them with the new techniques on the water resource field.

Reply of the Government

2.8 The matter of providing more funds for R&D schemes has been taken up with the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance. In this context, a D.O. letter at the level of the Secretary (WR) has been written to Secretary, Planning Commission and the Secretary, (Expenditure), Ministry of Finance (Annexure—1).

The Ministry of Water Resources also sponsor research schemes on saline water as and when suitable proposals for the same are received. The following research schemes are in progress at present:

1. Studies for combating salinity problem in the Upper Krishna Project (UKP) area. [Institute: Gulbarga University (Estimated cost Rs. 6.02 lakh)]

2. Control of water logging and salinity of salt affected areas of Purna Valley under the command of Ketepurna and Morna project. [Institute: Punjabrao Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola (Estimated cost Rs. 4.76 lakh)]
3. Strategies for conjunctive use of poor quality underground water for controlling soil salinity/alkalinity and sustain crop productivity in Kaithal circle of Bhakra system. [Institute: CSSRI, Karnal (Estimated cost Rs. 5.22 lakh)]

A new scheme namely, "Environmental studies of surface and ground waters—Downstream of Pennar River" [Institute: Centre for Environment, J.N.T. University, Hyderabad] has been recently sanctioned by the Ministry, which will also include studies of the effects of saline water (Estimated cost. Rs. 6.38 lakh).

A separate plan scheme is being implemented for upgrading the Central Training Unit (CTU) of the C.W.C. at Pune to the level of a National Water Academy (NWA), exclusively for providing in-service training and refresher courses to the engineers of Central/State Governments.

Swaranrekha Chandil Project

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7)

2.9 The Committee note that Swaranrekha Chandil Project pending from 15-20 years is a multi-state project between Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa with main dam in Bihar. They have been informed that the Project has been left incomplete as gate work has to be done for which Bihar Government has to take forest clearance. Despite writing to them several times, Bihar Government has not taken the requisite clearance. The Committee take a very serious note of the fact that due to mere administrative reasons the project, where huge amount of money has been spent is allowed to hang fire for so many years. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take up the matter with the Bihar Government at the highest level and also expedite clearance from Planning Commission so that the dam is operationalised urgently.

Reply of the Government

2.10 Chandil Dam is one of the components of the Swarnarekha Multipurpose Project of Bihar. The project, with its components as (i) Chandil Dam (ii) Icha Dam (iii) Diversion structures barrage at Kharkai & Galudih; and, (iv) Canal System off taking from Chandil, Icha, Kharkai & Galudih was accepted by the Advisory Committee on Irrigation, Flood Control & Multipurpose Projects in its meeting held on 8.12.1992, for an estimated cost of Rs. 1428 crore, subject to obtaining clearances/approval from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, from the forest angle, Ministry of Welfare (present Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment) with regard to R&R and the State Finance Deptt, committing funds to the projects.

These clearances are pre-requisite for according investment clearance to the project by the Planning Commission.

Whereas the clearances in respect of Ministry of Welfare and the State Finance Department have been obtained by the State Government, the clearance of the Ministry of the Environment & Forests from forest angle is yet to be obtained by them. The State Authorities are being regularly persuaded for the same by this Ministry.

The Ministry of Water Resources had independently, taken up the issue of expeditious clearance of the Water Resources Projects from the forest angle with the Ministry of Environment & Forests. It has been agreed to by the Ministry of Environment & Forests during a meeting held between Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources and the Director General Forest, ex-officio Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forest that for avoiding delays in identifying land for compensatory afforestation, they will accept degraded lands of various categories also for afforestation and therefore, State Governments might create "Land Banks" in such lands for the purpose. Accordingly, all the State Governments should create "Land Banks" for the purpose, wherein degraded lands under various categories could be included.

Pursuant to this, Chief Secretaries of all the States, including Bihar, have been requested to identify and create "Land Banks" out of degraded lands to meet the requirement of compensatory afforestation for Water Resources Projects.

The State has been specifically requested to obtain the necessary clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and proceed with the project.

Minor Irrigation

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10)

2.11 The Committee are happy to find the substantial increase in allocation made for Minor Irrigation. Minor Irrigation has been rightfully given the due thrust, as it account for 63.29% of total irrigation. The Committee are, however, constrained to note that a scheme in Minor Irrigation *viz.* Restoration of old tanks has still not been approved by the Planning Commission despite the Committee's recommendations in this regard in their earlier Reports. They do not agree with the Planning Commission's reasoning that Central funds under various employment generation schemes were available to be pooled for rehabilitation and modernisation schemes. The Committee wish to point out that restoration of old tank require machanised handling and cannot be done manually. The Committee have also been informed that the scheme is being recast with due emphasis of farmer's participation. The Committee desire the Ministry to urgently submit the recast scheme to Planning Commission and vigorously pursue with them for early clearance of the scheme.

Reply of the Government

2.12 The scheme for "Rehabilitation and Management of Minor Irrigation Schemes" has been recast with more emphasis on people's participation. The scheme titled "Participatory Irrigation Scheme for Rehabilitation and Management of Minor Irrigation Projects", costing Rs. 703.00 crore, has been framed which will be completed in 5 years time from the date of start. The Planning Commission has since given its "in principle" approval for this scheme.

Ground Water Recharge Scheme

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11)

2.13 The Committee note with serious concern the rapid decline in ground water level in many States. The Committee were informed that a pilot scheme on artificial recharge of ground water is being implemented in some States. The Committee are happy to note that the scheme has given very encouraging results in selected areas of Delhi, Maharashtra, Chandigarh and Karnataka where it is being implemented. In JNU/IIT Area in NCT Delhi, about 1,25,000 cubic meter storm water was recharged during 1998 resulting in rise of water

levels by 4 m. The Committee strongly recommend that in view of encouraging results achieved in pilot schemes, the Planning Commission should clear the main Centrally Sponsored scheme on artificial recharge of ground water in States expeditiously. Since ground water is declining rapidly and is causing a great alarm in many States, the Committee desire that the Planning Commission should urgently consider and clear all schemes for ground water recharge mooted by the Ministry. The Committee further desire that the pilot schemes on ground water recharge be extended to other States and UTs also.

Reply of the Government

2.14 The rapid development of ground water resources to meet increasing demands of various user sectors during the past five decades has resulted in depletion of fresh ground water resources. In many arid and hard rock areas, overdraft and associated quality problems are increasingly emerging. In 231 blocks (out of a total of 4272) in various States in the country, besides 6 mandals in Andhra Pradesh and 12 talukas in Gujarat, situation of overdraft exists *i.e.* stage of ground water development has exceeded the annual replenishable resource. In addition, in 107 blocks all over the country besides 24 mandals in Andhra Pradesh, 14 talukas in Gujarat and 34 watersheds in Maharashtra, the stage of ground water development has exceeded 85% of the annual recharge.

The overdraft of ground water has resulted in the rapid decline of water levels, leading to failure of shallow tubewells, shortage of water supplies necessitating increased pumping lifts and pumping costs and even salinity ingress in the coastal areas.

The behaviour of ground water levels is being monitored by the Central Ground Water Board through a network of 14,682 stations throughout the country. Dugwells are being gradually replaced by piezometers for water level monitoring.

To tackle the problem of ground water depletion, urgent steps are needed to regulate ground water withdrawals and through artificial recharge measures. The Central Ground Water Board has been implementing the Central Sector Scheme on "Studies on Artificial Recharge of Ground Water" on a pilot basis in the States of Karnataka, Maharashtra, NCT of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh. The Scheme has now been extended to cover the States of

Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and the NCT of Delhi. 35 structures are presently under construction in these 12 States. Construction of rain water harvesting system at Kurukshetra using Sarovar Water and roof top rain water harvesting structure at Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi have also recently been completed which are expected to give positive results.

The results of the Pilot projects so far completed under the Scheme have been intimated to the Planning Commission with the request that the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on assisting the States in Artificial Recharge of Ground Water at an estimated cost of Rs. 101.50 crore may be cleared expeditiously. The advise of the Hon'ble Standing Committee has also been brought to the notice of the Planning Commission on 08.05.2000 for expediting the pending scheme. Earlier, the Minister (WR) had written to the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission on 21.03.2000 to clear the proposal at the earliest.

Flood Proofing Programme in North Bihar

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13)

2.15 The Committee are distressed to note that there has been continuous under utilisation of funds under Flood Proofing Programme in North Bihar for the last three years. During the year 1999-2000 an allocation of Rs. 1.00 crore was made for this scheme, which was reduced to Rs. 50.00 lakhs at the Revised Estimate stage. Again for 2000-2001 the Ministry has earmarked Rs. 2.00 crore. The Committee have been informed that there will be no expenditure for 1999-2000, since an amount of Rs. 0.75 crore is already lying as advance with the Government of Bihar for undertaking these works. The Committee have also been informed that a total 99 schemes at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.62 crore had been approved by the Steering Committee of the flood proofing programme in North Bihar. The Government of Bihar have so far taken up 57 schemes for execution, out of that only 11 schemes have been completed and remaining 46 are in various stages of completion. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Central Ministry to take up the matter with the Bihar Government to bring the prudent change in the implementation machinery of this important programme, so that the utilisation of funds as well as completion of these schemes can be speeded up.

Reply of the Government

2.16 The Ministry of Water Resources has been pursuing the matter with the Government of Bihar for accelerating the pace of implementation of this Programme. Secretary (WR) had taken up the issue with the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar and in response, Government of Bihar have raised the issues of (i) Allowing mechanical carriage of earth and soil, (ii) Sanitary Arrangement, and (iii) Conversion of Zamindari bunds into raised platform, as difficulties being faced for expeditious implementation of the Flood Proofing Programme. These issues have been discussed in the tenth meeting of the Steering Committee on Flood Proofing Programme in North Bihar held in May, 2000. The Committee agreed in principle for the earthwork of raised platforms by mechanical means where suitable soil was not locally available within reasonable distance as well as development of ring bunds. In view of the decisions taken in the meeting, the Government of Bihar has assured for early implementation of the Flood Proofing Programme.

Floods in rivers coming from Nepal

Recommendation (Sl. No. 14)

2.17 The Committee are informed that rivers coming from Nepal are creating floods in Bihar, West Bengal and Eastern U.P., thereby damaging crops, land and other infrastructure. These States incur heavy losses, which are not compensated by the Centre. The Secretary (WR) during evidence stated that only solution of the problem is building reservoirs in Nepal, and they have taken up the matter with the Nepal Government a number of times. The Committee recommend that the Government should take up this matter with the Nepal Government at the highest level and find a solution to the problem at the earliest. The Committee further recommend the Ministry to propose projects for Flood Control in the region and place it before the Planning Commission for necessary funding.

Reply of the Government

2.18 The Union Minister of Water Resources recently held a meeting with the Nepalese Foreign Minister in which discussions were held on implementation of Joint Projects for water resources development. He had also decided to visit Nepal, shortly, as a result to the discussions held on Indo-Nepal water resources development projects to be undertaken in the Nepalese territory.

As regards the recommendation of the Committee to propose projects in the region, it is stated that a few water resources development projects namely Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, Sapta Kosi High Dam Project and other Projects are proposed to be discussed in the forthcoming meetings.

Regarding Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, both Governments have agreed for joint survey and investigation. Consequently, a Joint Project Office has been opened for preparing a joint Detailed Project Report which would be submitted to the Planning Commission in due course.

Regarding Kosi High Dam Project, the revised Inception Report (1999) has been prepared by the Government of Nepal in pursuance to the decision taken in the 2nd meeting of the Joint Team of Experts held in January, 1997. Comments of Government of India on this revised inception report have been sent to the Ministry of External Affairs for further transmission to the Government of Nepal. Once the revised inception report is accepted by both the countries, further modalities for survey and investigation for preparation of the DPR in respect of Sapta Kosi High Dam Project will be chalked out.

In order to solve the problem of inundation due to Lalbakeya, Kamla, Bagmati and Khando rivers, it was decided to extend embankments along these rivers in Indian territory upto Nepal and tie to high ground in Nepal with financial assistance from India. It has been decided to take up the Lalbakeya embankment works as the first case and estimates for the same have been finalised and recently updated also at 1997 price level. The estimates for embankments in respect of Kamla and Bagmati have also been finalised. The estimated cost at 1997 price index for Kamla embankment is Rs. 49.08 crore and that of Bagmati embankment is Rs. 14.98 crore. A Joint Team for finalisation of the estimates and a Joint Committee on Embankment Construction exists for overseeing the implementation. So far the Ministry of External Affairs/Government of India has released Nepalese Rs. 70.00 lakh to the Government of Nepal for executing works pertaining to the Lalbakeya Embankment.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Flood Restoration Work in West Bengal

Recommendation (Sl. No. 19)

3.1 The State of West Bengal suffered from devastating floods in two consecutive years 1998 and 1999. In the year 1999 because of flood and consequent drainage congestion the entire State suffered very acutely. Almost all the major embankments in 16 districts 9860.00 sq.km. was flooded and inundation of 433 sq.km. was caused by drainage congestion.

The Committee recommend the Government to urgently release to the State Government funds to undertake flood restoration work in the State.

Reply of the Government

3.2 Flood Management is a State's subject and therefore, the State Government has to formulate schemes for flood restoration works and send it to the Central Water Commission duly approved by State TAC/State Flood Control Board and undertake the works from the State Plan Funds approved by the Planning Commission.

In this regard, it is also stated that the State Government has received Rs. 29.52 crore from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFCR) and Rs. 44.50 crore Central Share from Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) from the Ministry of Agriculture during 1999-2000.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8)

4.1 The Committee note with concern that at present there are 162 major, 240 medium and 74 ERM (Extension, Renovation and Modernisation) on-going irrigation projects in the country at various stages of construction at the end of VIII plan with spillover cost of Rs. 79,321.39 crore. Out of these total projects some projects are going on for the past 30 to 35 years which were started during second and third plan period. The Committee find that the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) started in 1996-97 to these projects have been able to complete only 7 projects out of 80 projects included under the scheme although almost Rs. 3959.07 crore have already been utilised upto 15th March, 2000. The Committee note that the additional irrigation potential created through components of projects covered under AIBP is only 5,79,834 ha. against the ultimate irrigation potential of 1,38,22808 ha. of projects covered under the programme. The Committee are not satisfied with the slow pace of work and recommend that an evaluation of results achieved in the project be done to find out the shortcomings in the programme.

The Committee are very unhappy to find that the Plan budget estimates for 1999-2000, which were pegged at Rs. 1600.00 crore, had been scaled down to Rs. 1400 crore at the revised estimates stage by Ministry of Finance without even consulting the Ministry of Water Resources. The Committee express their strong disapproval that funds approved by Parliament for an important scheme have been unilaterally reduced by Ministry of Finance without assigning any tangible reasons. As the funds for the AIBP Scheme are provided in the budget of the Ministry of Finance, the Committee, recommend that the Ministry of Finance with the recommendation of Ministry of Water Resources should release full funds allocated

for this scheme during 1999-2000 to the States. The Committee further recommend that the funding pattern under AIBP for special category States and KBK which in 3.1 (Centre: State) be further relaxed so as to make it 100% grant.

Reply of the Government

4.2 A large number of river valley projects, both multipurpose and Irrigation, have spilled over to the successive Plans mainly because of the financial constraints as being faced by the State Governments. As a result of this, despite huge investments, having already been made on these projects, the country is not able to derive the desired benefits. There were 162 Major, 240 Medium and 74 ERM on-going Irrigation Projects in the country at various stages of construction at the end of the 8th Plan (*i.e.* end of 1996-97) with spillover cost of Rs. 79,321.39 crore. This was a matter of grave concern for the Union Government and, ways and means for the expeditious completion of such projects, which were in advanced stage of completion, were explored. This resulted in the introduction of the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) in 1996-97.

The Ministry of Water Resources further made a critical review of the various on-going irrigation projects and advised the State Governments in September, 1999 to make concerted efforts to complete the on-going Major and Medium projects, which were in advanced stage of construction, in one or two years and certainly by the end of the 9th Plan. Subsequently, Chief Secretaries of all the States concerned were also addressed during November, 1999 for completion of the pending projects, which were in advanced stage of construction and were identified by this Ministry for completion during the 9th Plan. They were also requested to send the Action Plan so prepared and the progress reports on the same, on a monthly basis. During January, 2000, the matter of early completion of the on-going Major and Medium Projects was also taken up at the Minister (WR) level with the State Chief Ministers. Eleven States have already sent the schedule of completion. The matter is also being pursued with the remaining States. Ministry of Water Resources have identified 179 projects (66 Major and 113 Medium) for completion by the end of the 9th Plan. As reported by the State Governments, 22 projects covered under the AIBP were scheduled to be completed upto 1999-2000. Besides, the State Governments had also reported that 15 of such projects were likely

to be completed during 2000-2001 and another 22 projects during 2001-2002. It may be pertinent to add that a large number of projects, even though not yet complete, have already started yielding benefits and an irrigation potential of 9299 thousand hectares had been created upto the 8th Plan from such projects. Yet, another 6948 thousand hectares of irrigation potential is likely to be created during the 9th Plan, thus a total of 16,247 thousand hectares, as against their ultimate irrigation potential of 26,172 thousand hectares, will be achieved by the end of the current Plan.

The irrigation potential of projects covered under the AIBP is of the order of 1,32,21,01 ha. Against this, irrigation potential of 48,47,561 ha. had already been created through them before launch of AIBP in 1996-97. Out of the balance potential of 83,73,450 ha., an additional irrigation potential of 8,79,834 ha. (provisional) has been created upto 1999-2000. The progress of potential creation as also the completion of projects has been affected mainly due to the fact that most of the States have not been able to contribute their share and thereby utilise the funds allocated to them. The reduction in budget allocations of AIBP during 1999-2000 from Rs. 1600.00 crore to Rs. 1400.00 crore was made at the R.E. stage. Finally, however, the Ministry of Finance had cleared all the proposals recommended by this Ministry and an amount of Rs. 1460.60 crore has been released as CLA under the AIBP during 1999-2000. There is a budget provision of Rs. 1712.00 crore under the AIBP during 2000-2001.

Comments of the Committee

4.3 For Comments of the Committee Please refer to Para No. 1.9 of Chapter I of this report.

Delay in Clearance of Investigation and Development of Ground Water Resources Schemes in Eastern States

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)

4.4 The Committee are distressed to find that a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for investigation and development of ground water resource in Eastern States which was formulated at the behest of Planning Commission in 1992 as 8th Plan scheme is pending with Planning Commission for approval for the last eight years. The scheme aims at utilising the ground water resources by shallow tube wells in Eastern States. The Committee find that it is a very useful scheme as it would

greatly benefit the farmers in that region and have a good impact on the crop production. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Planning Commission to urgently clear the scheme, which has already been inordinately delayed, so that it can be taken up for implementation during the year 2000-2001. The allocation, therefore, be made at Revised Estimate stage.

Reply of the Government

4.5 This Scheme envisages developing additional irrigation potential of 1.96 lakh ha. through 16,125 shallow tubewells and 1100 medium tubewells in the Eastern States comprising Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs. 178.60 crore. The Central Ground Water Board's scheme on "Investigation and Development of Ground Water in Eastern States" was discussed in the meeting held between the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the Union Minister for Water Resources on 04.04.2000. The Ministry of Water Resources have also written to the Planning Commission on 08.05.2000 to clear the Scheme expeditiously.

The views of the Standing Committee have also been brought to the notice of the Planning Commission for expediting the clearance of the Scheme.

Comments of the Committee

4.6 For Comments of the Committee Please refer to Para No. 1.12 of Chapter I of this report.

Farakka Barrage Project

Recommendation (Sl. No. 18)

4.7 The Committee find that Farakka Barrage Project has been given a share of Rs. 17.50 crore in the Rs. 100 crore scheme of Critical Anti Erosion Works in Ganga Basin States. The Committee are of the view that erosion of left bank of Ganga in Farakka Barrage Project is a gigantic problem and the sum of Rs. 17.50 crore provided is too meagre to undertake all the anti-erosion works required in the project. They wish to point out that the Expert Committee constituted by Planning Commission had recommended undertaking of short term measures costing Rs. 315 crore and long term measures costing Rs. 612 crore for critical anti erosion work in the project. The Committee therefore, recommend that necessary allocation for anti erosion work as per the Expert Committee's Report be made to Farakka Barrage Project to meet the serious challenges of erosion.

The Committee find that Bhagirathi-Hooghly System also faces severe erosional problem at different points affecting National Highways, Railway Tracks, historical, religious and important towns. The Bhagirathi/Hooghly and Ganga/Padma have already been declared as National Waterway No. 1. The maintenance of the navigable channel along this riverine route is the responsibility of the Central Government. The Committee also recommend that Government of India should provide adequate fund for undertaking anti-erosion measures in the districts of Malda and Murshidabad and Nadia and that of Bhagirathi-Hooghly System which covers 7 more districts, upto the Hooghly estuary.

Reply of the Government

4.8 An amount of Rs. 30.00 crore has already been provided as special additional Central Assistance during 1998-99 by the Planning Commission to Government of West Bengal under State Plan funds to mitigate the anti-erosion works of Ganga/Padma in Malda and Murshidabad districts. The expenditure incurred so far by the Government of West Bengal on these works is Rs. 76.42 crore.

In addition to this, the Government of West Bengal has undertaken some additional works on the left bank of Ganga on the upstream amounting to Rs. 30.00 crore. This includes construction of retirement sound and strengthening works of existing spurs.

An EFC memo for a scheme with an outlay of Rs. 146.67 crore (Rs. 110.00 crore as Central Share + Rs. 36.57 crore as State Share) has been formulated and submitted to the Central Appraisal Agency. The funding pattern proposed is 75% (Central Grant): 25% (State Share). The Planning Commission has already given "in principle" approval to this scheme. In this scheme, an amount of Rs. 30 crore has been provided for Anti-erosion works of West Bengal. In addition to this, Central Government propose to undertake anti-erosion schemes, through the Farakka Barrage Project Authority, amounting to Rs. 17.50 crore with Central funding, in areas under their jurisdiction.

Comments of the Committee

4.9 For Comments of the Committee Please refer to Para No. 1.18 of Chapter I of this report.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Budgetary Allocation for North Eastern States

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2)

5.1 The Committee are happy to note that out of the total Plan outlay of Rs. 475.42 crore for the year 2000-2001, the Ministry has earmarked an allocation of Rs. 91.90 crore for the various schemes in the North-Eastern region. This allocation is almost 19.33% of the total plan allocations for the year 2000-2001. The Committee note that the Government propose to implement three new projects in Flood Control Sector *viz.* (i) Pagladiya Project in Assam, (ii) Flood Control Waters in Brahmaputra Valley, and (iii) Brahmaputra Board for North East. The total allocation for those project comes to Rs. 85.50 crore. They are, however, constrained to note that these schemes have not yet been finally cleared by Planning Commission.

The Committee recommend that the Ministry should pursue vigorously with the Planning Commission for an early clearance of these important schemes, so that the schemes could be taken up urgently. They also desire that funds allocated for North-Eastern States should be fully utilised and the three new projects to be taken up are completed within the stipulated period of time.

Reply of the Government

5.2 The Ministry is pursuing vigorously with the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry for early approval of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rs. 200 crore (Rs. 150 crore as Central Share + Rs. 50 crore as State Share) regarding Flood Control in Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys. The Public Investment Board has approved Pagladiya Dam Project, subject to certain conditions during its meeting held on 14.03.2000. Information and clearances ad desired by the PIB are being collected after which a note for CCEA will be prepared. The Ministry has also prepared an action plan to strengthen

the Brahmaputra Board and make its functioning more effective. It has also been proposed that Brahmaputra Board will take up the work of Pagladiya Dam Project and flood management and drainage development schemes, which have been identified and included in the action plan.

National Water Policy

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

5.3 The Committee are unhappy to note that the draft revised National Water Policy which was finalised by National Water Board on 29.10.98, has till not been placed before National Water Resources Council for consideration and adoption. The Committee were earlier informed that the meeting in this regard was scheduled to be held on 3rd April, 2000. Now, the Secretary, Water Resources informed the Committee during evidence that the meeting was being postponed due to some administrative reasons. The Committee are very much concerned about the delay in the finalisation of the National Water Policy, as the existing policy is not able to address fully to the new challenges that the country is facing in the sector.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should finalise the Draft National Water Policy without any further delay so as to have a consolidated and sustainable development of our water resources and also to settle water related disputes of the States promptly and amicably.

Reply of the Government

5.4 Draft National Water Policy (1998) and the Draft National Policy Guidelines for water allocation among States, as finalised by the National Water Board, were placed before the National Water Resources Council (NWRC) headed by the Prime Minister and with Chief Ministers/Lt. Governors of States/Union Territories as Members for consideration and adoption in its 4th Meeting held on July 7, 2000. There was a general consensus among the States on most of the important issues contained in the policy. However, some areas of differences continued to remain. It has been decided by the NWRC that both the documents be referred to a Working Group headed by Union Minister for Water Resources, with members drawn from the States, to sort out the differences and bring about a consensus.

Comments of the Committee

5.5 For Comments of the Committee Please refer to Para No. 1.6 of Chapter I of this report.

Command Area Development (CAD)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9)

5.6 The Committee are unhappy to note that the Plan budgetary allocation under Command Area Development Programme (CAD) has been coming down year after year. In 1998-99 allocation made was Rs. 188 crore, in 1999-2000 the allocation was slashed down to Rs. 178.00 crore, in 1999-2000 the allocation was reduced to Rs. 161.62 crore at revised estimates stage and again for 2000-2001 the allocation has been kept only Rs. 160.88 crore.

The Committee take a very serious view of this reduced release of funds to Command Area Development Programme during the above mentioned years. The primary objective of the CAD programme is to bridge the gap between irrigation potential created and utilised through increase in irrigated areas and also to increase efficient utilisation of irrigation water. The Committee find that there is still a large gap between irrigation created and utilised from Major and Medium Irrigation Projects. As against 1.56 m ha of irrigation potential created during 1997-99, utilisation of irrigation potential was only 1.16 m ha.

The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance to increase the Plan budgetary allocation at the revised estimates stage for this scheme as originally proposed by the Ministry of Water Resources to Rs. 180.00 crore. The Ministry should also accordingly raise the targets of various components of the project to be achieved during the Ninth Plan on restoration of allocation to B.E. amount of Rs. 180 crore.

Reply of the Government

5.7 The Centrally Sponsored CAD Programme has been continuing during the 9th Five Year Plan and an amount of Rs. 840 crore has been provided for this scheme in this Plan period by the Planning Commission. Targets for different components of OFD works *i.e.* construction of field channels, field drains, land levelling and shaping, warabandi and reclamation of waterlogged areas had been fixed

considering budgetary allocation of the scheme. However, the budget estimates for 1997-98 to 2000-2001 were proposed on the basis of availability of funds (Annexure-III—page 39) and physical targets were set accordingly (Annexure-IV—page 40). The question of increase of allocation to Rs. 180.00 crore would be taken up with the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance at the stage of RE 2000-2001. The targets would be revised accordingly.

Desilting of Old Rivers and Strengthening of Bunds

Recommendation (Sl. No. 15)

5.8 The Committee note with concern that due to silting of Ganga and its tributaries the capacity of the Ganges to carry flood water to Bay of Bengal has been reduced with the result an area of North Bihar and West Bengal remain under water during October and November.

The Committee are of the view that this problem can be solved by desilting by dredging of the river. In this connection, they wish to draw attention of the Ministry to the desilting done in the Cauvery Basin in Tamil Nadu in the last two years, which has reduced the volume of floods.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that a scheme for desilting old rivers and strengthening of bunds should be chalked out by the Ministry and forward it to the Planning Commission for necessary approval and funding.

Reply of the Government

5.9 As recommended by the Hon'ble Standing Committee, the Central Water Commission and Ganga Flood Control Commission have been requested to prepare a scheme for desilting old rivers and strengthening of bunds. On receipt of the requisite scheme from the Central Water Commission/Ganga Flood Control Commission, the same would be forwarded to the Planning Commission for approval and funding.

Critical Anti Erosion Works in Ganga Basin States

Recommendation (Sl. No. 16)

5.10 The Committee are happy to note that the scheme 'Critical Anti Erosion Works in Ganga Basin State' has finally been given in principle approval by Planning Commission and is expected to be

launched in 2000-2001. The Committee desire the Ministry to vigorously pursue with Planning Commission for all administrative clearances of the scheme so that it could be implemented in the first trimester of the financial year. The Committee further desire the Ministry to ensure that Rs. 23 crore provided in the budget are fully utilised by the States, so that the scheme could be completed within the Ninth Plan period itself.

Reply of the Government

5.11 In this regard, "In Principle Approval" has been accorded by the Planning Commission. Subsequently, EFC memo. has been circulated to various appraising agencies. The comments of Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission have recently been received. This Ministry is pursuing the matter for convening the EFC meeting at the earliest. The funds would be released after obtaining the necessary approvals.

The Ministry of Water Resources will endeavour to provide the allocated amount of Rs. 23 crore during the financial year 2000-2001 to the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal as well as Farraka Barrage Authority after the approval of the EFC, the full Planning Commission and the Cabinet Committee on External Assistance (CCEA).

National Project Construction Corporation Limited

Recommendation (Sl. No. 17)

5.12 The Committee are disappointed to note the continued uncertainty in regard to the fate of National Project Construction Corporation. It is a sick public sector company having 950 surplus manpower and is incurring heavy losses year after year. The Committee has time and again recommended for Revival Plan for this corporation to be implemented at the earliest. The Committee have now been informed that the NPCC Ltd. has been directed to get the Revival Plan as suggested by M/s. Batliboi & Co. evaluated by IDBI. The Committee deplore the delay in taking a final decision on the fate of NPCC, as it is adversely affecting the performance of the Company. The Committee, therefore, recommend that evaluation work by IDBI be expedited and issue of revival of NPCC Ltd. should be decided immediately.

Reply of the Government

5.13 In pursuance of the directions of the Prime Minister's Office, M/s. IDBI has been assigned with the task of evaluating the report of M/s. Batliboi & Co. on revival of National Project Construction Corporation Ltd. On receipt of its evaluation report, further action will be taken expeditiously on the issue of revival of NPCC Ltd. as directed by the Committee.

Comments of the Committee

5.14 For Comments of the Committee Please refer to Para No. 1.15 of Chapter I of this report.

NEW DELHI;
22 February, 2001
3 Phalgun, 1922 (Saka)

S.S. PALANIMANICKAM
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Agriculture.

ANNEXURE I

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES
SHRAM SHAKTI BHAWAN, RAFI MARG,
NEW DELHI-110 001

Z. Hasan
Tel: 3710305

May 22, 2000

D.O. No. 19/31/2K-PP (Vol. III)

Dear Dr. Saxena,

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha while scrutinizing the Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of this Ministry has observed that the Annual Plan outlay for 2000-2001 of the Ministry has been reduced by the Planning Commission from Rs. 582.95 crore (Proposed) to Rs. 475.42 crore. The Committee have expressed their concern particularly for the reduction in the following components:—

Sl. No.	Sector	Proposed Outlay (Rs. in crore)	Approved Outlay (Rs. in crore)	Remarks
1.	Major and Medium Irrigation	75.48	50.60	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 52.51 crore
2.	R & D Component of Major & Medium Sector	4.00	1.70	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 2.60 crore
3.	Command Area Development Programme	180.00	159.58	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 177 crore

In this context, I wish to bring to your attention the relevant observations/recommendations of Standing Committee which are enclosed herewith for ready reference.

In view of the recommendations, it is requested that the outlay for the overall Plan size for 2000-2001 including the above mentioned components may be raised to the levels as were originally proposed by this Ministry.

With regards.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Z. HASAN)

Encl: As above

Dr. N.C. Saxena,
Secretary,
Planning Commission,
Yojana Bhawan,
New Delhi.

ANNEXURE-II

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES
SHRAM SHAKTI BHAWAN, RAFI MARG,
NEW DELHI-110001

Z. Hasan
Tel: 3710305

May 22, 2000

D.O. No. 19/13/2K-PP (Vol. III)

Dear Shri Mankad,

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha while scrutinizing the Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of this Ministry has observed that the Annual Plan outlay for 2000-2001 of the Ministry has been reduced by the Planning Commission from Rs. 582.95 crore (Proposed) to Rs. 475.42 crore. The Committee have expressed their concern particularly for the reduction in the following components:

Sl. No.	Sector	Proposed Outlay (Rs. in crore)	Approved Outlay (Rs. in crore)	Remarks
1.	Major and Medium Irrigation	75.48	50.60	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 52.51 crore
2.	R & D Component of Major & Medium Sector	4.00	1.70	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 2.60 crore
3.	Command Area Development Programme	180.00	159.58	Less than BE 1999-2000 of Rs. 177 crore

In this context, I wish to bring to your attention the relevant observations/recommendations of Standing Committee which are enclosed herewith for ready reference.

In view of the recommendations, it is requested that the outlay for the overall Plan size for 2000-2001 including the above mentioned components may be raised to the levels as were originally proposed by this Ministry.

With regards.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Z. Hasan)

Encl: As above

Shri Piyush Mankad,
Finance Secretary,
Ministry of Finance,
North Block,
New Delhi.

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON AGRICULTURE HELD ON 22ND FEBRUARY, 2001
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'C' GROUND FLOOR,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs to 1540 hrs

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

Shri M. Master Mathan — *In the Chair*

2. Shri Ram Tahal Chaudhari
3. Shri Ramdas Rupala Gavit
4. Shri Raghunath Jha
5. Shri Abul Hasnat Khan
6. Shri Y.G. Mahajan
7. Shri Haribhau Shankar Mahale
8. Shri Savshibhai Makwana
9. Shri Dalpat Singh Paraste
10. Shri Adi Shankar
11. Shri Tejveer Singh
12. Shri Mahboob Zahedi

Rajya Sabha

13. Smt. Jamana Devi Barupal
14. Shri Khagen Das
15. Shri Kailash Joshi
16. Shri Devi Prasad Singh

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. (Smt.) Paramjeet Kaur Sandhu — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri Raj Shekhar Sharma — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Smt. Anita Jain — *Under Secretary*
4. Shri K.L. Arora — *Under Secretary*

In the absence of Hon'ble Chairman (AC), the Committee chose Shri M. Master Mathan to act as Chairman for the sitting under Rule 258(3) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The Committee then took up the following Memoranda for their consideration and adoption:—

Memoranda No.	Reports
1.	Draft Action Taken Report on 12th Report (12th Lok Sabha) on cultivation of cotton of the M/o Agriculture (Deptt. of Agriculture and Co-operation)
2.	Draft Action Taken Report on 6th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the M/o Agriculture (Deptt. of Agriculture and Co-operation)
3.	Draft Action Taken Report on 7th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the M/o Agriculture (Deptt. of Agricultural Research and Education)
4.	Draft Action Taken Report on 8th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the M/o Agriculture (Deptt. of Animal Husbandry and Dairying)
5.	Draft Action taken Report on 9th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the M/o Agriculture (Deptt. of Food Processing Industries)
6.	Draft Action Taken Report on 10th Report (13th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry of Water Resources

The Committee considered the Draft Reports one by one and adopted them without any change.

The members of the Committee, thereafter, authorised the Chairman to present all the above mentioned Reports to the House on a date and time convenient to him.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

[Vide Para 4 of Introduction of the Report]

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE 17TH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (13TH LOK SABHA)

(i) Total Number of Recommendations	19
(ii) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government	
Serial Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 & 14	
Total	9
Percentage	47.36%
(iii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	
Serial No. 19	
Total	1
Percentage	5.26%
(iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee	
Serial Nos. 8, 12 & 18	
Total	3
Percentage	15.78%
(v) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	
Serial Nos. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16 & 17	
Total	6
Percentage	31.57%