

[Shri Ved Prakash Goyal]

"That in pursuance of Rule 4(i) of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers Rules, 1963, the members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, one member from among themselves to serve as member of the National Welfare Board for Seafarers subject to the other provisions of the said Rules."

*The motion was adopted.*

12.12 hrs.

### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

#### Unprecedented drought situation in the country – (Cont'd)

[English]

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi) : Sir, I beg to move :

"That the House do now adjourn."

I thank you on behalf of any Party and my own behalf for giving us this opportunity to raise an issue which has been causing severe and extensive distress to crores of men, women and children in large parts of the country.

I was going through the reply to a Starred Question in the House on Monday and looking at the dimension of the tragedy.

- Andhra Pradesh: 22 districts
- Chhattisgarh: all 16 districts
- Haryana: all 19 districts
- Himachal Pradesh: all 12 districts
- Jharkhand: all 22 districts
- Karnataka: 24 districts
- Madhya Pradesh: 32 districts
- Maharashtra: 33 out of 35 districts
- Orissa: 30 districts
- Punjab: all 17 districts

- Rajasthan: all 32 districts
- Tamil Nadu: 19 districts, although the formal declaration has not yet been made.
- Uttar Pradesh: all 70 districts
- Uttaranchal: all 13 districts; and
- West Bengal: 3 districts.

The report further adds :

"Besides, Gujarat has recently declared 13 districts as drought affected."

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Sir, even Gujarat is reeling from drought and the repercussions have been severe because it has come on the back of the terrible and massive earthquake. Yet, the BJP and VHP do not seem to be agitated about the drought and its effect on the people of the State, but instead they carry on with their divisive, hate-filled propaganda.

It seems that this is clearly one of the worst and most widespread drought that we have had in a long time. Substantial portions of the *Kharif* crop have been lost and according to the Government's own advance estimate, the shortfall of *Kharif* foodgrain production this year may actually well be closed to 19 per cent. Sowing has been far less than normal. Even in the areas where there has been sowing, the crop has withered.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a signal of the impending drought was visible many months ago to all of us and surely to the Government also. A weak monsoon was forecast. There were reports on television; there were reports in the newspapers. Its impact could definitely have been anticipated. Even after the *Kharif* crop was lost there was time to take action to protect at least the *Rabi* crop, but this too was not done.

I have seen the drought-induced misery in various parts of our country as many of you who come from those areas have undoubtedly also seen. I do not wish to make this a political issue since the lives of so many *kisans* and *khet mazdoors* are involved. But I am compelled to say that the Central Government has not treated or tackled this national calamity with the sense of urgency required as was done, for instance, during the drought of 1987-88. I regret to say that the Central Government has responded,

in a most lethargic and insensitive manner and has not taken serious notice of the gravity of the situation that prevails in so many States.

I have held a number of meetings with the Chief Ministers of Congress-governed States. We have collectively met and together we drew up certain suggestions and action points. We then, all together, called on the hon. Prime Minister and that was on August 05. At that point we had made certain suggestions which I would like to quickly list out.

One suggestion was that an all Party Committee be set up to galvanise the implementation of the relief package. This has not been done. We had also suggested a special meeting of the NDC to be convened to discuss the drought situation and short and long term plans to deal with such an emergency. We requested for immediate despatch of Assessment Teams from the Central Government to the affected areas. This was done but after quite a bit of delay. I had suggested that the corpus of the National Calamity Relief Fund be raised to at least Rs. 10,000 crore. At that time we were told that the National Calamity Relief Fund has no monetary limit. And yet most of the States have received a tiny fraction of the relief assistance which they had asked the Centre for. I had also asked for the waiver of interest on short and medium term loan extended by co-operatives and commercial banks to the farmers in drought hit areas. Now, the waiver has not been announced but what the Government has done is that it has simply deferred this by a year. Here I would like to ask a question. In this not adding the burden to the next year? I had also suggested changes to improve the effectiveness of the National Crop Insurance Scheme and also I had asked if the Government could have, for obvious reasons, a system whereby emergency seed production plans could be made to make good the loss in seed production during the *Kharif* season. Now, this too has not materialised.

There were many other suggestions that came from the Chief Ministers at that very meeting at which I think the hon. Agriculture Minister himself was present. There were many other suggestions from experienced Chief Ministers. The Government has now announced a package of relief measures. It almost seems to me that the same package keeps being announced from time to time perhaps to give an impression that a lot is being done. But, I am afraid I

have to say that the truth is quite otherwise. The package is obviously inadequate and it has come too late. We are told that the reports of the Central teams are still being processed for further releases in future.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are in November. The *Kharif* crop is already lost. Wheat sowing has started. When is the Government going to act? This is what all of us through you would like to ask the Government and would like to also get a reply. We know that there are a large number of Districts that are chronically drought-prone. So, why did Government not show greater preparedness to meet any contingency, especially in these regions? It seems to us that this attitude is quite incomprehensible. I believe that the time has come for a comprehensive review of all long-running schemes like the Drought-Prone Areas Programme and the Desert Development Programme, so as to make them effective because today they are simply not effective.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, drought management must be a cooperative endeavour. There is no room for confrontation between the Centre and the States here. We all must recognise the severe fiscal problems that are faced by all States Governments. Many States are actually taking measures both to raise revenues and to manage their expenditures well. Therefore, the Centre must help these States. It must be more flexible in the implementation of relief and rehabilitation programmes without unnecessarily adding to the fiscal burden of the States.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a time when our country had a famine code. Now we have successfully abolished mass famine. That was a huge, tremendous hurdle and we were able to successfully cross that hurdle – I would say here – greatly thanks to the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. I believe we all know that not more than 40 per cent of the cultivated area in our country is irrigated. Even if all of the country's irrigation potential is harnessed, 40 per cent of the cultivated areas would still be rain-fed. Thus, vulnerability to the vagaries of the monsoon simply cannot be avoided.

I would suggest, therefore, that the time is ripe for the country to think of a drought management code in the form of appropriate legislation that would codify a detailed action plan, which would automatically come into force when the rains fail. This code should also cover relief

[Shrimati Sonia Gandhi]

measures, food and drinking water supply, alternative cropping systems, grain, seed and water banks in villages. There should be special focus on the really vulnerable section of our society who inevitably face acute distress during times of drought and who inevitably and always suffer the most, and these are the *dalits*, the tribals and landless labourers, women-headed households, the old, the aged, the destitutes, infirm, pregnant and nursing mothers, and all those who cannot avail of the Food for Work Programmes.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to make yet another suggestion which would definitely strengthen our drought management effort. The system for allocating resources in times of calamities like drought, must not only be fair and equitable to all affected States, but also must be seen to be fair, equitable and transparent.

Here again, there seems to be a standard refrain of the Centre when allocating foodgrains to the States. The standard refrain is that the States are not lifting the grains. Now, the Government, of course, has all the figures; and I too have checked them with some of the Chief Ministers who are in charge of the Congress-ruled States. I must say that the picture that emerges from the reports that they have given is a quite different one.

I would just like to quote a few cases. For instance, Madhya Pradesh was allotted one lakh metric tonnes of grains as drought relief in the current financial year. This was to be lifted by 30th November. The State has already lifted 75 per cent of this and the rest will be lifted by the 21st November. They have also asked for another five lakh metric tonnes, but that has not been given so far.

Chhattisgarh was allotted only 50,000 metric tonnes for drought relief this year and this allotment was made on the last day of September. By October end, the State had lifted the entire quantity. They have also utilised the entire quantity; and they have again asked for another five lakh metric tonnes, which is still to be cleared.

Karnataka asked for six lakh metric tonnes. They were allotted only two lakh metric tonnes. They have lifted 1.65 lakh metric tonnes. They have not been able to lift the rest because of movement problems of the FCI. The State has

been requested to have this sorted out. In the meantime, they have asked for another two lakh tonnes immediately, but as of now, this is still to come.

In the case of Rajasthan, it is really, I would say, the State which is the most distressed at the moment because of more than four years of consecutive drought conditions; and it has asked for 56 lakhs metric tonnes, against which it has been given only 2 lakh metric tonnes. The State has lifted the entire quantity and has been desperately asking for more. I am told that only yesterday, a further allocation has been made and that too, of only five lakh metric tonnes.

So, Mr. Speaker, Sir, does this not show that the Centre is trying to pass the buck, rather than acknowledging its own shortcomings and adopting a more serious attitude towards these major calamities?

What we need is objective criteria to determine the nature and quantum of Central assistance. It is actually no use for the Centre to shift the responsibility to the States, as it has repeatedly done on so many occasions. After all there are limits to what the States can do on their own, without adequate support from the Central Government under such circumstances.

Sir, here, I am not speaking only of Congress-ruled States; I am speaking of all the States that have been so badly impacted, irrespective of the party in power.

Sir, today this country is facing the dichotomy of overflowing godowns and empty stomachs. Starvation deaths, at any time, are a blot on our society and more so when we have such huge levels of foodgrain stocks. Today, our stocks for foodgrains are four times more than the 16.8 million tonnes required for ensuring food security. For over a year, my Party colleagues and myself have been requesting the Prime Minister to start large scale food-for-work and food-for-nutrition programmes across the country, particularly, in those traditionally vulnerable regions. We have also been asking for an increase in the coverage and allocation under the Antyodaya Programme. Yet, very little has been done and the Centre has not yet addressed the very genuine demand of the States regarding transportation cost of the foodgrains that are allotted to them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Government has been particularly privileged in presiding over the largest foodgrain stocks in the history of our nation. Here again, I would like to recall Shrimati Gandhi's name because it was under her leadership that this was made possible. Yet, the Government has failed miserably in providing basic and essential food security, when and where it is most needed. It has failed to use the surplus to alleviate endemic malnutrition. The real underlying tragedy of endemic malnutrition is often overlooked. I am sure, all of us understand that it is only to be expected that the nutrition situation deteriorates further during acute drought years. Ironically, for two years prior to the drought, the opportunity offered by the surplus food stock to prevent acute distress among poor people was simply frittered away. While the Central food stocks were steadily rising, the off take of foodgrains under the Public Distribution System was declining. Why did this happen? This is again a question we would like the Government to answer. This happened due to the Government's own distorted policy which reduced the PDS offtake at a time when they should have actually been increasing.

Well this is not an occasion to score debating points. There have been some unfortunate attempts to reap political capital out of the recent tragic deaths in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh without going objectively into the facts. It is most unfortunate, of course, that these deaths have occurred. On my request, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan had instituted a high level inquiry to see if any administrative lapses occurred in the Baran District. I have seen the inquiry report. It acknowledges the unprecedented famine in the entire district and it also acknowledges the fact that since failure of the monsoon is not very common in the Baran District, people there are less equipped to handle the distress. The report clearly establishes, however, that the immediate cause of death in both those villages was specific illnesses. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has given a detailed report about the deaths in Shivpuri District. According to the report, most of the affected families are owners of land. Most of them had stocks of foodgrains in their homes at the time the deaths occurred in the family.

Therefore, I believe we need to carefully analyse the cause of such deaths and learn from experience rather

than make accusations at a time when the drought is already causing sufficient distress.

I do hope that we will mount a collective response to mitigate the impact of drought in the years to come. I believe that we have the knowledge, we have the technology, we have the skills and we have the resources. What we need desperately is the will and the commitment. This is an issue on which there can be no division in this House and I am sure that there is no division in this House. I trust that all Members from all sections of the House will be united on the need for vigorous and timely action.

The Centre – and this is most important – has to provide the leadership. It is still not too late. There is much that can still be done. But that requires a sincerity of purpose and a sense of urgency. I hope that this will be reflected after the conclusion of this debate.

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That the House do now adjourn."

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, let me bring it to your notice that there will be no lunch hour today and the discussion on the Adjournment Motion will continue.

[*Translation*]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not a good trend to skip 'Zero Hour' and lunch hour so after. Therefore, Zero Hour and lunch hour must be taken.

[*English*]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Today we are discussing about famine. So, let us skip lunch!

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : I have asked to skip the lunch hour today only.

(*Interruptions*)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : It should not be a routine affair. We may skip lunch hour and Zero Hour only under special circumstances. It is inappropriate to skip Zero Hour and lunch hour very often. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN (Vidisha) : Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : The food is very much there, only the Lunch Hour has been skipped. You may accompany me for lunch. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : After having lunch, you can come back.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : How the hon. Members who are not ready to leave the House for even a minute, will have their lunch? That's why, I am raising this question. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : People are dying due to starvation, we may skip the meals for a day while attending the House. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENU KUMARI (Khagaria) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I should also be given the chance to speak. A student of Maulana Azad Medical College has been gang raped. I should be given chance to speak on this issue. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Tomorrow, you will be given a chance to speak during Zero Hour.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the leader of Opposition brought adjournment motion in the House on the issue of drought and a debate was initiated on the issue. She was expressing her concern in this regard. She had convened a meeting of Chief Ministers belonging to Congress Party in which they discussed the same issue. Sir, adivasis and dalits are dying every day in drought affected Rajasthan due to starvation. And this meeting was convened in a hill station of Rajasthan – Mount Abu. Five to six crore rupees were spent on this meeting. Money was spent lavishly. I would like to ask the leader of the opposition whether it was not possible to hold this meeting in Delhi. . . .(Interruptions) Shedding crocodile tears on the issue of drought will not serve the purpose . . . .(Interruptions)

COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY (Barmer) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, he is levelling allegation, starvation deaths have not taken place there. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You please sit down and listen to him.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : It is right that country is facing unprecedented drought. 14 States are drought affected. People are dying due to starvation in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Let there be order in the House. Please sit down.

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Through you, I would like to ask the leader of opposition whether the reasons for starvation deaths in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were also discussed in this meeting of Chief Ministers. She was mentioning in her speech that the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were stating that these deaths have taken place due to some disease and not due to starvation. She was mentioning that especially the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has said. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Your party member is speaking, let him speak.

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA (Jhabua) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon'ble members are not taking this issue seriously. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please speak in detail while replying to this issue. It is inappropriate on your part of interrupt. All of you please sit down. Your party member is speaking, let him speak. You can raise your objections later on.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, she said that the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have stated that these deaths have taken place due to some disease and not due to starvation. She also said that the deceased had land to cultivate and plenty of foodgrains at their houses. I challenge the House in this regard. I myself have visited Naharia, Khajuri, Lamnia and Bhalai village of Ganj Basauda Tehsil of Vidisha district in Madhya Pradesh where starvation death have taken place. They may send their team to enquire whether their houses

have plenty of foodgrains. I will renounce the politics if it is found true. It is completely illusionary. The fact is that 31 people have died due to starvation in Ganj Basauda Tehsil of Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh alone. . . .  
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH (Rajgarh) : I will resign from the House if hon'ble Members proves that starvation deaths have taken place in Shivpuri area of Madhya Pradesh. However, if the hon'ble Member fails to prove it, he should resign. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : I accept the challenge. Starvation death have taken place in Ganj Basauda Tehsil of Madhya Pradesh. . . .(*Interruptions*)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (Udaipur) : Wrong figures can not be presented in the House.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Through you, I would like to submit that an all party Committee should be constituted to know the truth in respect of Madhya Pradesh. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL (Kanpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the precious time of the House is being wasted. The hon. Members should speak on the subject. . . .  
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Leader of the Opposition herself is saying that they had plenty of foodgrains in their houses and they were possessing land and property also. But the truth is that they were not having anything to eat. Crops could not be produced due to drought. As a result they were not able to earn whatever that were earning earlier. . . .(*Interruptions*) Relief works were not started at a desired scale. Not a single relief work was started under the scheme "Food for Work" and in 'Sampooran Gramin Rozgar Yojana' in Ganj Basauda Tehsil of Vidisha district when such deaths started taking place there. . . .(*Interruptions*)

COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : He is misleading the House. . . .(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Col. (Retd.) Sona Ram Choudhary, please sit down. We are discussing an important issue.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : We are discussing a very important issue. The issue is in the form of an Adjournment Motion.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my parliamentary constituency is badly affected by drought.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon'ble Members, please sit down.

[*Translation*]

Please listen to me. I would like to appeal to all the Members that the issue under discussion has a national importance. I just want to say that I allowed the adjournment Motion because of the importance of this issue. Now when the discussion has been initiated on this issue. I would like that more and more Members could get the chance to speak on it. Therefore, I request all of you to let all the hon'ble members express their views. How I would be able to give chance to all, if you will not listen to my request. I appeal to all of you not to level allegations and counter allegations on this issue. Farmers of our country are waiting hopefully for our action on this issue. You are aware that a number of people are starving in various parts of the country. Therefore, this issue should be discussed with a view to help them. I will definitely give you the chance to place your views before the House. If the hon'ble Members from this side want to make any speeches, please let them do so. Please do not disturb them.

[*English*]

Please keep silence and let there be a serious discussion on this issue.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, very humbly, I would like to request that we should

[Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan]

accept the fact that starvation deaths have taken place and if the mistake is on our part, we should accept it and then. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. If, despite my repeated request you are not allowing him to speak, how the House will function in such a situation ?

[English]

Hon'ble Member, please go ahead with your speech.

[Translation]

Not only to you but I am appealing all the members.

[English]

I want complete silence in this House. What is this going on ? Do you not know the importance of the issue ? Do you not have any concern for farmers ? The way you are behaving is absolutely objectionable.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my submission is that if any mistake has been committed, all of us should try to rectify the same. I am not saying all this out of party politics rather I am compelled to say all this as the issue has been raised here and such a incident has taken place in my constituency. The truth is that desired work was not done under "Sampoorn Rojgar Yojana" – The scheme "Food for work" could not be implemented there. Existence of Anganwadi was only on papers. The cards which were to be distributed for helping the people living below the poverty line could not be distributed. Drought has affected the daily wagers also. Crops got damaged due to which they could not get their wages. And the relief work which was to be undertaken on a large scale could not be started even at a small scale. A person keeps on working till he has the capacity even without having his meals, but Mr. Speaker, Sir, when they came on the verge of starvation in the absence of any relief, they started eating boiled seeds of Sama grass. They prepared chapatis from this grass. I am aggrieved to say that the Chief Minister of a State mentioned Sama grass chapati a nutritious one and also mentioned the

preparation of kheer with it. Very humbly, I would like to request. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, if it is the same Sama grass which is commonly used by the people of the country during fast, then there is no two opinion that it is very nutritious. It is used in my parliamentary constituency also. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am a farmer. Hon'ble Member is not aware. The grass which I am showing is not the one which is known as sama, which it very nutritious and is sold at Rs. 80 per kg. I have tasted the chapati made of it when. I visited the adivasis. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Your time is going to be over, please continue.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would speak only when she will allow me to speak. I am saying that this grass is not Sama grass which hon'ble Member is mentioning. It is a different type of grass. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You are not allowed to bring anything in the House.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : I brought it here to reveal the truth because they are saying that it is nutritious. . . .(Interruptions) My submission is that it is not the same Sama which is nutritious and is sold at Rs. 80 per kg. This Sama is not eaten tastefully rather it is eaten under compulsions. To satiate one's hunger. . . .(Interruptions)

I am submitting that it is not the same Sama which is sold at Rs. 80 per kg. That Sama is for the rich people. This is wild grass. I have eaten the chapati made of it, that's why I am raising this point. Chapatis made of this grass are difficult to swallow and create stomach problems. Adivasi people were surviving on Sama. Ditori, Gulasari and Gawar etc. but gradually they started suffering from malnutrition and caught in the grip of ill health. On medically examining the 91 children of these areas, it was found that they were having third and fourth grade level of Portion and Calories in them. Their bodies are just

skeleton of bones. They have enlarged liver which is affecting their stomach also. I had taken all those women and children to the Chief Minister of Bhopal. They staged dharna there. You can confirm it from newspapers also. Electronic media was also present there, You can confirm from them also. The truth is that they started eating this grass when they were having nothing to eat.

As a result, today they are falling prey to malnutrition. Due to this, their bodies have become so weak that they cannot even resist against small diseases like cold and cough and ultimately died. We can say that they have died of ailments instead of starvation.

Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, a tribal of 50 years died there. When we raised this issue, it was told that since he was old, he died. When a tribal reaches 50 years, it is said that he is old whereas a leader of 50, 60 or 70 years, is called as a young leader. I would like to know whether the same story of a tribal will be repeated in India. In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, all these deaths have occurred due to starvation only. Here, the leader of opposition was quoting the figures. I will not read the figures of 2001-2002 but I would like to tell the figures of foodgrains supplied from Central Government to Madhya Pradesh for mid day meal under welfare scheme. During the year 2002-03, from April to till last month, 18,000 tonnes of foodgrain was allocated under mid-day meal scheme but out of which only 1002 tonnes of foodgrain that is more than the half of the foodgrains was lifted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Similarly, under normal and special components of 'Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana' 430.51 tonnes of rice and what were allocated to Madhya Pradesh but they had lifted only 171.84 tonnes. The same position is in regard to the PDS. Hon'ble Leader of Opposition was mentioning about this. If we see the figures of PDS, we will find that during the year 2002-03, total 750 thousand tonnes of foodgrain has been allocated to Madhya Pradesh out of which they have lifted only 15.933 tonnes. I mean to say that about 15% of foodgrains is being lifted under PDS. Similarly, only 15% wheat and 26.81% rice were lifted by them. This is the situation which is prevailing there.

As regards the problem of drought under which Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka are reeling, the Government have never said that it will not help them

but even then the State Governments of those States are not working effectively. If the State Governments do nothing then what Central Government alone can do ?

The Central Government have taken all necessary steps in this regard immediately. Hon'ble Leader of opposition was saying that this Government have woke up very late, which is not true. As the drought hit the States, last year during monsoon session, the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture held a Conference of Agriculture Ministers of all States on 24th July and had a meeting with them, after that on the basis of their suggestions he had taken many policy decisions to deal with the drought. The funds, from the Calamity Relief Fund were provided to the affected States during August, in advance, whereas it is given in the month of November. The Central Government had released the first instalment of Rs. 648.45 crore and the second instalment of Rs. 551.04 crore in advance. Besides, 13.25 lakh tonne of foodgrains was also provided free of cost to start relief work. The Hon'ble Prime Minister had constituted Special Task Force under the Chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and that special Task Force had also decided that major portion of foodgrains could be utilised under 'Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana' for dealing with drought situation.

Issue of Rajasthan was being discussed. Besides all these things, Rajasthan alone was provided 30,000 tonnes of cattle fodder seeds and Rs. 11.66 crore were provided for maintenance of cowsheds. The Central Government had made arrangement for the free transportation of water and cattle seeds by railways. A Central team has visited 14 drought affected States and it has submitted its report also. On the basis of these recommendations the Central Government have decided to provide Rs. 2000 crore to the drought affected States. The Central Government have also decided to provide Rs. 237 crore to flood affected States. It has been decided that 5 lakh tonnes of foodgrains to Rajasthan and 1 lakh tonnes of rice to Orissa will be provided separately. While quoting the figures, perhaps the hon'ble leader of Opposition might have forgotten that on 16th, 19.5 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrain has been allocated again and a sum of Rs. 2000 crore will also be provided immediately to the drought hit States. Extra bonus on minimum support price. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Your time is over.



SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : I will take some more time. The time which has been wasted should not be included in my time.

Extra bonus on minimum support price has been increased from Rs. 5 to Rs. 20 per quintal. In Rajasthan kits of fodder seeds were distributed for cattle and arrangement of alternative seeds were also made for the crops which has been damaged. Rajasthan alone has been provided around Rs. 2000 crore from 1998 to till date out of which Rs. 155 crore, were meant for drought relief. This funds have been spent on setting up Rajiv Gandhi Schools i.e. the funds have been diverted. It shows the seriousness of State Government of Rajasthan to deal with the drought situation. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : An amount of Rs. 30 crore has been spent extra thereon.

MR. SPEAKER : You please sit down.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : The condition is very bad whether we talk about Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan. Rs. 450 crore were allocated to Madhya Pradesh under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana. Rajasthan was allocated Rs. 402 crores. But I am pained to say that Madhya Pradesh Government has not spent even Rs. 50 crores out of these Rs. 450 crores in the entire State. Similarly Rajasthan Government has also not spent even half of the allocated amount. Had this funds been utilised properly, the activities related to relief work and provide employment to labourers, would have been accelerated. The Central Government will provide full assistance to deal with the situation arising out of drought. Besides, it will provide other required assistance also. But I would definitely like to submit that the assistance being provided in the name of drought should be percolated down to the grass root level as hon'ble Leader of Opposition has said. Drought is a catastrophe for some people but it is a boon for some people. Some corrupt officials, politicians and brokers use the funds, provided for relief work, for their own interests and they are pocketing the money. I can give many such examples. The funds and foodgrains provided to Madhya Pradesh under Sampoorna Gramine Rozgar Yojana to provide employment to labourers have been provided to a certain influential Panchayats but the work to be undertaken under the said scheme have not been launched by them.

13.00 hrs.

All these works are being done by tractor, JCB and Bulldozer as a result, the poor people are not getting employment in the name of drought relief. Therefore, there is a need for an effective monitoring system, so that sufficient assistance could be provided for drought relief. I agree with the hon'ble leader of Opposition that an All Party Committee should be constituted in which barring representatives of political parties, representatives of social organisations, voluntary organisation and some social workers be included so that there could be an effective monitoring of all relief measures to tackle drought.

MR. SPEAKER : Now you please conclude.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : I will take some more time.

MR. SPEAKER : I have already given you more time.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN : I will take two-four minutes more.

We should have a Drought Relief Committee not only at national level, but even at State and district level also so that there could be an effective monitoring of relief measures. The Government should come out with a comprehensive and long term policy to tackle drought problem. Every year we face the situation of drought, every year we discuss this issue but unless and until any long term policy is formulated to tackle the situation we will not be able to solve the problem.

During last few years, we have continuously exploited the nature. We should not exploit nature because it will disturb ecological system. We should exploit it only to certain extent but the way we have exploited it, it has disturbed the ecological system and natural cycle as a result these catastrophes are arising. My submission is that there should be a comprehensive programme to dig ponds in every village with the assistance provided for drought relief. If necessary, a law should be enacted to reserve land for the purpose of digging ponds in every village. Particularly the funds which are being provided through "Sampoorna Gramine Rozgar Yojana" should be utilised in water conservation works. There is a need to construct several check dams and stop dams.

Alongwith this regarding the proposal of linking rivers, I admit that there is a need to form national consensus immediately. On the one hand we are facing flood and on the other we are facing drought. It is not possible that the flood water, which is causing havoc, is diverted to drought hit areas. I welcome the initiative of hon'ble Prime Minister for convening meeting of all political parties for evolving common consensus on the issue of linking rivers. I admit that it is a difficult task, and it requires more than 5 lakh crore rupees. We may face other difficulties also but if the House is resolved in this regard then every problem can be solved. The networking of the rivers should be undertaken as early as possible.

Through you, I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that the delayed recovery of debt would not help the farmers. Unless and until the interest, on the loans provided to the farmers, is waived off, the farmers would not get any relief. Whenever any such catastrophe occur we postpone debt recovery as a result of which double interest is recovered next year. The farmers are burdened with such a huge amount of interest that they have no other way except committing suicide. Hence we should discuss about waiving off interest on loans provided to farmers.

I would also like to submit to the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture that I do agree with the Leader of Opposition that there is a need to make amendments in the Crop Insurance Scheme.

13.04 hrs.

[SHRI P.H. PANDIAN *in the Chair*]

Crop Insurance Scheme is already being implemented in the country. I belong to a farmer's family. Whenever any farmer buys fertilizers and seeds through cooperatives then insurance premium is deducted but when there is destruction due to flood, drought and hailstorm and the crops of farmers get damaged, their insurance claims are refused to be paid on the plea that a Tehsil and not any individual is considered as a unit in this regard. Therefore, unless and until more than 60-65% crops of the Tehsil are ruined, farmers will not get any relief or compensation. It is sheer injustice. My submission is that under the Crop Insurance Scheme, a farmer itself should be considered as a unit. Unless and until the loss, suffered by an individual farmer is not compensated, Crop Insurance

Scheme would just help the Insurance companies to grab money in the form of premium without benefiting the farmers in anyway.

I would like to make one more submission. Through you, I would also like to submit to the hon'ble Leader of Opposition that the farmers are distressed due to erratic power supply in the country. They get electricity for 2-5 hours and that too during night. Due to this they have to wait whole night in their fields. I have visited my parliamentary constituency. There a farmer requested me to make some arrangement so that they could sleep at night. When I asked the reason for not sleeping at night, he told me that the power cuts are imposed throughout the day and it is only at night that we get power supply and that too is erratic. Hence I and my son remain in our fields throughout night. The moment electricity is available, I switch on the button instantly. The next moment I hear my son saying that it's gone. The situation is that not a feet of land is irrigated. I am not demanding that electricity should be provided free of cost. The move to provide free electricity to serve political ends and get votes has created problems. Today the farmers are on the verge of getting ruined. If both the Central and State Governments discuss the matter properly and make joint efforts to improve the power situation in the country then only the farmers could get some relief. On one hand due to lack of power supply, the crops are getting destroyed while on the other hand drought has severely affected the farmers ultimately leading them on the verge of getting ruined.

This House has to resolve to combat the drought situation in the country. We should rise above party politics to discuss this matter. Blaming either Central or State Governments will not do. We should unitedly consider this issue and evolve a consensus to tackle this situation. A resolution to the effect of properly combating drought, preparing the farmers to face the situation and saving the country from the tragedy of starvation death should be taken.

[*English*]

SHRI N.N. KRISHNADAS (Palghat) : Sir, as everybody knows, the country is being faced with a very serious drought situation. We are having a very serious debate on this grave situation. The drought management should done in a cooperative endeavour, and it should be above party

[Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan]

politics. It is the prime duty of the Central Government to take the leadership, and unite all factors to tackle this grave situation, and help the people.

Sir, unfortunately, at the outset, I must say that very recently, the hon. Prime Minister of India had declared that some steps would be taken by the Government to tackle this grave situation. But the important steps declared by the Hon. Prime Minister to tackle this grave situation of drought are totally inadequate.

The Government have decided to declare a moratorium to repay the medium term loans of the farming community of the country, especially, those reserved for the fourteen declared drought affected States. It will be effective up to 31st March. But, Sir, after 31st March, what will happen? Will the farming community of the country, especially, the drought-affected areas, be able to repay their medium term or short term loans? No, Sir.

So, first of all, I would like to tell the Government, through you, Sir, that this moratorium is totally inadequate. The loans should be totally written off.

But what I demand on behalf of my party is its waiver. What is happening is that the Government is boasting time and again that all our godowns are overflowing? While our godowns are overflowing, people are dying due to starvation.

On this particular point, I demand that the Government should immediately review the Food Policy which is being implemented by the Government now a days and the foodgrains should be distributed free of cost in those drought affected areas.

Now, 14 States have been declared as drought affected States by the Central Government. I would like to ask the Central Government what was the criteria for declaring them as drought affected States. Sir, I come from the State of Kerala. According to the official sources, the Meteorological Department has stated that compared to last year, this year monsoon has been 14 per cent less in the State of Kerala. But the State of Kerala has not been included in the list of drought affected States.

Sir, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are the neighbouring States of Kerala. As you know very well, the monsoon is almost same in these three States. But Tamil Nadu and

Karnataka have been declared as drought affected States, whereas Kerala has been left out. If I remember correctly, on 8th or 9th August, during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, some of the Members from the State of Kerala approached the hon. Prime Minister and gave him a memorandum to declare the State of Kerala also a drought affected State. But till date it has not been declared as a drought affected State.

Unfortunately, we came to know that the Government of Kerala did not demand that the State of Kerala be included in the list of drought affected States. Sir, it is a very unfortunate thing. Till date, all the official sources say that monsoon has been 14 per cent less this year, though the Kerala State has not been declared as drought affected State. The farming community of Kerala is facing a very serious and acute situation. Even though the declared remedies and steps by the Central Government are adequate, these are small steps in getting anything for the farming community of Kerala because Kerala has not been included in the list of drought affected States.

So, I seek a reply from the hon. Agriculture Minister while he replies to this debate, as to why the State of Kerala has not been included in the list of drought affected States declared so far.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has rightly pointed out that it is a very serious situation and all the steps should be taken by the Central Government. It must be above the party politics. The Central Government should take the initiative and leadership in tackling this grave drought situation in the country.

Now, I come to Food Policy. That is also connected with the remedies and steps that are taken to tackle the drought situation. So, Food Policy is very important. Now, the Public Distribution System in our country is totally collapsed. That is why, everybody is pointing out that even at the time of over-flowing of foodgrains in the godowns of our country, people are dying with empty stomach. So, it should be reviewed. These foodgrains should be distributed free of cost of the drought-affected areas, tribal areas, backward areas and remote rural areas. In such a way, the Government should come forward to tackle this serious and grave situation in the country. Unfortunately, I must say that discrimination is coming up in the matter of taking steps by the Central Government to tackle the drought situation in the country. There should not be any

discrimination against any State in the matter of taking steps to tackle the drought situation. So, in such a way, a very serious attention must be shown by the Central Government. Very serious steps must be taken by the Central Government against this very serious drought situation in our country.

While we are discussing about the drought situation, some parts of our country are facing floods also. So, there should be a permanent mechanism to tackle all these natural calamities such as drought and floods.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

*[Translation]*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the adjournment motion moved by the leader of Opposition in regard to famine, amounts to only shedding crocodile tears because, all the States being governed by Shrimati Sonia Gandhi's Congress Party, may it be Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh or any other State, which ever has been affected by the drought, the State Governments over there have totally failed to manage the situation.

Sir, as my colleagues have just said, the starvation deaths have been reported from Bara district of Rajasthan during last few days. MP of my neighbouring constituency Dr. Girija Vyas ji is also the President of Rajasthan Pradesh Congress. The reports are continuously coming from Adivasi areas like Dungarpur, Banswada and Western Rajasthan and Ajmer district that the situation over there is dreadful due to famine. It is true that Rajasthan Government has declared 32 districts as drought affected districts. As these States have been declared as drought affected districts, they must get aid from Central Relief Fund or Calamity Relief Fund as approved by Central Government or Rajasthan Government.

Rajasthan Government have drawn all these funds. Union Government have provided adequate relief to the Rajasthan Government in the form of potable water, fodder and other assistance to combat the drought situation. I am sorry to say that the intention of the Rajasthan Government is not good – "na surat buri hain, na seerat buri hai, bura vahi hai jiski neeyat buri hain". The reason behind my saying this is that the intention of Rajasthan Government is not good and that the Rajasthan Government has totally failed in managing the situation arising out of drought. It has failed in providing employment to the people, making

arrangements for employment, it has failed in lifting the foodgrains, making arrangement for drinking water, as well as it has proved unable in providing livelihood to the people and failed in saving the livestock of the Rajasthan. On the basis of Geobels theory, the State Government is repeatedly telling the lie that the Union Government are not providing any assistance.

Sir, the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture is present here. I would like to request him that the Government of India should issue White Paper. The State of Rajasthan is facing drought continuously for the last four years. Lord Indra is unhappy with Rajasthan. The people in our villages say, whenever Congress have come to power, the State had faced the drought situation and whenever the Bharatiya Janata Party come to power, Madam may understand it well, in Rajasthani it is said the 'Janta aur Jamana, Congress aur Akal'. Whenever Congress had come to power, the State had to face situation of drought whenever Bharatiya Janata Party came to power, the State enjoyed good time, it rains, it is absolutely true. During last few days, the starvation deaths took place in Bara of Kota in Rajasthan and Star TV, Zee TV, Doordarshan and other means of media or newspapers have also confirmed those starvation deaths.

Sir, I regret to say, that Sonlaji said that those death were not due to starvation, but due to malnutrition I would like to ask my colleagues from Congress Party, whether malnutrition does not mean starvation? They do not get two square meals. They work hard to earn their livelihood but they do not even get two square meals, they do not get adequate food, they have to sleep without food. They have to eat leaves and grass, as a result of which they die. I am surprised to say that the Rajasthan Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Nair, Secretary, Home Affairs. It has already submitted its report. But, it do not had courage to give report against the Rajasthan Government, they were saying that deaths took place due to malnutrition. The Congress Governments are playing tricks, whether it is Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, the starvation deaths are taking place over there. Hon. Minister of Food, was present there. He released foodgrains from Food Corporation of India's godowns. The State Government can lift the available foodgrains from FCI godowns in Rajasthan. The Union Government has arranged five to ten mounds of foodgrains to each and every Sarpanch, so that nobody die of hunger. The families where they do not have any earning member, those who

[Prof. Raza Singh Rawat]

are helpless should not die of hunger. Therefore, in order to provide free foodgrains there, the Union Government has supplied wheat bags under special scheme namely 'Annapoorna Yojana'. It is regrettable, that under Congress rule, the Sarpanchs had even misappropriated the wheat supplied under Annapoorna Yojana. They are not supplying that wheat to the people who do not have to grain to eat. The starvation deaths which took place in Bara are the black spot in history of Rajasthan.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to tell the hon'ble Minister that during last 55 years, the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies have ruled the State only for 10 years. For rest of the years, the Congress Party had ruled the State. If the Congress might have sought permanent solution for drought during its regime, if the effort would have been made to make Ganga-Yamuna water available to Rajasthan, the starvation deaths would not have taken place. If the Chambal water would have been supplied under life scheme to those areas of Rajasthan which are facing water scarcity, people would not have faced starvation.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to say that probably, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi is not aware of poverty and situation being faced by poverty-stricken people.

[English]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Sir, this is not the way. She has visited the worst affected areas. He should correct himself. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Dr. Girija Vyas, you can speak when you get your turn.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Congress Party has ruled the State of Rajasthan for 45 years. If the then Minister of Agriculture and the Government would have made efforts to redress the problem of drought, the Rajasthan would not have faced drought for fourth consecutive years. It is like "Rome was burning, Nero was fiddling." There were reports that starvation deaths are taking place in Rajasthan but

Congress was convening conference of Chief Minister's of Congress ruled States in Rajputana-resort, a five star hotel in Mount Abu, and you can well imagine the expenditure incurred thereon. I am sorry to say that hon'ble Sonia Gandhiji visited there, to shed crocodile tears and said I want to survey the drought affected areas. Rajasthan Government made arrangement for her visit to a few selected places, which can be visited by helicopter only and she met a few people, which had nothing to do with drought relief. Those people were already taught what they had to speak and what not. There Soniaji said that Ashok Gehlot has done the good job, as everything is well managed. I want to say that "Garib ko mat sata, garib ro dega, sunega uski khuda to tujhe jarh se kho dega." Soniaji gave certificate to Shri Gehlot and after that Gehlot ji was also relaxed. He should have taken steps to provide employment and relief to the poor.

The Chief Minister of Rajasthan had called the meeting of MPs of Rajasthan in the capital itself. But 16 out of 25 MPs are from BJP. They were not invited in that meeting. Only 9 MPs from Congress were invited. These MPs are not satisfied with the way drought is being handled. I do not know how he pacified them

Munsi ji please find out why I have not been called so far to speak on famine ? It is discriminatory policy of the Government of Rajasthan. . . .(Interruptions) Mr. Chairman, Sir, the situation is grave so give me a little more time to speak. I want your protection. Two lakh tonne wheat was specially allotted by the Government of India under Sampurna Gramin Rojgar Yojana and for other works. A special quota of 5 lakh tonne was also allotted. It was to be released in two lots of two lakh tonne and three lakh tonne but the Government of Rajasthan could not lift it. They blame each other and try to take credit for the good work being done "Mehamadiya ki topi Ahmedia ke mathe and Ahmedia ki topi Mehmdia ke mathe," Meetha-Meetha' hup and Kadwa-Kadwa thu." which means they take credit for good deeds and blame others for wrongful deeds. They are telling that they have done a lot for the people and that they are distributing grains and that they had requested the Central Government also but the Central Government are not providing funds. I would like to quote the figures. The Congress Government over there misled the people. They have hypnotised media. Ads of two pages are being given. I would have been happy if the

advertisement had Girija ji's photo. On one corner of the ad we find the photo of Congress President and on other corner photo of Gehlot Saheb. Crores of rupees are being spent on ad-war but on arrangements are being made for providing food to the hungry, for providing relief to famine affected people or far removing drinking water scarcity and to protect their live stock. Live stock is main source of agriculture there. I would like to thank Central Government for having announced free supply of fodder from wherever it is available through goods train to famine affected States, so as to protect their live stock. Goods trains full of fodder are being sent of Rajasthan but the Government are unable to lift it from Railway stations. There is none to take it or for making arrangements for its storage. Panchayat depots have been opened in villages. I visited 4-5 panchayats in Kisangarh constituency. Sarpanches submitted a memorandum stating that they wanted to open depots. I made written requests several times but no action was taken. Grain depots are not opened. . . .(Interruptions) Once straw was full of dust and fodder was poisonous. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are a number of speaker. We must finish the debate by 6 o'clock. There are more than 33 Members who want to participate in the debate.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, six buffalos died in Puskar Fair Kerosene oil in the village is not supplied in time. A Congress party worker was caught black marketing it and large stock was recovered from him. The condition is worse there. You must read newspaper published from Rajasthan.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am calling the next speaker, Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi. There are more than 33 Members who want to speak.

(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Sir, I want your protection. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, you have started at 1.18 p.m. you have already taken 7 minutes.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Sir, I will conclude within two minutes. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Can I cut short your Party's time ?

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Government of India allotted funds for providing famine relief, providing drinking water and for rural employment but it was spent for opening Rajiv Gandhi Swarnjayanti School. Rs. 158 crore were spent on it. He would be surprised to know that existing schools do not have teachers and rooms. . . .(Interruptions) Mr. Chairman, Sir, I may please be given two minutes to speak. I need your protection. Rajiv Gandhi schools have been opened at several places but B.ED or STC qualified persons are not getting job there.

Favorite people of Sarpanches or Congress party, who are just matric or even non-matriculate have been employed in these schools who are paid a paltry sum of Rs. 1000-1200. An inspector visited one of the schools who found that a teacher was telling the students that river Ganga originates from Himalayas, and flows in to the Arabian sea via Haridwar-Inspector Saheb asked the teacher that you are sending river Ganga in Arabian Sea. He said that it will merge in Arabian Sea if we are paid only Rs. 1000-1200.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, please resume your seat. You have taken nearly 20 minutes.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Since he is a professor, he is talking on education; he is not talking about drought. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi, you may start now.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : This is the condition in cities and villages. Through you, I want to tell that the

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

condition in Rajasthan has become grave. The Central Government should issue a white paper and it should take immediate steps for providing relief to the maximum number of drought affected people of Rajasthan and also to save them from lackadaisical attitude of the Congress Government.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (Khajuraho) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, at present 14 States are facing drought and famine situation. Some of these States have been reeling under drought and famine for the last 2-3 years continuously but Rajasthan has been facing drought and famine for the last five years. Consequently it is a sensitive matter on which I rise to speak. Just now, our leader Shrimati Sonia Gandhi spoke on grave situation prevailing in the entire country. It is natural that elected representative of the country will be concerned regarding it. There may be some differences between our line of thinking. I would like to request hon. Members humbly to cooperate on such issues and do not politicise several such important issues concerning common people which are likely to come up for discussion during this session. We should avoid such situation and take them seriously according to seriousness of the issue and realise the agony of common men and should endeavour as to how to take the country out of it ?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was listening to the speeches of both sides – treasury benches and the opposition. Whenever country is in grip of famine there category of people get most affected. First category is marginal farmers. But, medium type of farmers are economically somewhat better who can face such eventuality but marginal farmers get worst affected. Second category of such people is agriculture labour who depend upon agriculture. Neither he has land nor any other source of employment. He works in the fields of farmer whereby he earns livelihood for his family. Most affected category is animals associated with agriculture which include, Oxen, buffalos and goats. Last Kharif crop in 14 most affected States has been totally destroyed because of drought and famine and Rabi crop which was about to be sown, only 50 percent has been sown in these States and in some of the areas even lesser land has been sown. Though Kharif crop was already sown. I have seen the figures of Madhya Pradesh where 60 percent land has been sown.

Out of this, only 30 percent crop has come up which is 30 percent of normal production.

Kharif crop has already been destroyed and in absence of availability of water for irrigation, prevailing drought and high temperature the crops which were to be sown. Only farmers understand, what shall be its consequences and others are not able to understand. If the seed retained by the farmer to be cultivated next year, is no more left with him then the farmer would definitely face crisis next year also. So, this crisis is not for the present year but its far-reaching results would effect the farmers in the next year too.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is no water left in the wells of the villages. I visited the area of Madhya Pradesh to which I belong. And the condition of water level is that the level of water in wells having hand pump which used to be in the month of March-April can now be observed in the month of November. Please imagine how can people of the entire village subsist with such meagre amount of water throughout the year. I warn the Government if no effective steps are taken immediately, the country may have to face crisis. There would be Drinking water available from the month of March itself and at some places even from the month of February itself. There are 138 such municipalities in Madhya Pradesh where water is being supplied at intervals of two days, or three days or even as long as eight days. This is the condition of towns. The State Governments should, through their resources. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara) : It is his Government there.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI : Its my rule, his rule and the Government's rule. I had made a request earlier also that if one has to see from the Government point of view, the condition of Uttar Pradesh is worse. Whom should I blame for this. Do not go into the rule of Governments, please look at the entire situation in a wider perspective, only then one can find some solution.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to say one more thing that it is very necessary to make drinking water arrangements there. Secondly, purpose would not be solved if the payment of loan by the farmers is asked to

be made by the next year. I agree with the views of Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan that farmers would get relief only if the interest on their loan is waived off. Otherwise, the very next year, the farmer would have to re-pay the same loan with interest on the interest itself, which would worsen his economic condition. Agricultural labourers are migrating from villages in large number. People are migrating to places where they are getting work, be it Punjab, or Delhi. I cannot say anything about other States except Madhya Pradesh. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan is not here, I think he might have said something out of political reasons because the fact is that the Madhya Pradesh Government have opened 11,748 relief centre in all the district, where 3.68 lakh labourers are working. Entire construction work is related to processing of water. Relief work is being undertaken everywhere for making ponds, stop dams, small reservoirs so as to store water and to raise the level of water in wells. Shivraj Singh ji is not here, I would have felt good had he been here. Twenty lakh rupees have been provided for each district and they have been told that this is first instalment. The collector has been directed to initiate relief work involving an expenditure of upto sixty lakh rupees. Work on Schemes upto development block level has been started in the entire district, I would like to draw your kind attention towards just two-three things.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time allotted by your whip, which is ten minutes, is over. There are five more Members from your side who are yet to speak.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI : I would try to finish my speech within time. Mr. Chairman, Sir, everyone is aware about the economic condition of the State Governments. Economic condition of some of the States like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan etc. is very bad. These Governments, for the last three years, are combating the drought situation by providing relief work and it is quite natural that if they do not get sufficient assistance, they would fail in their effort. Big States like Uttar Pradesh also need help from the Union Government. I will not say that the Centre did not give any financial assistance, they did give, but how much ? A Central team was sent to Madhya Pradesh and they conducted a survey there. After the

survey and after assessing the situation, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh put a demand for rupees 4869 crore keeping in view the wide expanse of drought i.e., 32 out of 45 districts are in the clutches of drought. But a mere assurance of financial assistance of Rs. 1100 crore was given First instalment of Rs. 500 crore was released and after that, nothing has been provided so far. We had made a demand for foodgrains. We had wished that the labourers should have been given work under the 'Food for work' programme, but even half of the quantity of foodgrains as demanded by the State Government was not provided. Situation of Rajasthan is also the same, they had demanded for 65 lakh tonnes of foodgrains, but actually how much was approved ? Merely five lakh tonnes was approved and only two lakh tonnes have been supplied.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time allotted to you is over. You have taken four minutes more.

[Translation]

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI : He can say that the Union Government had provided the assistance but whether the assistance extended by the Government was sufficient in proportion with the conditions prevailing there. We shall have to make deliberations on this aspect and it would be disastrous if we leave the entire situation on the State Governments.

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan had talked about the starvation. I personally visited the area 'Shivpuri', where it happened. There are three four families where deaths took place. These families have accepted that they had foodgrains in their respective homes. . . .(Interruptions) Please let me finish my statement. A foodgrain bank has been established in that village and 28 sacks of foodgrains are stored in that bank. It's not that they cannot procure foodgrain from that bank. Had they not worked, even then they would have procured foodgrains from that bank. But foodgrain was not required. Actually these five-seven persons died due to some disease. Malaria, Dengue fevers are quite prevalent in that area presently, it has mixed symptoms of viral also. It can spread in other areas also. Deaths have taken place in my native place also. Some



[Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi]

persons have died due to measles. We will not do justice if we say that every death has occurred due to starvation. And therefore, we should consider only those deaths that have occurred due to starvation if any such thing has occurred anywhere, be it Rajasthan, Orissa or any other State, then the Government of that State should be held responsible for it. None should be safeguarded. I am not here to safeguard to support anyone.

At the end, I would like to say that the hon. Member had said that Madhya Pradesh did not procure its total share of foodgrain allotted to it. With due regards, I would like to say that the hon. Member's information is not correct. I lakh tonnes of foodgrains was sanctioned for my State. Out of which 75000 tonnes of foodgrain has already been procured by us till the last month. We have demanded for some additional foodgrain which has not yet been allotted to us. You are saying that we have not procured it. They can see the report of foodgrain sent under the 'Nutrition Scheme'.

13.49 hrs.

[DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH *in the Chair*]

The foodgrain sent under the Nutrition Scheme, was infected, rotten and of inferior quality. What do you want, the Madhya Pradesh Government should procure such foodgrain and provide it to their children? How can we give rotten foodgrain to our children which may then result into deaths – in fact we immediately wrote to the Government that why such an inferior quality foodgrain was supplied to us. We requested that these foodgrains may kindly be changed with a better quality one. But you would be surprised to know that we were not provided good quality foodgrains. Keeping in view all these facts, we should prevent ourselves from making allegation and counter allegation and rather a wide, integrated scheme should be formulated, so as to check flood or drought situation.

Sir, an average property worth 10 thousand crores rupees gets destroyed every year either due to drought or flood in one or the other area. We can prevent ourselves from the crisis of flood as well as of drought, if we link all rivers of the country inter-se. I am aware that many

years back, in 1950, a project was initiated to link River Ganga and Kaveri, but it has not been materialised till date. Perhaps this could not happen since the economic condition of the country was not good and we were not getting sufficient foreign aid, but today it is appropriate time that instead of destroying our property worth 10,15 or even 20 thousand crore rupees every year, we should talk to financial institutions, which could link all rivers of the country and this make solution for drought and floods occurring in the country and some far reaching permanent solution could be made otherwise every year we would discuss here in the House about crisis of flood and drought and cry helplessly without any permanent solution for them in the country. I, therefore, request this august House here to forget all disputes and make a unanimous decision on this and work with great seriousness and start the project as soon as possible, so that our descendants could, atleast get relief of flood and drought.

SHRI SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (Parbhani) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Adjournment Motion has been introduced by the hon. Leader of opposition Shrimati Sonia Gandhi and through this motion, a discussion is being held in the House on the flood and drought situation specially. I oppose this Motion on behalf of my party Shiv Sena. 55 years have passed since we achieved independence. And during these 55 years, be it the Centre or the State including Delhi, it was the Congress which ruled the country. This includes Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, Taluk Panchayats, district level panchayats, Legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha – it is the Congress which ruled about 40 to 45 years out of these 55 years. There was no one to check them and Congress only ruled the country. I only want to say that if genuinely the leader of Congress as also the party itself had wished for the welfare of the farmers, their condition would not have worsened so much. The Congress party in its regime of 40-45 years did not take any concrete step to provide relief to farmers from flood and drought. The present situation is the result of such previous actions. I feel that it is a serious problem but all the political parties are trying to achieve their political motives instead of combating this serious situation.

Therefore, you should make an appeal to all the parties to see that our party is of the view that such a calamity should not be seen from political point of view

Especially in Maharashtra, Congress ruled for 40-45 years and during these years, the area of irrigation was merely 10 percent. During this period, i.e. for four and a half to five years, when there was coalition Government of the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata party, the area of irrigation was increased from 10-12 percent to 22-23 percent. This was done to provide relief to the farmers there. During the regime of our Government in Maharashtra, the farmers were supplied electricity for 24 hours of the day for the purposes of irrigation. Today there is Congress party Government in Maharashtra.

I am not delivering any political speech, but only discussing about the condition prevailing in Maharashtra. There is power-cut for six to eight hours in a day. Especially in rural areas, where farmers require power for irrigation, they are not getting it. Even after the power-cut of six to eight hours a day, there is no power supply. This is the condition of Maharashtra.

I feel proud to say that during the regime of coalition Government of Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata party, farmers get electricity 24 hours a day throughout the week except for once in a week. There was no load shedding at that time. The hon. Speaker of Lok Sabha presently Shri Manohar Joshi has been the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra. The Congress party people at that time used to say that he is 'Brahmin' how can he know about cultivation, but this great 'Brahmin' provided electricity to farmers for complete 24 hours in a day.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, cotton is predominantly grown in Maharashtra. All big and small farmers grow cotton there. Out hon. Leader of Shiv Sena, Shri Balasaheb Thakre had said that if his Government comes in power in Maharashtra, he would give Rs. 2300/- per quintal for cotton to the farmers by establishing monopoly of cotton. I say with pride that we practice what we preach. This is the principal and policy of the Shiv Sena. I am of the view that the support price of cotton was never so high in the last 40 45 years as high during the regime the coalition Government of Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Today the condition of farmers in Maharashtra is very deplorable. The cotton growers in Maharashtra are committing suicide. It has been published in the local newspapers of Maharashtra that farmers of nine areas have paid loan with regard to cotton.

14.00 hrs.

The payment of cotton purchased by the Maharashtra Government last year has not been made so far. Our coalition Government had fixed the price of cotton at Rs. 2300 per quintal. The Maharashtra Government fixed its price at Rs. 1500 to 1600 per quintal last year. It is a fact that the farmers are committing suicide as the Government have not yet made payment to the farmers. Nine farmers have committed suicide so far but no Government officer has visited their house. The payment due to the farmers has not yet been made by the Government of Maharashtra nor taken any steps in this regard so far. On the one hand, farmers are suffering from providence and on the other from the administration. The farmers of Maharashtra are suffering on two accounts. Sir, through you, I would appeal that not even a single penny has been given to the farmers out of the total amount of Rs. 65 crore granted by the Union Government from their Natural Calamity Relief Fund. . . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now please conclude.

SHRI SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV : Efforts should not be made to pass the buck on one another. Funds released by the Central Government should be provided to farmers whereas they are diverting it. Long term policy should be evolved to tackle with drought. A committee should be constituted to carry out a study on linking of rivers and there is a need to ponder over seriously to facilitate irrigation through it all over the country. We have plenty of grains but our distribution system is faulty. Even now, children are dying of hunger in tribal areas of Maharashtra. Large stock of foodgrains is lying in godowns of Central Government, but there is a need to tone up the distribution system. Such unfortunate situation should not recur in future in our country that the children, the sons of farmers die of hunger while there are plenty of foodgrains.

Through you, I urge the hon. Minister of Agriculture as he is an able Agriculture Minister, to implement Crop Insurance Scheme in each State. If crop of a farmer gets damaged due to drought or he is unable to get good yield, he should get compensation. Day by day, the farmers are getting debt trapped for no fault of theirs. There is scarcity of water in some of the States whereas there is no water in others. A farmer takes loan for sowing paddy in his field

[Shri Suresh Ramrao Jadhav]

and for buying fertilizers, but if crops get damaged due to drought and he gets no production, it is none of his fault. Therefore, my submission is that such a policy should be framed whereby at least interest on loan of marginal and medium level farmers, who are debt trapped, should be waived off

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your time is over, you may conclude now.

SHRI SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV : So far, our task force has failed in providing relief to the farmers. A team on behalf of Union Agriculture Ministry was sent to each State to study the condition prevailing there, but it is yet to submit its report. Even if, the report has been received, no relief has been provided so far. The Centre and State Governments should chalk out a joint programme to tackle drought and take effective measures at the earliest in this regard.

The Centre have food for work scheme. Since we have plenty of food grains and enough labour force, we can implement it as agriculture labourers from villages are fleeing to metros like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. Food for Work scheme should be implemented to avoid large scale exodus of these people.

My only submission is that as the farmer is our a bread-provider, the Government should endeavour to save him since he himself is hungry. If the farmer is saved, we will be saved. The Government should frame a long-term policy to tackle drought, which can be implemented in whole country, i.e. each State or each district. The Government should constitute a Committee to ponder over its seriously and take effective measures.

I conclude with these words.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajanj U.P.) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak on drought.

About three years and a month has passed since I have been a Member of this House. I have experienced that this apex House has been discussing drought and flood every year for the last three years. We hold

discussion and think that our duty is over. I feel that we have become so insensitive that we think that our duties are over by just blaming each other. After observing the discussion on drought in the House, it has become quite clear that the ruling party and the opposition parties have tried to hold each other responsible for it. Even 55 years after our independence, if the farmers are forced to survive on the mercy of nature, it is a shame on our democratic system. We should be forced to think what we have given and what we have not given to the farmers during this 55 years of our independence.

Just now, I listened to the speech of hon. Leader of the Opposition. During her speech hon. Sonia Gandhi said that we have got rid of famine but not drought. When I went through newspapers of last few days, I came to know that spokesperson of BJP, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqui Saheb held local administration of Rajasthan responsible for 51 deaths that occurred there and that BJP delegation had just visited famine affected areas of that State. We should not have illusion on famine and drought. I know that Rajasthan and Orissa are facing famine today. States such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are reeling under famine. This tug of war and alleging each other is not limited upto this only. Hon. Agriculture Minister is sitting here. Today itself, I read statement of leaders of his party wherein they have stated that Shri Sharad Yadav and Kumari Mayavati have rendered the farmers in such a pitiable condition. It is the statement of present officials of the district unit of Rashtriya Lokdal. Leaders of RLD have alleged that Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Shri Sharad Yadav and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Kumari Mayawati is responsible for putting farmers in sad state and late starting of crushing of sugarcane in Mills.

I would like to tell that right from State Legislature to the Parliament, we are bent upon blaming each other. This way we shirk our responsibilities. I want to tell this House seriously that if the Government do not take effective measures to solve the problems of farmers, who are another form of God, it will have to face the wrath of farmers in the days to come. We should sit here and ponder over how serious their resentment would be.

Every year crores of rupees and many lives are lost in drought and flood, whereas, so far, the Government have

not formulated any water policy. How Unfortunate it is that even 55 years after independence the country has no Water Policy. Today, the Government should take steps to prevent excessive exploitation of ground water caused by scanty rainfall as a result of rapid environmental changes. We should store rainwater scientifically so that the land absorbs it.

Just now, Chaudhary ji has said that it will be difficult for people to get water from February onwards. I had been to Rajasthan recently. The people were not getting drinking water even in the month of November there. As I have learnt from the newspapers, people are pinning for drinking water in Orissa, too. Perhaps the Government cannot imagine, if such is the situation in November, what it will be in the month of February, March and May-June. If people in power in the Centre want to get rid of their duties by passing the buck on others, they are committing a great mistake and they are putting democracy in danger.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not want to blame any party. Uttar Pradesh is being ruled by alliance of Bhartiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal. I have read the statement of Agriculture Minister of U.P. in newspaper. He, too, has expressed his resentment over the measures taken by the Government in this regard. 51 people died of hunger in Rajasthan. Hon. Sonia ji, who had been to Mount Abu recently, also expressed concern over hunger deaths. Just now, Shivraj Singh ji has mentioned the pitiable condition of Madhya Pradesh before the House.

We should accept the truth honestly instead of blaming each other in this context.

I would like to say to the hon. Minister of Agriculture that the Government has fixed the Minimum Support Price of paddy at Rs. 530 per quintal. Besides the Government have also provided a bonus of Rs. 20 per quintal as drought relief measure. This way the farmers should get a Minimum Support Price of Rs. 550 per quintal for paddy. I would like to remind the hon. Minister of Food, Public Distribution that it is a serious subject. The average yield of paddy and wheat in my constituency Maharajganj is even more than Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh. However the farmers there are forced to sell their paddy through the brokers at the rate of Rs. 375 to Rs. 390 per

quintal. They are not getting even Minimum Support Price fixed by the Government, leave aside the bonus of Rs. 20 per quintal as drought relief, they are not even getting the MSP fixed by the Government. They are getting only Rs. 375 to Rs. 390 per quintal for their paddy. The farmers have toiled their sweat and blood to produce a record quantity of paddy even in this adverse condition of drought, even in those areas, Government have failed to procure their produce. Today we are facing the wrath of the farmers. The workers of Bhartiya Kisan Union and Rashtriya Lok Dal are protesting at various places in Western Uttar Pradesh.

The owners of the sugar mills in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have said that they would procure the sugarcane at the MSP by the Union Government and the States have no right to enhance this amount further.

Unfortunately, even the High Court of Uttar Pradesh has given its verdict in favour of the sugar mills owners. I would like to say that the Government should issue an ordinance empowering the State Government to fix the MSP for sugarcane for their respective States and if necessary, a legislation to this effect should be introduced in the House to remove this bottleneck. If the sugarcane worth Rs. 95 per quintal is procured at Rs. 62 per quintal by the sugar mill owners, the farmers would not be able to realize even their cost price. Today the farmers are forced to burn their sugarcane and paddy crop. Instead of providing encouragement to the farmers who have been giving their invaluable contribution to the national stock even in this critical juncture of drought, they are being discouraged. Hence, I would like to submit very humbly that attention should be paid in this regard and also that the Centre should issue guidelines to the States and ensure that these guidelines are complied with in letter and spirit.

Shri Shivraj Singhji has just said that not even the 25 percent of the funds allocated to Madhya Pradesh under the Pradhanmantri Grameen Sadak Yojana had been spent. I would like to say to my BJP colleague that they should also pay attention towards the States where BJP coalition Government is in power, as the case is in UP where BJP alongwith Bahujan Samajwadi Party is running a coalition Government. Not even twenty five percent funds allocated to UP, which is the largest State in the country, have been spent. I challenge that if I am proved wrong

[Kunwar Akhilesh Singh]

I am ready to resign from my MP seat. I would also like to say that the funds allocated to various States under the Pradhanmantri Sampoorna Rozgar Yojana being run for the poors, are being misused and I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards it. Earlier when your friend was the Minister of Rural Development several crore rupees were siphoned off to various districts of UP under the undue interference of some persons and those funds have been misused at large scale. If you probe into that other facts would be revealed. I am saying this because when you were the Minister of Food and Public Distribution, you had tried to do away with several lacuna prevailing in the system by working very honestly. I don't want to go into as to what extent you were successful in achieving your target. Today it is the entire responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Development to ensure whether the funds allocated by the Centre to the States for providing employment are being fully utilised or not and whether the workers are actually being hired or not or the entire sum is being cornered by the contractors and also a probe be heed to ascertain all these things.

We would have to chalk out a blueprint to deal with the problems of drought and floods. Recently the hon. Prime Minister has allocated an amount of Rs. 56000 crore for widening of the national highways in all parts of the country. I am not opposed to that scheme but I want to say that had these funds been allocated or invested under some other useful head like providing irrigation facilities to the farmers as well as for providing drinking water to them, then the result thereof would have been fruitful and positive.

Due to the vast changes in environment, glaciers are melting and the climate is also changing. My friend from Himachal Pradesh is sitting here. My friend from Mandi Legislative Assembly constituency is also here. Recently while on tour of Estimate Committee we had visited and studied the sites of glaciers and found that even in the month of September no glacier were observed at places where they used to be present as huge mass of ice during the summer months. Hence, I would like to say that we should try to make concrete efforts to improve our environment as per the need of the country and should not follow the international dictates in this regard. If we do

not make concrete efforts, it is sure that we can not prevent our agriculture from getting ruined.

Besides, I would like to say that we should have to think deeply for resolving the drought problem in the country. As has been said by the leader of the opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji, that 40 percent of irrigation is still dependent on the rainfall. I would like to say on the basis of my definite information that still two third of the fields are on the mercy of the nature. To combat with this situation we should link the big rivers carrying more water, with the smaller rivers, carrying less quantity of water. The rainwater should be properly preserved and we must take some initiative to tackle the problem of drought.

Sir, the discussion in the House is taking place over the names of the States wherein the starvation deaths have occurred and also wherein it have not. We came to know from the newspapers that His Excellency President Kalam was also perturbed over this drought situation in the country. He has directly asked from the States Governments to submit the report on this problem. However still the people in the Centre are not serious about the problem. I would like to say only this much that if You don't become alert to the situation you will suffer from the same fate in the centre also in the year 2004 general election as your Government is being swept off in every State legislative Election. Hence I would like to say that if you have even little sympathy and pain for the farmers, then a Joint Parliamentary Committee be constituted immediately. Besides, a Committee comprising of Members from all the parties should also be constituted which may submit its report by seeking the opinion of the Agriculture scientists and engineers and the follow up action be taken by the Government on the basis of this report.

With these words, I conclude and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the issue regarding drought situation in various States of the country is being discussed in the House. Discussion on drought situation has been held earlier also but scanty rainfall continuously for last three years in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and in some parts of Maharashtra has made the situation more

grave. The State Governments and Union Government should have taken effective measures to tackle drought situation. But despite assurance given by the Union Government for providing every possible assistance they did not do so and a result of which the State Government could not make proper arrangements, and thus drought situation has become worst. Weather has changed drastically and this is the most severe drought of the century.

Sir, I would like to draw your attention towards some parts of Madhya Pradesh. Despite drought in these areas the Chief Minister of the State claimed that not shortage of foodgrain or drought but malnutrition is the reason for deaths in these areas. When this issue was raised in Legislative Assembly then hon'ble Chief Minister had to admit that some areas may be facing such situation and then a proposal was made to send a group there to assess the situation. Such incidents have taken place in Shivpuri and Ganjbasauda. Similar situation prevails in my constituency Mandsaur district. A few days ago, I toured Kojya village of Neemuch district. I wanted to show you the specimen of loss suffered by people there due to drought but I could not bring it here.

It is an evidence that the situation is very grave in these areas. I would like to cite two three examples. The Union Government have launched several schemes of rural development wherein foodgrain is provided at concessional rates. The foodgrain allocated by centre is sent to consumer stores from where it is sold in black market. It does not reach the needy people living below poverty line. Recently a case was detected regarding selling of foodgrains in black market by a godown in Mandsaur district. The property worth crores of rupees has been seized from Chief Manager of this store I referred the matter to the hon'ble Minister. Hon'ble Shardaji is present here. I would like to say that immediate action should be taken to dissolve the management because not only manager but the whole management is guilty. I would not mention the name specifically here, you can find out those who are in the management. Now they are trying to blame BJP Government that assistance is not being provided. You can find out why such situation prevails there.

Secondly, I would like to say that Union Government have given crores of rupees of digging wells and ponds

for permanent solution of drought problem. I would like to cite an example of Bhanpura tehsil of Mandsaur district of my constituency. There has been a pond for many years, which has also been mentioned in documents of Revenue Department. Now it has been shown on papers that another pond had been constructed there. Where these funds have gone? Gandhisagar dam is in my area which has a large submerged area. There is less water today but that may increase in near future. You can imagine how difficult it would be to solve the problem of drought if money is embezzled in the name of constructing pond there. State Governments are getting funds in the name of drought problem but this money is being embezzled, I have given a written complaint in this regard and I am ready to give it again if hon. Minister wants that. Sir, what action is being taken by State Government in this regard. Union Government have given crores of rupees for developing unfertile land into fertile land. In place of developing unfertile land or constructing ponds, efforts are being made to spend this money somewhere else. I have given several examples of my Parliamentary Constituency, related the situation of Ganj-basoda, Jhabua, Kojya and Shivpuri villages of Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh from where several complaints regarding starvation deaths have been reported. Detailed discussion has already been held on that. I do not want to go in those details again but would like to say that proper arrangements should be made there immediately. It has become necessary to construct ponds wells, small and big dams for water harvesting.

Sir, I have already requested that some arrangements should be made for foodgrains. The State Governments say that they do not have storage facility and Union Government say that they are ready to provide assistance, grant and assistance through banks for constructing small godowns. They are not ready to lift the foodgrains allocated by Union Government and blame Union Government for not providing required assistance to them. The Union Government are ready to provide assistance but system in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan is disturbed and action should be taken to improve the situation. Arrangements should be made for that. The issue of Rajasthan has been discussed here in detail. A central team was sent there to assess the situation who found that there is some lacunae which even the Chief Minister has accepted. The

[Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya]

drought situation was discussed in conference of Congress Chief Ministers held at Mount Abu recently wherein Union Government was blamed. The situation is that State Government are saying that all the required arrangements should be made by the Union Government. Then what is the rationale in handing over the responsibility to the State Government. Union Government is ready to provide thousands of tonnes of foodgrain but State Governments do not have storage facility. Crores of rupees are allocated in the name of construction of roads, ponds but these funds should be utilised properly and there should be arrangement for its monitoring. I have also raised a matter under Rule 377 wherein I have raised this demand. I have submitted that Ratlaam, Mandsaur, Neemuch of Madhya Pradesh and several districts of Rajasthan are in very deplorable condition. Disposal of work is delayed inordinately in these districts even after getting information for tender notice. I, therefore, demand from the Government that monitoring committee should be constituted to monitor this work, besides a parliamentary committee should also be constituted to supervise the quality and procedure of these works. Today I have again drawn the attention of the Government towards this issue to find out reasons behind it and how this situation can be improved. We always try to find out permanent solution to the problems. Yesterday, during debate on Sardar Sarovar Project hon'ble Member from that side raised issue regarding distribution of its water among Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. I would like to say that existing system in this regard should be strengthened and the House and the hon'ble Minister should pay attention towards the suggestions given in this regard. Will it not be appropriate to make a link of rivers by linking river Narmada to Chambal, Chambal to Shipra and Shipra to Shivna for irrigating Malwa region? This procedure has been started in Gujarat by linking Narmada to Sabarmati and should be extended further.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Rule 377 would be taken up later on. You can give your suggestion at that time.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA : I am telling about the further plans for tackling drought problem in case there is no rain. Several crops have been affected and this time also due to shortage of water crops will be affected. People

are saying that for last three years they have not got good yield and their condition is worsening.

I would like to raise another demand. The hon'ble Prime Minister has issued orders to suspend the recovery of loans by bank but it is not clear that interest on it will also not be charged. My submission is that if interest is not waived of then they will have to pay double interest next year. Therefore interest should be waived of along with suspension of loan recovery. Today Madhya Pradesh is facing power crisis and on the other hand double amount is being charged from the farmers. Their power connections are cut for delay in payment of bills even by two days and thousands of rupees are taken in the name of providing reconnection. Thus farmers are suffering due to drought, shortage of power and mismanagement on the part of the State Government. This should be taken seriously. Instead of indulging in counter allegations a concrete policy should be formulated. Can we not formulate a National Water Policy, National disaster management policy to work unitedly on it at the time of crisis and move in the right direction, so that these problems could be solved and we can also get benefit of various rural development schemes formulated by the Union Government.

The adivasis and people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the worst drought affected people because transportation of foodgrain in their areas is very difficult. The reasons being improper transport system and other arrangements. There is need to think as to how it could be made easier. I would also like to submit that instead of providing foodgrains through warehouses, a system should be evolved in which agencies are appointed in drought hit areas and foodgrain is made available directly. I have several examples published in newspapers. Supreme Court has stated about Rajasthan that :

"The Supreme Court told the Counsel for the Rajasthan Government that 'Your Chief Minister has no business to ask for more foodgrains when what was allocated by the Centre was not lifted.'"

[Translation]

Supreme Court has told the counsel that the State has no jurisdiction and right to raise special demand for

foodgrain allocated to them by centre. There is Congress Party in power in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. These were proposed to be made model Governments but instead of becoming model their condition is deteriorating :

[English]

"..unfortunate deaths taking place in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan due to malnutrition do not happen further."

[Translation]

Such situation should not develop there. Malnutrition results due to lack of timely assistance to people. Several parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are also affected and they should also be given assistance.

'Times of India' newspaper has given that Chief Secretary will be responsible in case timely action is not taken in this regard. While citing example the newspaper has asked Digvijay Government as to why required measures are not being taken by the Government in case of starvation deaths. The newspaper also says that State Government should check recurrence of such incidents I will conclude after giving one example. Attention should be paid towards strengthening the present system for distributing foodgrain to more and more persons. These are the cuttings to 'Hindustan Times' wherein it has been given :

[English]

#### **Many go hungry in MP's cities**

"Surprisingly as it may seem, Madhya Pradesh despite having a Government which seems to lay great emphasis on development programmes, languishes, at the bottom where food security in urban areas is concerned. According to the Atlas, the State is fairly insecure in respect of eight of the seventeen indicators. Sample this - MP's poverty percentage is very high. . ."

[Translation]

The drought situation is a matter of concern for all of us. I would like to make a submission that situation should not deteriorate further and the Government should take

precautions so that starvation deaths do not occur in future. The Union Government have assured time and again that adequate foodgrains and funds will be provided. I visited the area I come from and did not find anyone working under drought relief programme. When I enquired from the District Collector, he told that work was about to be started because allotment of funds was delayed which further aggravated the problems. Water level has receded and tubewell does not serve the purpose even at the depth of 700-800 meter. There is motor to extract water but it can not be used properly due to power shortage in Madhya Pradesh and the voltage is very low. In the prevailing circumstances people are unable to get water. There is no water, no fodder for cattle. I had gone to Jodhpur and I saw deplorable condition prevailing there.

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA (Jhabua) Our State Government have made the maximum demand. Union Government have been withholding the money. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has sent demand for foodgrain and funds time and again but the Union Government have not been providing why partiality is being done in this regard ?

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA : I never interrupt you or any other person. You may speak on your turn. You may not accept deplorable condition prevailing there ? Do you not admit power shortage there and deplorable condition of farmers. Farmers are running from pillar to post but they are not getting power for even two hours which has aggravated the problem further. Is there not shortage of drinking water ? Have the essential goods of consumer stores at Mandsaur been not sold in black market ?

Kantilalji is my good friend. His constituency is just adjacent to mine. Similar condition prevails in his constituency. Is the problem of drinking water not to be solved there. If it is not done the problem would further aggravate.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have been to Jodhpur, the present Minister of Finance Shri Jaswant Singh comes from there. The price of a cow be worth Rs. 8-10 or 12 thousand is being sold at Rs. 500 just because there is no fodder to feed the cattle. Who can deny the severity of drought problem.



[Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya]

In place of taking drought seriously, only leveling charges on Union Government is not going to solve this problem. This problem should be taken seriously. Adequate quality of foodgrains, fund should be provided for protecting adivasis, Scheduled Castes and poor people at every cost. Livestock should also be saved by making arrangements for fodder. Farmers will be ruined if affected people are not protected. Farmers, at present are on the verge of destruction. Our State has been in grip of drought consequently for the last three years. The Government should make a national policy to solve this problem. Some way out should be found to deal with the problems of drought to check recurrence of starvation deaths in future.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (Udaipur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we had met in August last time. Then we left for our respective States with the hope that we will get full assistance from the centre and the centre would provide assistance to all the famine struck States and help in combating with the calamity. I would especially like to talk about Rajasthan here. Today when we have met here, the same subject is being discussed in the House. Situation has become more grave owing to the compounding of the problem in the last few month which has belied all hopes.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have no words to portray before the House the misery of famine affected areas of Rajasthan. I would like that a study team of the Parliament be sent there to witness themselves the severity of drought with parched earth, depleted green cover, dried lakes and the dearth of the drinking water. The people are looking with a gaze in the hope of assistance. Besides the misery of the livestock which is reflected through their eyes and face is heart rending. In this context we remember later Shri Rajiv Gandhi when he himself visited to witness the misery of the poor people. He did not leave the situation in the hands of the State Government even though the State was being ruled by Congress. He made an assessment of the foodgrain stock of the people and other facilities provided to them and the employment number of employed persons in the States. Hence Rajiv Gandhiji not only provided assistance but also gave a new concept for the famine affected areas but we failed to implement it. Today we expect the Union Government to go through the management concept of Shri Rajiv Gandhi as how to

manage the situation in the affected areas within a minimum span of time, there existed guidelines in this regard.

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : Sir, we are told that there was again an attempt by the terrorists today to attack the Parliament and they took several rounds. They are caught finally. I desire that the hon. Home Minister may kindly take the House into confidence whether this report is correct or not. . . .(Interruptions) I think, before we rise for the day, the hon. Home Minister can report the matter to the House.

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : However there is vast difference in the situation of 1987-88 and the present one. Today the entire country is in the grip of famine while earlier famine had struck only few States. The day before yesterday it was stated in the reply of a question that all the parts of the Rajasthan are affected. Earlier where 3.50 crore people were affected, this time around 4.5 crore people and double the number of live stock are affected and 32 districts are continuously in the grip of famine for the last five years. In total 40689 villages comprising 4.49 percent of country's population and 4.51 crore livestock is affected. All the crops have also been damaged and rabi crop worth 7382 crore rupees has been damaged.

There has been loss to the tune of 4417 crore rupees in rabi crop and Kharif crop worth 7382 crore rupees is also expected to be damaged. The drinking water is not available in 87 percent area and the ground water level has decreased up to 0.32 to 5.12 metres. Ponds have dried up and the inflow is almost negligible. Strategy would have to be formulated in regard to the suggestions given by my colleague representing adjoining constituency. The State Government did not receive that much money which it demanded from the centre. I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the State Government's decision of providing the wages to the APL families as well besides BPL families. A decision to formulate plans for relief work and to connect them with the centrally sponsored schemes has also been taken. The State Government has declared that special efforts will be

made for the preservation of livestock and the Government is also committed to accelerate the nutrition and other health programmes. One crore people are daily being benefited through ICDC and they are being given breakfast under this scheme. The decision to expedite the 'Food for work' Programme has also been taken by the State Government. This has happened for the first time that the relief work had been undertaken from 16th August and as now. . . .(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is like a drop in the ocean. There are three to four hundred workers in a panchayat while only 10-15 workers have been given employment under BPL. It is like a drop in the ocean. No difference is left between APL and BPL. Famine has been continuing for the last four year, hence more and more people should be provided employment. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Hence we appeal to the Union Government that the workers employed in August. . . .(Interruptions) You please listen to my view. Government should provide funds for the relief work started in August and also undertake the 'Food for work' programme only then their number would increase. Hence the State Government has decided that the wages would be given for ten days only.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : The State Government is not spending the money. All the money was spent on Rajiv Gandhi 'Pathshalas'. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : I want to assure that one bagful of foodgrain and Rs. 150 would be given in ten days and thus the number of persons on work would increase from 12 lakhs to 36 lakhs. The survey of the destitutes is being undertaken and I would like to appeal to all the MP's to help the Government in protecting the destitutes on the lines of the decision taken by our party. Provision for providing free foodgrains has been made. Irrespective of whether the credit for this goes to Central Government or the State Government, it is our responsibility to extend our assistance to the Government.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Government have taken one more decision and that is to provide foodgrains for 60 days in advance to the workers given employment. Such

provision does not exist in any State. However Rajasthan should be praised for the initiative taken in this direction. The funds for transport have been increased and as far as the losses are concerned. . . .(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : You please name the panchayats where the foodgrains have been provided in advance during relief works ?

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : You name the panchayats where it has not been provided. . . .(Interruptions) He does not have the full information, firstly you should update yours then ask the question. As far as loans are concerned, short term loans have been converted into mid term loans. The State Government have started giving special grant for fodder cultivation. As far as foodgrains issue which was repeatedly raised is concerned, I would like to submit that upto 94.5 percent of the foodgrains being given for BPL families was lifted where it was 70 percent of the total foodgrains given. The percentage of the foodgrains lifted in other category had been 75 percent but not in case of APL families. I would like to draw the attention of the Union Government as how the people would prefer purchasing wheat from the open market when it is so costly. Hence I have been continuously urging the Union Government that besides BPL, API should also be given assistance from the same funds under the same head.

Besides, one rupee per beg of foodgrains should be reduced for BPL families so that the people may be benefited from it.

Sir, we are in an era of privatisation. The only profit earned by the fair free shop owner is the empty beg. The would lead to black-marketing PDS is not being paid full attention. . . .(Interruptions) the same situation would prevail unless the margin of profit is not increased. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. JASWANT SINGH YADAV (Alwar) Whose responsibility it is to look after PDS. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Policy is framed by the Union Governments hence we are saying. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please resume your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Jaswant Singh Yadav ji, Shri Rawat ji, please resume your seat. When you will be given chance, you can also have your say. Now please resume the seat.

*(Interruptions)*

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : You find the truth bitter. . . .  
*(Interruptions)* You do not want to hear the truth. You must have the courage to hear the truth. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Kriplaniji, Shri Rawatji, Please resume your seats. It is not proper. The member has a right to speak. You don't interrupt him. You can express your view when you get the opportunity to speak. Please resume your seat.

*(Interruptions)*

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Presently the foodgrains for the BPL is being lifted. APL people are also poor. . . .  
*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go in record without my permission, please resume your seat.

*(Interruptions)\**

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : He is not able to cope with the truth. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your views will not be included in the proceedings because you are speaking without my permission You resume your seat. You don't have right to speak.

*(Interruptions)\**

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA : He is insulting the chair. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why are you interrupting. There is no point to interrupt. You resume your seat.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : When Rawatji was speaking, Girija ji did not interrupt even once. Now when Girijaji is speaking he is interrupting time and again. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your views are not being included in the proceedings.

*(Interruptions)\**

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (Khammam) : It is not a matter of Rajasthan alone. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now why are you speaking ? This speech is not being included in the proceedings.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is no point in your speaking. You resume your seat.

*(Interruptions)*

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : You can not prove truth as untruth by shouting. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Member, who are not allowing Dr. Girija Vyas to speak and are interrupting should be instructed that if they want to speak on Rajasthan a separate notice should be given in this regard. . . .*(Interruptions)*

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, he does not have the courage to listen the truth. . . .*(Interruptions)*

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Day before yesterday the Chief Minister of Rajasthan held a meeting in which our hon. Member were not invited. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Why are you making noise. You please sit down whatever he is speaking would not go on record.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Rajasthan Government had submitted a proposal seeking assistance of 77,519 crore rupees in view of the situation prevailing there. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Rawat, you are repeatedly speaking without the Chair's permission. This is not fair.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have to know that out of the total amount sought for, 400 crore rupees

were to be provided by the Union Government but only 207 crore rupees have been sanctioned and that too is being tried to be adjusted and efforts are being made to ensure that the State Government does not get even a single paise in cash. Hence I have raised this original question in this House. When the incidents of starvation deaths are reported here, it is shameful on our part. I would say that the Union Government. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN As you are speaking without permission, your views are not being recorded.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Minister is giving a wrong statement. I have not said that the deaths have occurred due to starvation. I have said that it is your statement that the starvation deaths have taken place in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and if it is so then it is only your responsibility to check it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the report of the State Government has already been submitted and in regard to repeated mention of starvation deaths in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, I would like to say that better stop playing politics on the issue of hunger. I would like to appeal the people of Rajasthan not to shamelessly raise this issue and not expose the entire House giving it a bad name. If the politics is to be played then it should be issue based and either by praising the good efforts of the opposition or by bringing to the fore the misutilisation of funds given to the opposition ruled States. If you want to play politics then the corruption in which you have indulged the exposed. Wait for the people's verdict if you want to play politics but do not play politics on the issue of starvation and drought. My submission is that the people are dying there due to drought.

15.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN : His speech is not being included in proceedings so you please sit down.

(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : I would like to submit that the leader of opposition has raised very important issues and expressed the sentiment that it is not a subject matter of politics and a law should be formulated in this regard, promote the concept of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Shri Rajiv

Gandhi had remarked that mere providing financial resources will not solve out the the problem of famine, rather there should be management at the time of famine. Strict laws should be formulated for the proper management and the responsibilities of the Central and State Government should be fixed for the compliance of the said laws. . . .(Interruptions)

Through you, I would like to submit to all the Ministers that the amount demanded by the States, particularly Rajasthan which is facing drought situation should be provided immediately. Besides this the Central Government should ensure that food grains, drinking water and fodder are provided and the electricity water supply from other States are provided to Rajasthan. Through you I would like to extend my thanks to Sonia ji that she urged Madhya Pradesh to allow livestock at their border to enter into the States. However, I would like the Central Government to interfere regarding the livestock at the Uttar Pradesh border. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Rasa Singh ji, you have already delivered your speech. Is it proper to interrupt the other hon'ble Members ? Why did you stand ? You please take your seat. Your party will not give you change to speak that is why you are looking for an opportunity to speak in the middle of the speeches of other Members.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : We are talking about the livestock and not about them. . . .(Interruptions)

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Through you I would like to submit that people should be benefitted by the ICDS Scheme however I am sorry to say that the Central Government have withdrawn this scheme and so people are not getting the benefit of the ICDS Scheme. They talk about the alleviation of poverty however they do not have any strategy to alleviate it. Besides, there is no monitoring of the funds which are provided for the purpose. The assistance that is provided in the form of food grains must be monitored. A monitoring committee should be setup to monitor the famine management works as has been suggested by the leader of opposition. Sincere efforts should be made to check the spread of desert in drought prone areas. With heavy heart I would like to appeal the

[Dr. Girija Vyas]

Government not to politicise the issue of assistance keeping in view the condition of the State particularly Rajasthan. They should not politicise the issue of deaths due to hunger and famine, rather they should help these States by way of providing financial assistance to them.

[English]

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Indian Meteorological Department has declared the year 2002-03 as the drought year. The drought of 2002 is counted among the four worst droughts of the Century.

Sir, the State of Andhra Pradesh has been witnessing the severe drought for the last four years, particularly this year we are facing the major drought situation in Andhra Pradesh.

Sir, as against this backdrop, the hon. Minister of Agriculture also spoke about the agriculture situation in this country. As compared to the last thirty years, this year is the most worst affected in this country. So, I hope, the Government of India will take necessary steps to protect the farmers, weaker sections and everybody concerned.

In the case of Andhra Pradesh, the failure of the South-West monsoon was one of the reasons. We received only 411.8 millimetre of rains from South-West monsoon as against the normal figure of 624 millimetre. We received 149.6 millimetre of North-East monsoon as against the normal rainfall of 180.2 millimetre. In the South-West monsoon, there is a fall of – 34 per cent and in the North-East monsoon, there is a fall of – 17 per cent.

Even in the Kharif season, the total cultivation in Andhra Pradesh is in 1.80 lakh hectares. Out of this we have sown in only 64.13 thousands hectares and there is a shortfall of 22 per cent. And particularly in paddy, out of the total cultivation of 26.95 lakh hectares, we have sown in only 17.94 lakh hectares with a shortfall of 33 per cent. Even in groundnut out of 15.42 lakh hectares of total cultivation, we have sown in only 12.14 lakh hectares. These are the particulars about crops in Andhra Pradesh. Even the sown area is also totally damaged due to the dry spell. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : The State Government did not help the farmers. You released water

for only the first part. . . .(Interruptions) When the farmers were having hope, you did not release the water for the second phase of agriculture which has resulted in these problems. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Madam, please do not interrupt. Please wait for you turn to speak. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : Sir, they released water for the first phase only and did not release water for the second phase because of which crops in 60,000 acres of land have been damaged. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Please wait. I will give all the facts. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : You may speak when you get the opportunity . . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : You have also promised 24-hour electricity which you did not fulfil. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : You should not talk about Andhra Pradesh. . . .(Interruptions) You have no right to speak. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : I would certainly speak. . . .(Interruptions) What are you talking of . . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi is here. . . .(Interruptions) Please hear me. If you want to mention anything you speak in your turn but not in this way.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : You did not release water for the farmers. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Sir, in Andhra Pradesh we have declared 22 districts as drought-prone. Out of the

1,104 mandals in the State, we have declared 933 mandals as drought-affected and basing on the situation prevailing in Andhra Pradesh, along all the States in India, we have submitted a memorandum to the Government of India to extend an assistance of Rs. 810.90 crore from NCRF and 15 lakh metric tonnes of rice to take up the employment assistance works which is the need of the first State along all the States. Andhra Pradesh has witnessed drought not only this year but for the past four years we are facing this drought situation.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : This is due to your Government. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Even last year also, we approached the Government of India for a financial assistance and for providing foodgrains. But they did not give financial assistance. They have allotted 1.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice under 'food for work' programme for the drought-prone works and to create employment potential to the people of Andhra Pradesh. Particularly in this year even the Central team headed by Shri Negi, M.D., National Horticulture Board visited the State from 9.9.2002 to 11.9.2002 and toured the districts of Cuddapah, Anantapur, Madak, Nizamabad, Nalgonda, Prakasam and Nellore districts. At that time rains came for one or two days and based on that he submitted a report. After that, due to the dry spell, the sown area is also completely damaged. This has happened in the month of September. After September, till today we have no rains in Andhra Pradesh. That is why we have declared further 89 *mandals* as drought-affected *mandals* in the State.

The hon. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh personally came to Delhi on 31st October, 2002 and requested the Centre to provide assistance of Rs. 1,210 crore and 25 lakh tonnes of rice for the employment generation works. On 13th November, 2002 there was a discussion in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly where they have passed a unanimous resolution by all the political parties and submitted the resolution to the Centre. I will quote from it :

"the House unanimously resolves to request the Government of India to extend liberal and timely relief to the drought-affected areas in the State. The House further resolves to request the Government of India to release at the earliest cash relief of Rs. 1,860 crore."

This is the latest request by the State Government after taking stock of the situation and in consultation with all the political parties when they arrived at this figure. We requested for supply of 22 lakh metric tonnes of rice as has already been requested by the State Government. The resolution further says :

"The Government of India is also requested to extend the following relief measures for the benefit of the farmers :

waiver of interest on agricultural loans;  
rescheduling of collections and issue of fresh loans.

The House further resolves to request the Government of India to expedite the sanction of drought assistance and relief measures to alleviate the hardship of the people and the distress of the farmers."

This resolution is supported by all the political parties. This is the latest resolution passed on 13th of this month. So, I am requesting the Union Government.

As per the recent decision of the Task Force, they have released financial assistance to all the States. A statement of Madam Sonia Gandhi was reported in the newspapers that Andhra Pradesh Government is financially supported more by the Government of India. It is not a fact. Somebody may have misled Madam Gandhi. According to the figures, Andhra Pradesh has 22 affected districts. Already, Madam Gandhi has also mentioned about it. We received Rs. 174.61 crore. Tamil Nadu have got 19 affected districts and they received Rs. 228 crore. Rajasthan has 32 affected districts and they got Rs. 207 crore. Even, Madhya Pradesh got Rs. 125 crore and Karnataka got Rs. 221 crore.

15.11 hours

[SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV *in the Chair*]

Andhra Pradesh received only Rs. 174.61 crore in this particular year, 2002-2003. So, it is not correct that Andhra Pradesh is getting more financial assistance from the Centre. Even, we requested for 22 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains. Recently, Andhra Pradesh Assembly unanimously passed a resolution and requested the Government of India for 25 lakh metric tonnes of rice. Out of that, they have sanctioned only three lakh metric tonnes

[Shri K. Yerrannaidu]

of rice to the State of Andhra Pradesh. Even, there are other States also which received one lakh, 1.5 lakh or two lakh metric tonnes of rice. It depends upon the situation in the State. We are not bothered about release of more money to the other States. The needy States are there. There Government of India should support all the States. This is the need of the hour that the Government should intervene and support generously all the States affected by drought.

In this context, I would submit that last year, we received 31.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice. I have to tell on the floor of the House. – even the leader of main Opposition Party, Madam Sonia Gandhi is also here – that in Andhra Pradesh, we have sanctioned nearly 5,21,000 works throughout the States. We put all the information in the Internet, but even in Andhra Pradesh, somebody is talking that Government of India is allotting more funds to Andhra Pradesh, but in Andhra Pradesh, leaders were talking that we are supporting this Government and still we did not get any money for the State of Andhra Pradesh to safeguard the people of Andhra Pradesh, for carrying out drought-proof works and other things. In this connection, they are unnecessarily creating an impression that out of 31.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice, there is misutilisation. By this propaganda, the Government of India may tomorrow stop release of rice and ultimately, the works will be affected.

If somebody says that there is mis-utilisation, we are ready to face any inquiry. So, far we have conducted many inquiries. So, we released some books and we have sent all these books to all the agencies. Under the Food for Work Programme, so far 441 Governments officials are involved in irregularities. We have suspended those people. Even 145 Government officials were suspended and 54 Sarpanches of MPTCs and ZPTCs involved in irregularities were suspended. They are from all the political parties. . . .(Interruptions)

Mr. Chairman, normally it is a big programme. With 31.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice allotted to the State of Andhra Pradesh, we have executed 5,21,000 works. Even, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi once said on the floor of the House about misappropriation that the Government was providing one rupee while ultimately only 18 paise reached the

people. What happened to the rest of the amount ? In such a big programme, irregularities may happen. . . .(Interruptions) We are not justifying that. But if some irregularities are there, we have even suspended the representatives of political parties including that of Congress, TDP and CPI.

We have seized many licences from the millers, and we have taken necessary steps, like initiating inquiries against those who have committed offences, etc. We have suspended some of them, and we have taken action against some others.

We have already submitted the first report of the Government of India. Our Chief Minister personally came here and submitted the second report wherein he sought Rs. 1,210 crore. Recently, a request was made by the Government of Andhra Pradesh through a Resolution passed by the State Assembly requesting for an amount of Rs. 816 crore and 25 lakh metric tonnes of rice.

We would like to know on what basis you have allocated the moneys to States and what are the guidelines. We were the first among various States who have submitted the memorandum to the Central Government. At that time, there were rains in many States, but in Andhra Pradesh, since June, due to the dry spell, even the crops in the sown area were spoiled. The Andhra Pradesh Government, even without waiting for the assistance from the Government of India, has so far released Rs. 256 crore, under various programmes, to the people of Andhra Pradesh. Recently, on the floor of the Assembly where a discussion on drought took place, that is, on 13th September, the Chief Minister has announced a further assistance of Rs. 206 crore, in addition to Rs. 256 crore already announced under various programmes, like for drinking water, for procurement of fodder, 50 per cent subsidy on seeds, etc. We are providing 50 per cent subsidy on seeds to the farmers in Andhra Pradesh. We have started implementing various programmes for the farmers. The Central Government, so far, has given only Rs. 174 crore, and they released only three lakh metric tonnes of rice. They have also rescheduled the loans where the drought situation is very bad.

In this scenario, what are the priorities of the Government of India ? In this present situation, what criteria have you adopted to sanction the money to help all the States ? In Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the river

*Krishna*, and in Kamataka, all the reservoirs are empty and there is no water in the tanks. The Leader of the Opposition also knows about it. Due to the dry spell and lack of rains, the situation is very grave, and the people are suffering. Two crores of animals are suffering for lack of fodder and grass. When the situation is like this, you have given a meagre amount of Rs. 174 crore, whereas the Government of Andhra Pradesh has so far released Rs. 256 crore under various programmes. Recently, we have given a sum of Rs. 205 crore, in addition to Rs. 256 crore that we have already released.

In this situation, the Government of India should have a clear-cut policy. We have submitted our reports and, if necessary, you can send another Central Team. The earlier Central Team, sent in the month of September, toured many districts and witnessed the situation in many areas. At that time, due to the dry spell, all the crops were spoiled. In this scenario, the amount sanctioned to Andhra Pradesh is very meagre. Recently, all the political parties in the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly have unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Government of India to extend the necessary financial help to our State.

Looking at the prevailing situation in Andhra Pradesh, we feel sad that you are neglecting Andhra Pradesh. Out of Rs. 800 crore, we expected Rs. 500 crore in the first instalment, but we received only Rs. 174 crore. This amount is very meagre compared to some other States, which have declared drought in the month of October. In their case, though the Central Team suggested a certain amount, you have released more than that. The situation in our State is known to everybody; meanwhile, many Central Ministers visited Andhra Pradesh and they have witnessed the situation in Andhra Pradesh. Even then, we received only Rs. 174 crore. On behalf of the Government of Andhra Pradesh and on behalf of the people of Andhra Pradesh, I am sorry to say that this amount is not only very meagre, but also is not sufficient to do anything. We have so far released Rs. 415 crore to meet the present challenges. We have taken up many schemes to provide employment to the poorer sections. In this context, through you, I am requesting the Central Government to release the amount that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has requested for and also to release the remaining 23 lakh metric tonnes of rice so that we can provide work for the labourers.

*[Translation]*

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Chairman Sir, I remember that discussion was held on drought and flood in Monsoon session and is again being held on drought in winter session and the leader of opposition Sonia Gandhi ji has moved the Adjournment Motion. More than 14-15 States of the country are affected by drought. The farmers have been ruined. Public life is in total chaos. It is due to this that Adjournment Motion has been moved by the leader of opposition Sonia ji. I rise to support it. When-ever the questions regarding the starvation deaths are raised in the House, the Members of the ruling party assert that it is the responsibility of the State Government and not the Central Government. If there is starvation death in any State and the Central Government do not feel responsible then such Government is not the Government rather it is worthless and insensitive Government. The death of human beings due to starvation is a blot for all. The State Governments who are the administrators also bear responsibility, however the Central Government are more responsible for this. . . .  
*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN) : What happened to the fodder for cattles ? . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not indulge in cross talk.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Famine and drought are so unfortunate that people in villagers say that 'Dahiya hoi aur sukhai jai'. That means flood is not as a devastating as drought. There is crisis of drinking water for animals also hwever I do not know whether the people in power realise the crisis or not.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Has fodder been eaten up ? . . .*(Interruptions)*

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : People are not getting food *(Interruptions)*. Many a time peasants allow their cattle to roam free. At some places they get rid of their ownership over the cattle by way of colouring their animals and allow them to roam freely. Such complaints have been received from two three States. Now people have started taking it lightly. If the magnitude of insensitivity is so high then what will happen if not death due to starvation ?



[Shri K. Yerrannaidu]

"Jake Rajya Priye Praja Dukhari, Vo Nrip Hoi Narak Adhikari"

If the people of a State are unhappy and miserable and the State Government instead of doing anything pass their responsibility on to the Central Government and vice versa then it is not going to benefit the people and such Government cannot tackle the situation. Just now we have heard that the flood management has been taken up under national disaster management scheme. The Ministry of Home Affairs and drought management is with the Ministry of Agriculture. I do not know about it. I would like that they should clarify it as to what is the position. Initially the process of passing the bucks was between the Governments. Now similar is being done among the departments of the Government. Once I heard that the disaster management has been transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the day Advani ji become the Deputy Prime Minister efforts have been made to reshuffle the departments. The Central team have paid visit. All the States have demanded certain amount of assistance to face the situation of drought however not a single paisa has been provided so far. Swami Viveka Nand used to say that nothing noble can be achieved by deception and deceit and the drought situation can not be tackled without money.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Sir, they are talking about fraud and deceit. The entire fodder has been eaten up by them and their Government. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please take your seat.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH\* : They interrupt in the middle of the speech. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : This word will not go in the record.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH\* : The farmers are getting ruined. Peasants are dying . . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Unparliamentary words will not go in record.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Sir, Andhra Pradesh Government have demanded for Rs. 1210 crore,

Chandigarh has demanded for Rs. 880 crore and Haryana and other States have demanded for Rs. 1885 crore. It will take time if I give information about all the States, Uttar Pradesh has also demanded for Rs. 7,539 crores. The State Governments are demanding funds from the Central Government to tackle the situation arising out of the drought in their respective States, however you have not allocated even single paisa. If it is so then you donot have moral right to criticize the State Government and complain that people are dying of starvation due to the inaction of the State Governments.

Sir, I would like to tell you about their deception. The commission has recommended that for Calamity Relief Fund, three part would be provided by the Centre while the fourth part would be provided by the State Government. It had to be released even when there was no drought, since the commission has recommended so. They say that funds have been released, even if it is so, it is not generosity. In the reply to a question, he said that as per the recommendation of the Commission, Union Government should release funds, but not one paisa has been given to tackle drought. Only thing that has been done is that States have been given ten thousand to three lakh tonnes of cereals depending on their requirement. Even the cereals supplied by the Central Government are rotten. The cereal worth Rs. 185 crore, which is rotting in their godown and which is not fit even for animal consumption has been given to the States. That is why I would like to ask why the States are being criticised for starvation deaths, why they are being held responsible and Union is absolved of all responsibility. Even if there is no drought, States have to be provided funds from Calamity Relief Fund. They did not provide funds during floods. The House had discussed flood, a Central team had gone there, but not one paisa was given. Therefore, the Union Government and their partners have no right to criticise State Government since they are trying to tackle the situation on their own. I accuse Government of India of being casual, insensitive and deceptive. You can counter my points by providing facts and logical arguments. Even Supreme Court has issued a notice in this regard and said during hearing that it is Government's responsibility to ensure that that there are no starvation deaths. Supreme Court has to intervene when the Government is so insensitive and casual.

\*Not Recorded.

SHRI SHYAM BIHARI MISHRA (Bilhour) : The wheat allocated to your State has not been completely lifted.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Uptill now, I was speaking about country, now will speak about the State.

Sir, I would like to ask Government of India whether Bihar is in India or not. It seems that they consider Bihar out of India, hence the injustice with Bihar. I would like to quote the annual report of Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, which was laid on the Table of the House this year. It identified 183 districts as drought prone. In it, 11 districts are in Andhra Pradesh and 6 in Bihar. It is there in a document of a department under Government of India. The reply given by the Government yesterday the 18th, does not even mention drought in Bihar. Everything appears yellow to a jaundiced eye, similarly, Government of India also has a jaundiced eye. I would like to prove from their own document that nothing has been mentioned about drought prone areas. There is drought in several districts of Bihar. You belong to that place. You are fighting for flood control measures. You have organised padyatras etc. I had been to Jantar-Mantar for fast with the aim of tackling flood. A few people are still there. An all party delegation, under the leadership of Chief Minister had not hon'ble Prime Minister. We had urged him to free Bihar from the scourge of flood caused by rivers originating in another country. We are discussing drought. What happened to the proposal of linking the rivers. They wake up only when Supreme Court takes cognisance of the matter. Supreme Court had asked about what happened to the linking of rivers. They have taken some measures in that directions but that will not suffice. It is said in Ram Charit Manas – 'Ka Varsha jab Krishi Sukhane'. Rain is futile once the crop is destroyed and it will not benefit farmers in any way. Bihar has been ignored and injustice has been done to it. There are many districts such as Nawada, Gaya, Nalanda, Aurangabad etc. which are chronically drought affected. It is there in their own documents. They have ignored Bihar and it, alongwith some other States, has not been given even a paise. If there is to be a waive off it should be done with honesty. It should not happen that it should continuously get debt notices and the loan keep on increasing and the resources of the State are spent only in debt payment. Therefore, I

would like to caution you that everything should be done in transparent manner and poor farmers should not be cheated. It should not happen that farmers go on believing that their loans have been waived and after a couple of years he gets debt notice and interest continues to accumulate on his loan. It will be a great burden for farmers and would lead to deterioration in their condition. That is why I would like to ask what is the harm in implementing food for work programme and crop insurance. These two programmes should be implemented in an effective manner. It would enable people to get jobs and would also prevent starvation deaths. Government may also get some of its work done.

Therefore, Government need to take strict action and not pass on its responsibility. If the Government passes its responsibility on others it create problems for people, farmers and poor. Government should come forward for immediate as well as long term solution to the natural calamities. Central Government ought to stop transferring its responsibility to the State Governments. When he was speaking about farmers, he termed them as the God of earth. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Government to save farmers from the losses due to natural calamities. Government should formulated policies for protection of farmers.

*[English]*

\*SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN (Nagappattinam) : Hon'ble Chairman Sir, it really pains me to talk about the plight of the rural poor and the agriculturist who suffer the worse due to the drought conditions prevalent in many parts of the country. Of course ; thank the Chair for giving me an opportunity to take part in this discussion. It pains me to participate in the discussion on drought situation year after year because it reminds us the fact that we witness this situation even after 55 years of independence. All these years we have been taking only cosmetic measures. Only now we have waken up to the reality that there must be a long-term strategy evolved to wipe out this problem once and for all. We have been listening to the members emphasising on this point that there must be a lasting solution to this vexing problem.

---

\*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

[Shri A.K.S. Vijayan]

This Government led by our beloved Prime Minister Vajpayee has commenced steps in the right direction to evolve a lasting solution for overcoming drought problems in the country. Two days back our Prime Minister had made a historical announcement that this Government would take up a major scheme to link all the major rivers of this country. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister a team is constituted to evolve ways and means to link all the major rivers of the country which would help irrigation and also help us to overcome drought problems in several parts of the country. I would like to thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for setting up this panel. I would like to impress upon this Government that nationalisation of rivers alone could pave a better path and would help this panel to evolve better ways and means to overcome the problems faced by the agricultural community.

Due to drought conditions in several parts of the country we also witness death due to hunger, malnutrition and so on. In my constituency in a village called Adichapuram in Mannargudi Taluk in Thiruvarur District there was a death due to starvation. A seven year old boy, son of an agricultural labourer named Chandrasekhar, died due to starvation arising out of drought conditions prevailing over there. In Thanjavur, Nagappattinam, Thiruvarur Districts of Tamil Nadu, we find the poor agricultural labourers resorting to eat field mice, snails, crabs and certain wild vegetable leaves. I point out this common occurrence there to highlight the intensity of drought conditions prevailing there. This morning in this august House we saw an hon. Member showing a dried up dying crop to draw the attention of this Government to the plight of drought conditions prevalent in the country. The farmers and agriculturists in my region, the traditional rice granary of Tamil Nadu, are witnessing the same plight now with their crops withering away. If this drought condition continues for 5 more years the paddy cultivation itself would be wiped away from Thanjavur region. We may also witness a time when the future generation may not know from which crop or tree paddy comes from.

Twelve years ago, during a similar situation the erstwhile Chief Minister to Tamil Nadu announced a relief

to the agriculturists of reduce the agricultural input cost. During his third term as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi announced free-electricity to farmers for irrigation purposes. That steps was taken to ensure that agricultural activity continue and provide livelihood to the agricultural labourers. Now we hear that that scheme may be withdrawn by the present Tamil Nadu Government. I for one who would like to emphasise that electricity must be provided free of cost to the drought prone farmers not only in Tamil Nadu but all over the country. This must help the farmers and agricultural labourers to have their sustenance and continue with their agricultural activities. We must also ensure that all relief measures reach the needy poor especially the rural poor. Both the Centre and the State Governments must ensure that all relief reaches the agriculturists in time because ours is an agro economy. I would like to impress upon the Union Government that the Centre must evolve suitable guidelines to ensure that the relief reaches the needy rural poor in a proper manner. Few months back the Tamil Nadu Government came out with a scheme to provide farmers with funds to raise bunds towards watershed management. But what happened was to the contrary. Instead of farmers, the ruling party workers were provided with those funds and no redressal was available even when it was taken to the notice of the then District Collector of Thiruvarur and the then Executive Engineer of the Agricultural Wing over there. The agro-engineering efforts were thus rendered futile. At this juncture, I would like to lay stress on the point that such schemes devised by the Centre must reach all the poor farmers. So I urge upon the Centre to evolve ways and means to ensure that the benefits of the schemes reach all the needy in a proper manner at the appropriate time.

Our Prime Minister has announced that there will be a moratorium on agricultural loans. I am afraid that this will only be adding injury to the insult. It would be better the loans are waived off at this juncture when the drought conditions are hitting hard the agricultural community. Our Prime Minister who would like to conceive several measures for the welfare of the agricultural community must ensure a long term solution to the problems faced by the farmers.

Once again, I thank the Prime Minister and this Government for taking up the proposal to link all the major rivers of the country and I urge upon you to translate that

into action to the earliest to help the farmers overcome the drought related problems.

With this, I conclude.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY (Khammam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for allowing me to speak. I am going to request all my hon. colleagues in this House that they will bear with me when I am speaking on this subject. Anything that is said is to be viewed in the collective responsibility of what is good for our country. It is not about individuals because no single person is important than the farmers of India. So, I take this opportunity to raise this issue. What is the common factor? Rashrapatiji in the Rastrapati Bhawan, Speakers in their Chairs, media in their galleries, Members of Parliament, poor people, rich people, soldiers fighting in Kargil, all these people need to be fed. They are fed by the farmers. Farmers feed the people. Today, he is the man who is starving. Who is this farmer? He is the true countryman who lives in the remote areas of our nation where there are no hospitals for the aged, no schools for his children and no hope of getting his children married because of the drought conditions. These are farmers of our country and they are being forced to commit suicide.

Today we are in drought situation.

[Translation]

Why drought occurred in the country? Were we not aware of it? Did we have no means to identify drought.

[English]

Shri Yerrannaidu has just now mentioned that this is the second consecutive monsoon failure. We should have been aware of what is going to happen. It is the failure of not having a vision for agriculture. There is no vision document for agriculture vis-a-vis WTO; vis-a-vis bumper crop productions; vis-a-vis technology and development that is taking place the world over. We have national remote sensing agencies which can give you aerial surveys; which can give you layer by layer data analysis of how much water you have; how many reservoirs you have; and what is your capacity to give water to the agriculturists of our country. We did not even address that issue. We did not accept that kind of technology. Nor did we pass it down to our farmers.

[Translation]

Everybody says that their crop has been destroyed due to drought and they should be paid compensation.

[English]

Agriculture is not just about crops. You have pisciculture, aquaculture, and horticulture. You have live stock also to deal with. It is not just human beings who get affected because of food shortage. When we say farmers, we do not just mean the farmers who grow paddy and rice. We also have fish farmers. We have fishermen who are dependent on this. Today, the lakes are dry. We do not get fish. The rates of fish feed have gone up. We are not able to get fish feed to do fish sowing or to keep our fish nurseries alive. Look at our seed nurseries. Crop failure is only one aspect of the issue of drought. We have no seed for preparation. It is because our seed nurseries have dried up.

You do not have seeds for the next crop.

[Translation]

We were talking about Kharif. At the time of drought, Shri Yerrannaidu said that by God's grace water is now available.

[English]

And so, you say that you were able to save the last crop of *Kharif*. If the Centre is going to calculate that kind of water availability and take that crop into account, then the systems analysis that we have for what is required for drought analysis will be a failure. We have got to look at it far more analytically. We have to understand that if we take the last crop into account and say that this is not drought-stricken, it will not do justice to anyone. You know the vagaries of monsoon are much more complex than that. It is rather an archaic and antique way of evaluating what is required for a drought prone area.

Along with this, we have the livestock. Andhra Pradesh has one of the largest poultry industries for us. Because of the food shortages, we do not have coarse grain availability. With no coarse grain availability, animal feedstock has gone up.

[Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury]

[Translation]

People may say that they have buffer stock of rice and wheat.

[English]

You cannot mix *chawal* or *gehun* with animal feed because it has a high nutrient quality. We require coarse grain.

In this connection, I would like to say that I have written to the hon. Minister, to the hon. Prime Minister and to the Commerce Minister almost three months ago requesting that we should have availability of coarse grains. If need be, we must import this without import duty to make it available to our farmers and for livestock.

[Translation]

Everyone says here that there is no water nor fodder for animals. It will not settle things.

[English]

Even if I can give feed to my livestock, I need the micro nutrition for my animals. Trace minerals like zinc, magnesium and potassium are required for the well-being of animals. A farmer like me has to spend between rupees 30 and 1500 rupees per animals today to keep the animal lively and healthy in this drought period. The Government has not even addressed to that. Leave alone the Central Government, the State Governments do not even know that such issues exist in our country and this is our requirement.

Now, I come to Floriculture, Horticulture and orchards. Please look at as to what is happening in Nagpur. The Nagpur oranges have world recognition. They are on the decline now. You have huge old orchards which are lying there, which are dying of a rare virus which has been affecting the crop. Soon, God forbid, the Nagpur oranges are going to be history. Orange is one of the few things that we take such a great credit and pride in.

The next point is that we have lopsided development of State Governments which lack vision, which talk of technology and they give us all useless things. This is a Government that has invested Rs. 1400 crore in what it

called as "*Meeru Neeru*" Bore-wells were put in all over the State indiscriminately. They are put in even fluoride water areas whereby the ground water level is declining. We have given birth and given rise to rare virus and diseases which are affecting both people and animals today.

[Translation]

AN HON. MEMBER : Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Member is entering the well of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please speak from your seat.

[English]

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : I am doing so.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please continue.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : We are approaching the Rabi season. So far, neither the Centre nor the State has spelt out any contingency plan as to how it is asking our farmers to deal with the Rabi season. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has indirectly told the District Collectors not to encourage planting of Rabi crop, which is fine! It is a fine drought.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : We have discouraged planting of paddy only. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : What is the crop holiday and what is the compensation that they are going to give to my farmers? Do you expect the farmers to sit idle? Everyone is very much excited when Mr. Bill Clinton visits, when Mr. Bill Gates visits. But when it comes to paying bills, nobody wants to talk about that bill.

[Translation]

He doesn't mention about the Bill nor does he send the electricity bill to the farmers.

[English]

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM (Badagara) : It is very true.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : So, this is what I am asking. When a State Government tells not to go for planting crops, what compensation will the State Government or the Central Government give?

[Translation]

Both just meet and shake hands. They speak on phone at will. The matter of our losses crop up, then they blame each other for levelling allegations.

[English]

I also want to tell you what happened in Andhra Pradesh. About Andhra Pradesh, they want to speak a lot of good things. I belong to Andhra Pradesh. Please give us food. I will never fight on that issue. But I am asking this question. In the Kharif season, the Government has given us an assurance in Andhra Pradesh telling us that it is releasing the Sagar waters under the Nagarjun Sagar Canal project. I am speaking about my district. I am talking about Khammam.

We have the largest population of tribals and landless labour there. When they said, they would release water to us, seeds for 50,000 acres were purchased by my poor farmers who went to the market and borrowed money because the banks will only give them as long as there is good credit. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

If even one person does not give instalment in the village, it is called bad credit and the entire village is held responsible for that and no bank gives money to the farmers. Then the farmer is compelled to go to the market and get loan at the rate of interest of 17, 18 or even 20 percent and keep on paying interest throughout his life. We were assured that they are releasing water. We purchased seed for sowing purposes. Then our seed developed and when the crop was ready. They refused to release water and also told us that there can be shortage of drinking water too. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : I would like to intervene with your permission.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : First, let me complete. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to react to what Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury has said.

We never assured fully. We expected that due to rains, we would have sufficient water. So, we promised it. Finally, we did not get rains. Then, we requested the Chief Minister of Karnataka : "They are suffering due to lack of power. You have enough water in Almatty and Narainpur. You release 50 TMC of water for Andhra Pradesh to protect all the standing crops. Then, we will produce the power. Anyhow, we are producing the power. We will continue to produce it. We will give it to you. You give water to save the crops of those people." The State is under the Congress regime. But these people are not influenced. When there is the Nature's fury, what can we do? . . . (Interruptions) The problem has arisen due to lack of rains. Because of dry spell, the farmers have suffered a lot. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : It shows how the rest of the country is with the Congress. That is very good. . . .(Interruptions)

A loss to the tune of Rs. 40 crore has come for my farmers because that Government could not release water.

[Translation]

They say that Karnataka not provide water. I am telling you that not even a single farmer asked for 24 hours power supplies. The State Government, very confidently assured 24 hours power supply on 15th of August because of newspaper publicity. What to talk of 24 hours. We do not get even 3 hours of uninterrupted water supply.

[English]

Because of sub-standard power supply that they are supplying, the farmers have no rights as consumers.

[Translation]

Our motors get burnt. Amount of Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000/- is spent on their rewinding. You may count the total expenses alongwith interest.

[English]

Ultimately, we came to know that the farmer is under the clutches of commercial term loans. Even no industrialist also can borrow like that. We are forced to borrow like that. We are living under such terrible conditions during drought.

[Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury]

What happens during drought? The entire cycle takes place. Privatisation of common property resources, village water, forest land, grazing land and water tank takes places.

[Translation]

Rich people acquire watering holes of the village and then no one is there to take care of tribal, poor people and dalits. We should support them.

[English]

What happens is that mortgaging of ration cards takes place during drought. You have to have a micro-analysis along with the macro-vision of what is happening in agriculture. A lot of poor people mortgage their ration cards so that they could get some money to live. Despite all this hot air and talk, which this Government does without any concept or visual of what is happening in the drought situation, they have not addressed the drought management. Today, they say that they have no contingency plan that they have spelt out to the nation at large. Waiving of loans is only one issue.

For the next crop also, I have to get an interest-free loan as a farmer because I do not have the resource any more. I cannot go to any other place besides waiving and deferring of the payments. They must give it to us. If NABARD can give to the Gramin Banks at four and six per cent, why is it that as farmers we are supposed to pay 12-16 per cent as a commercial loan in the banking system. Now, the NABARD should come forward and give us our loans directly as part of the drought management.

It should be done directly as part of the drought management, as well as compensation has to be given for farmers who are going to take crop holidays. Landless labours have to be assured that their ration cards will be left for them.

He was indulging in self-praise. There were many scams. There was a report about this in *The Hindu* newspaper yesterday. Sir, 557 quintals of rice was caught being misused by the State Government. Of course he has

confessed that these things happen. I hope they will see that these things do not happen in future.

Also, there has to be special focus on women. I am not talking about women's liberation but women are 50 per cent of the agricultural communities. We are the women who harvest the seeds. We are the ones who sow the seeds. We are the ones who keep their animals. We are the ones who feed their animals. We are the ones who carry their children. There is no nutritional food or package available for women.

Now, I will come to subsidy on drip irrigation. It was given to women as a special incentive. It was withdrawn by an unimaginative Union Government. Please see that you restore subsidy on drip irrigation. A part of their water management was with drip irrigation where you get better yield, better productivity, better direct supply of nutrition, and micro nutrition for their plants.

Along with this, I would like to refer to the serious power situation in Andhra Pradesh. Sir, Rs. 7.50 per unit is being charged to the farmers. They talk about giving us subsidy. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

Its not true. It is beyond your perception. Infact the farmers grow foodgrain for the Union and State Governments in lieu of Subsidy. Is there anyone who could understand our problems. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

Unless you are able to take up those issues, it is difficult to solve the problem. They were boasting about internet information. Let them not forget this.

[Translation]

Bureaucrats who used to commit irregularities on files are now doing them on internet. Persons doing verification are public representatives. The whereabouts of public representatives in their State are not known.

[English]

This is an important time when we look at the water resources, water mapping, crop planning. You have to

think. We cannot sit like this till a drought descends on us. Then you say that you are releasing funds for drought management. You should be able to anticipated drought with today's scientific data analysis. You should be in a state of preparedness. You have got to look at crop planning in a completely different way.

You know Assam has come into rice production. They are a water-rich place. East Bihar is a water-rich place. So, you have got to leave water rich or crops which require water to those States, and look at the planning in other States. Unless you have some such thing, as crop planning or analysis, droughts like this bring a shift in crop pattern. They go from food crop to cash crop. As all your scientific prophesies have told you that you are going to go in for food shortages in the near future.

Sir, my fervent appeal to the Government is this. The tragedy arises that the Union Government has never considered agriculture as a primary focal issue. The last two or three years' agricultural budgets have been pitiful, inciting, and meaningless to the agricultural community. Because of lack of agricultural inputs in the budget, private spending has also been zero for our country as a result of which agriculture is always treated as a side subject. Only when there is a crisis, people pretend to care and talk in this Parliament. Non of this reaches the remote areas. My farmers are constantly harassed by bankers. Unless you have a revolutionary approach, and you have a visionary, and a missionary compassion to this community, do not imagine that farmers are going only to kill themselves. Beware of the wrath of farmers!

*[Translation]*

When the farmers would rise, everyone would be taken aback.

*[English]*

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU : Just a minute. I want to clarify one point on the floor of the House. My colleague, Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury talked about power tariff. She gave some examples.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am challenging her. One of the best States in the country is Andhra Pradesh. We are providing power for nine hours even now to the farmers,

and 20 hours to the ordinary consumers. You send some Parliamentary team to Andhra Pradesh.

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : Such a big lie.

16.00 hrs.

Sir, Just day before yesterday I've come back from my district. And the situation is that there is no power for three hours together. . . .*(Interruptions)* Ask me, I do cultivation, how can you know about that.

*[English]*

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN (Tirunelveli) : Sir, I would like to express my views on behalf of my party.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : On behalf of the country!

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : On behalf of the country on this motion.

During the last Session, we had a discussion on drought. We explained in details the needs of the farmers and the drought conditions prevailing in the country. We highlighted the drought situation in Tamil Nadu last time.

It is the policy of our AIADMK Party since as early as 1972 that all the rivers should be nationalised. When the late former Chief Minister Dr. MGR was alive, he propounded this policy and that policy was reflected by the present Chief Minister, Purachithalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha in Rajya Sabha as early as 1982 that all the rivers should be nationalised. If there is no water, the drought condition comes in. Even in spite of the Supreme Court, the Cauvery delta area farmers are not able to get water.

Sir, it is the politics of water. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA (Chikaballapur) : Sir, the records are there. We have to set right the records. We have been giving them water. But when we have no water, how can we give it to them ? . . .*(Interruptions)* Sir, he is misleading the House.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Sir, the Farakka Barrage issue was settled between India and Pakistan and Tiesta Water Dispute has been settled between India and Bangladesh.



[Shri P.H. Pandian]

But we are not able to resolve this issue between two States in our country. So, the Supreme Court had to interfere. The Supreme Court has passed the orders. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Sir, our Chief Minister has requested them to take water, but his Chief Minister refused to take it. She does not even respect the Prime Minister. She is so much audacious. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Order please.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Sir, water would have come to Tamil Nadu to save the Cauvery delta area farmers. But due to failure of South-West monsoon during the current year 2002 and because of lack of rainfall, 19 out of 28 districts of Tamil Nadu have been affected by drought, it was declared.

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu reviewed the situation and convened a meeting on the drought conditions, calling all the Collectors as early as on 23.9.2002. Based on that, she submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister asking for the allocation of Rs. 1400 and odd crore. We saw from the papers that Tamil Nadu has been granted Rs. 228 crore towards drought relief by the Central Government, but so far there is no official communication till date.

Before getting the allocation, the Chief Minister toured the Cauvery delta area on 24.6.02 and she announced a special relief package of Rs. 164.18 crore to the drought affected Cauvery delta areas of Thanjavur, Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam.

Sir, to alleviate the sufferings of the Cauvery delta area farmers, the Chief Minister had also announced, before the receipt of this amount of Rs. 228 crore from the Central Government, a special Deepavali gift of Rs. 210/- per hamper. As many as 10 lakh farmers were given this Deepavali gift at the cost of Rs. 21 crore. The State was helping the farmers to combat the drought conditions. Had the Government of India sanctioned Rs. 1,434 crore plus 5.5 lakh tonnes of foodgrains, we would have been able to overcome the drought conditions. So, we request at this juncture that the Government of Tamil Nadu be

sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1,434 crore minus Rs. 228 crore if they have sanctioned. I would say that in spite of drought conditions, there is no starvation death in Tamil Nadu. Even in this serious financial crunch, the Government of Tamil Nadu headed by our Chief Minister, Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi had given a bag, to the farmers, containing 10 kilograms of rice, one kilogram of sugar, 250 grams of sweets, 100 gram of ghee, and all vegetables plus Rs. 50/- cash as Deepavali gift. It costs about Rs. 210/- per head. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Sir, it is only for two days. What about the remaining 363 days in a year ? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI (Salem) : Sir, this is too much. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : What is this? Are we in Parliament ? . . .(Interruptions) If you want, you go and give. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : I am not confined only to Karnataka. I am confined to the entire India. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : What is this? Please control him. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj) : You cannot control Dr. Jayalalitha. How can I control him? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : At this juncture, I would say that the Government of India should have a foresight of these drought conditions because in every Session we talk about the serious drought situation on one day but we are not able to remedy the drought situation prevailing in the country. We discuss and we disperse. What do we get for the farmers? Do they merely get the benefit out of our discussion? Cutting across the party lines, we are arguing and putting forward our case for all the farmers irrespective of their region and irrespective of any other creed. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Canara) : Including the DMK farmers. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Pandian, please address the Chair.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Sir, there is a lot of distraction. There must be a flow. When I am in the flow, there is an interruption. . . .(Interruptions)

SHIRMATI MARGARET ALVA . Please do not look back. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please address the Chair.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : What are the criteria for allotment ? What are the criteria in respect of the allocation of drought relief by the Central Government ? We, the Members of the AIADMAK Parliamentary Party, met the Prime Minister.

We presented a Memorandum asking for Rs. 1,434 crore. We met the Finance Minister. Three months after the Members of Parliament presented the Memorandum, a Central Team was sent. The Central Team submitted a report recommending allocation of Rs. 500 crore, but we got only Rs. 228 crore. The Central Government should have, at least, sanctioned the amount as per the Central Team's assessment. The Central Team was consisting of Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Government of India; Shri R.P. Singh, Joint Director, Directorate of Cotton Development; and Shrimati Nalini Pathak, Assistant Director, Ministry of Finance and Company Affairs. So, four teams were sent to different parts of Tamil Nadu to assess the drought situation. They collected materials. They went to the spot. They assessed the drought damage. They had sent their recommendation for allocation of Rs. 500 crore. Let the Minister, at least today, sanction the balance amount of Rs. 272 crore.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Are you supporting ?

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : We are not supporting anybody. The mover of the Motion is from your Party. I am speaking on your Motion. Is participating in a drought discussion a crime ? Should it not be serious ? It should not be lively. It should be like an obituary reference. The farmers are dying there. The farmers are not able to repay their loans.

DR. C. KRISHNAN (Pollachi) : Just now he said that there was no death. Now the hon. Member says the farmers are dying.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : What is this ? There is no death. If a dead man happens to be a farmer, do you mean to say that it is a starvation death ? What is this ? So, to alleviate the sufferings of the farmers of Cauvery delta area, the Government of India should have acted swiftly. The Government of India, after getting the report of the Committee, should have immediately sanctioned that amount. The hon. Chief Minister also briefed the Team about the failure of the monsoon. There is some anomaly. If Tamil Nadu is in drought condition, they will be able to give a relief package. There is a technical word that each district should be declared as drought-affected. When the Whole State is declared as a drought-affected State, why should there be a declaration of each Taluka and each village ? The whole State is suffering from serious drought condition. So we should not stand on technicality. This technically is an official technicality. The people of the State are suffering. So I would request the Government of India to come out of all the technicalities and give relief package to every State. I asking for all the States because we are discussing the serious drought condition in every part of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : I will finish my speech in a minute.

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM (Thanjavur) : Then, why are you not declaring the districts as drought-affected areas ? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : That is why I have said when the whole State is in a drought condition, where is the need for declaring each Taluka and village ?

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Does that include Chennai ?

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : It is including Chennai. Chennai is in drought. The people are suffering even for drinking water.

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Then, the basic tax may be exempted for the farmers.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : This is not Tamil Nadu Legislature. This is Parliament.

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : But fortunately or unfortunately, you are from AIADMK and I am from DMK.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : You ask your DMK men there to raise it in the Legislature. This is a higher forum. . . .  
(Interruptions)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : There are 10 Ministers sitting in the Ministry from your side. I do not know how much money they have got for Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : You are representing Tamil Nadu. You are ruling Tamil Nadu, but you are not sending any direct report to the Central Government.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : Sir, I am thankful to my friend Shri T.M. Selvaganpathi for reminding that there are ten Ministers sitting on the Treasury benches. What are they doing? Why should they be Ministers? They are there to look after Tamil Nadu's interests. They are not there to look after their personal interests. For them, their personal interests are above all people's interests. The ten Ministers have shirked their responsibility. They have not talked to the Prime Minister. They have not talked to the Government. They are not agitated over the matter. All the Ministers have kept quiet. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM : Yes, I accept your argument. In the case of Karnataka, all hon. Members who represent Karnataka have approached the Prime Minister along with their Central Ministers. Your ego has prevented you from approaching us. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : This is not unparliamentary. Ten Ministers are there from the State of Tamil Nadu. It is a fact. It is a fact that they have not done anything in the interest of the people of the State. . . . (Interruptions) It is a fact that the ten Ministers are looking after their personal interests. . . . (Interruptions) Do you want me to expose their personal interests? Each Minister has a personal agenda. They do not have a people's agenda; they do not have a farmer's agenda. . . . (Interruptions)

Let the people know that the ten Ministers from the State are keeping quiet. They are not even present here. Where are those ten Ministers from Tamil Nadu? What is their appointment apart from attending Parliament? Attending Parliament is an important matter. This is not an

allegation. It is a fact that all the ten Ministers are not representing the interests of the people of Tamil Nadu. There is no Central Minister from Tamil Nadu present here. . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMANAND SINGH (Satna) : Why are you giving so much time to him? He is speaking for the last one year but there is nothing concrete, he is raising only the dispute of Karnataka and Tamilnadu. This is not the place for raising Tamilnadu – Karnataka dispute, raise it outside. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : I am asking about the ten Ministers from Tamil Nadu. Why should they not be here? . . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. There are 26 hon. Members to speak.

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : These are interruptions. You should not take them into account.

This matter should be discussed in broad detail. Everybody should know what the Ministers are doing. They have not approached the Prime Minister because of political considerations. They want the drought to continue. They want that the Chief Minister should not be able to disburse the amount. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMANAND SINGH : How long will this discussion continue and whether we would be given time or not? Whether members sitting at the back seats would not get time? Please give the ruling. I have given prior notice for my question, atleast members sitting at the back should also be given a chance to speak. Our name is there in the list and we need your ruling in this regard. We can discuss referential issues besides drought, but regional disputes should not be raised here. This is a serious issue, everyone should be given a chance to speak on this. . . . (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Ramanand Singh ji, your name is there in the list, please sit down. Why do you rise every now and then without permission.

[English]

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : I do not know Hindi. I do not know what he is saying.

We have a discussion on disinvestment. On that issue, we can discuss in different voices. On the question of farmers, why should there be a partisan discussion? Let it be a House discussion for farmers. Let there be a House discussion where all the parties come together. Let all the Ministers work together. Let all the Ministers approach the Government, talk to the Government and exert their power. They are exerting their powers on personal agendas. They are exercising their powers for their personal benefits.  
... (Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : What is the personal benefit?

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : If you bring a No-Confidence Motion, I would give out all the personal agenda.

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN : Will he keep this promise? If we bring a No-Confidence Motion against the Government, will he support it?

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA : Would you vote with us?

SHRI P.H. PANDIAN : You bring the Motion. We will think about it on that day. Why do you want to anticipate our stand now? ... (Interruptions)

Sir, there was a failure of monsoon which necessitated the drought conditions. Now, it is up to the Central Government, at least, to remedy the situation prevailing in India.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, main answer to the question would be given by the hon. Minister of Agriculture. There are only three points related to my department, regarding which I would like to give some information to the august House. The demand for foodgrain made by the States under the special component of SVRI, was fulfilled. In all, around 38 lakh 29 thousand tonnes of foodgrain was distributed in the entire country under the special component scheme.

16.21 hrs.

[DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA in the Chair]

Besides, 14 lakh 26 thousand tonnes of foodgrain has been provided in the States affected by drought. I agree that it is a new achievement for India that our farmers have produced foodgrain in such huge quantity that it is becoming difficult to store it in godowns and we are exporting it. The country which used to import foodgrain four years back, is today exporting it to 30 countries of the world. But under such circumstances, when we do not have place to store it, the news of starvation is definitely a matter of concern. It is not a matter of discussion or allegations and counter-allegations. What is the reason that despite each district of the country, having huge quantity of foodgrain, we are hearing news of starvation, the House should make serious considerations in this regard. I am of the view that there is no shortage of foodgrain but there is lack of proper management. We are trying to find out the loopholes. All States, that demanded for foodgrain under the special component scheme as also recommended for that, have been provided foodgrain.

Mr. Chairman, Sir I would like to put another point before the House. There are so many schemes related to rural development with the Ministry of Rural Development and in all the annual budget of our Ministry is Rs. 14,000/- crore. The foodgrain provided by us costs rupees eight thousand crore. A total of rupees 22,000 crore are with our Ministry which are fixed for the development of villages and which are released to the States. What is the use of so many schemes, the people in rural areas would get jobs only if these schemes are implemented. There is a requirement to give jobs to the people due to the situation arising out of drought. This problem can be solved if all the schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development are implemented properly in the States.

I do not have figures of condition prevailing in the entire country, but I have collected details of States which are affected by drought. I am surprised and even the House should be surprised as to why such a situation has arisen. Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the beginning of the years the opening balance of the schemes of Ministry of Rural Development with the drought affected areas was rupees 3275 crore. We released rupees 5705 crore.

[Shri Shanta Kumar]

In all, these drought affected States had rupees 8980 crore for implementing the rural schemes. This year, after we released our instalment, these States had rupees 9659 crore for implementing the Rural Development Schemes. And the amount spent was rupees 2186 crore. So rupees 9659 crore could have been spent, and can be spent but as per the report upto September, rupees 2186 crore were spent and rupees 7473 crore were left unspent. When this remaining amount of rupees 7473 crore would be spent on the schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development in rural area, then the people would get employment and when they get employment we can certainly combat the situation arising out of drought.

Rajasthan state has been discussed here at length. I was looking into the details of Rajasthan. The opening balance of all our schemes for the current year in Rajasthan was. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Please provide State wise details of schemes to the House, the funds of which have not been spent. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : I would provide the House with statewise details. I was saying that discussion on Rajasthan State has been held at length here. The news about Rajasthan is a matter of deep concern. If people in any corner of the country are starving then it is definitely a point of concern for the entire country. The opening balance of all Rural Development schemes in Rajasthan was rupees 207 crore and we released rupees 460 crore. In all, Rajasthan had rupees 682 crore for Rural Development schemes out of which rupees 58 crore were spent. Why the entire funds were not spent? We have released funds and requested them to utilize these funds so that we could release the next instalment but Rajasthan spent only rupees 77 crore out of rupees 683 crore. Even today Rajasthan has rupees 604 crore to be spent off. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SIS RAM OLA (Jhunjhunu) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is not right. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Minister is not yielding. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : I am talking about the drinking water in Rajasthan. That area is affected by drought. They need water but the situation of drinking water is such that opening balance. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SIS RAM OLA : You are not right. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : No, this is not the proper way. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Chandigarh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, he is raising basic objection in this regard. . . .(Interruptions) Whatever he has said is not correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Sis Ram ji you can speak when you are called. You please take your seat. Your name is included in the list. When your turn comes only then you may speak. You please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL : It is not matter of his turn. The basic objection that he is raising is that the figures that are being placed by him are not correct. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Sis Ram ji, you will speak when your turn comes.

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : If these figures are wrong then you please supply the correct one. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Sis Ramji you may speak when your turn comes and refute his Statement.

(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : The people of Rajasthan are facing problems. Funds allocated for the rural development schemes are not being spent. It is due to the inaction of the Rajasthan Government that funds are not being spent. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, with all due respect to the hon. Minister, I would request that the hon. Minister may kindly enlighten the House. . . .(Interruptions)  
We are not questioning him. . . .(Interruptions)

Sir, the hon. Minister may kindly enlighten us about one thing. Rural Development budget of a particular State is divided into Plan and Non-Plan budget. When the Plan support comes, then the other grant is allotted. Rural Development Fund comprises of, if I am not wrong – the Minister may correct me if I am wrong – PMGSY, Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme and also other components of the *panchayati raj* programme. It is not exclusively for drought. He should explain head-wise which are the heads of the entire rural development programme. . . .(Interruptions) It is not correct. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Rasa Singh ji you please take you seat. I have called Sis Ram ji.

SHRI SIS RAM OLA : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister that the figures he is quoting that the amount is directly sent to Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now you please sit down. You have expressed your view.

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was submitting about the drinking water. I would like to tell about the resolve of the State Governments regarding the availability of water in the even of drought. Funds have been allocated to the Rajasthan Government for drinking water schemes and its opening balance was Rs. 83 crore. The funds which were released by the Union Government to Rajasthan for drinking water schemes were Rs. 133 crore. Thus Rajasthan Government has Rs. 217 crore for the implementation of drinking water schemes. Out of that only Rs. 43 crore have been spent so far and Rs. 173 crore are balance. Why are you not spending that amount. I would like to submit that if the State Government run all the village development schemes then there will not be any problem in generating sufficient employment opportunities.

At the end, I would like to submit that there are 13 such regims where drought condition is prevailing. There are total of 310 districts which are affected by drought. We have some norms for releasing of the funds. There are two conditions for releasing the second instalment. Once the first instalment is released second instalment is released only when utilisation certificate stating that 60% of the first instalment has been spent, is submitted. The State Government had requested to relax it as it had some difficulty. So the Government of India relaxed this condition and it was decided that out of the 310 districts only 174 district will be benefitted by this relaxation. Rs. 484 crore and seven lakh tonnes of foodgrains was released by the Government. However, there are 136 such districts which could not take second instalment in spite of this relaxation. It means that they could not spent even 40% of their previous instalment. They are not utilizing the funds and are complaining that they are not getting funds. It is not healthy situation. If the State Governments utilise the funds allocated for various schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development then there will not be any problem in providing employment to the people. Funds amounting to nearly seven thousand crore rupees are lying idle under various schemes of the Ministry meant for these drought affected areas. My submission is that if the entire amount is spent then there will not be any problem in providing employment to the people.

SHRI SIS RAM OLA : I am laying\* on the table of the House the utilisation certificate given to Rajasthan Government by the Auditor General, Rajasthan.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Uttar Pradesh is the biggest State of the country. If the hon. Minister has figures regarding Uttar Pradesh with him, he should lay those figures also on the table of the House.

SHRI RAM SAJIVAN (Banda) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the entire nation is in the grip of drought and on several occasions discussions in this regard have been held in the House but the problem remains at it is. The reasons behind that is that we did not make efforts to know the basic reasons of it. We should seriously think over the main

---

\*As the Speaker subsequently did not accord the necessary permission the paper was not treated as laid on the table.

[Shri Ram Sajivan]

reasons if it and should seriously ponder over it. I feel that the life of rural people is most affected by drought and the Central Government are not paying that much attention towards it as it should do.

Once I got an opportunity to hear in the House and a village oriented atmosphere was created in the country 'Chalo gaon ki ore'. However, today everyone has forgotten it. Earlier entire House was agreed upon this and we had some principle but today that principle is reflected neither in any scheme nor in any tone, speech and point of view. So, first of all we should change our attitude that we have to pay attention towards rural problems as poor people inhabit in India. If the attention is paid towards this then we will succeed in solving the problems of flood and drought.

Earlier also I had submitted in the House that our influential leaders come from Urban areas and they control entire policies. However, I have firm belief that the leaders coming from cities does not have knowledge about the life in rural areas. When it comes to rural life and the solution of the problem is concerned, I firmly believe that our attitude should change. When anything happens in Mumbai Kolkata, Delhi and Chennai it is widely reported in newspapers. It is the attitude in our country. So unless we pay attention to the main reasons this problem will not be solved.

Many times it has been discuss in the House. I would like to submit in the context of Uttar Pradesh that Uttar Pradesh administration first of all deferred the collection of revenues in drought effected districts. There after other States deferred the collection of revenues. The objective of deferring the collection of revenues and other related works was to provide relief to the farmers and drought affected villages. This demand was raised from other States also and it was on account of this that the Government of India became active and some steps were taken in this regard.

Hon'ble Minister was saying that he sanctioned crores of rupees but they were not spent. Therefore, he is not to blame and the blame should go to the State Governments. Such an approach will not help in ameliorating drought problem. This is political approach just to disgrace others.

If he has given funds then there is no State Government of any party which would not want to spend those funds. They demand for funds and in my opinion the funds meant for States are not spent because of certain reasons. Hon'ble Minister has left but one-two hon'ble Ministers who are present here should mark my words.

SHRI RAJO SINGH (Begusarai) : I support the views of Ram Sajivanji. One hon'ble Minister delivered his speech and left. Now another is waiting to deliver his speech.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is giving close attention to your speech.

SHRI RAM SAJIVAN : We also do the same. Leave the matter.

Fund provided to the States are not spent. On the basis of my experience, I would like to say that the funds sent are clubbed with so many conditionalities that the officers are scared to spend them even when the State Government asks them to do so. You might not be aware of it as you do not go through the details. The officers think that by spending the funds, guidelines would be violated and their job would be in threat. Therefore, the conditionalities need to be reviewed. If they can't do this, they can take the advice of MPs who may give valuable suggestions in this regard. I can quote few examples in this regard. The Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, which consists of 7-8 districts of Southern Uttar Pradesh and Northern Madhya Pradesh, is a drought affected area. Every year I raise the issue of drought and drinking water problem in the House. As per my information, Government sent funds for digging tanks with the aim of ameliorating drought conditions. The digging started but the condition was laid down that the work should be labour oriented. I am not against labour oriented policies, but Central Government has confused officers and State Governments by laying down such conditionalities.

If the funds are sanctioned for the digging of tanks, then the cost of extracting one bucket of earth would come to Re 1. The labour oriented dual policy of the Government of digging tank to store water and providing work to people is all very good. Everyone would praise such a scheme but what happens in practice. The practical thing is why worker would go to work in 10 bighas of land. It would

result in the fact that neither tank would be dug nor the labourer would get his wages. You will be in a dilemma. As a saying goes, "Duvidha mein donon gaye, Maya mili na Ram." Neither water could be stored in the tank nor there was work for labourers. The labour aspect will have to be abandoned if the tank is to be deepened and water is to be stored. Labour can be used for roads. They can also be used for some other works. If the digging of tanks are conducted through tractors and machines, then thousands of tanks would certainly be dug. Those tanks would solve the problem of drought.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. You had promised to conclude in two minutes.

SHRI RAM SAJIVAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, the State Government provides Rupees one lakh as subsidy to the farmers for the boring of tube wells. I had raised this issue here a number of times. Hon'ble Irrigation Minister replies that it is not included in their programmes. Why would I have raised the matter if the programme had been included among the programmes of the Centre? They should also provide Rs. one lakh as subsidy to the farmers for boring tubewells as are being provided by the UP Government. UP Government have limited resources. If the problem is attended to in this manner, the problem of drought will be solved.

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL (Monghyr) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my views on the issue of drought.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we discuss drought and flood in each session but the issue remains unsolved. Whenever drought, flood, starvation or poverty issue is raised, it is said that no politics should be involved in it, but whenever adjournment motion is moved, pure politics is played here. We are people's representatives but we also indulge in deception in saying that there should not be any politics but we also play politics in it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am sorry and also distressed. As Shri Ram Sajivanji was saying that Union Government provide funds, but where is the blame for State Governments, if the funds are not utilised. It is because, there are many preconditions for its utilisation.

I would like to quote the example of my area. In daily Hindustan, dated 10th November, a news published on the front page under the caption "Sangrampur ke gaon mein Jaanlewa Garibi aur Bimari!" This is on the front page of the Bhagalpur edition of the paper. When I went there, I came to know that a man Umesh Dube died of hunger. A baby of one and a half years of age died one and a half months ago and then her mother also died. After reading the newspapers I reached there on 11th November and enquired about the episode. I was told that Umesh Dube was a Brahmin and the deceased mother and her baby were Rajputs. It was for the first time I ever heard people of Brahmin and Rajput community dying of hunger and I rushed to their place. I was surprised to learn that both the families had red ration card meant for below poverty line families. There was no entry in those cards regarding food or money provided under various schemes of Central Government such as Antyodaya Yojana, Annapurna Yojana etc. I would like to know how the Union Government would arrange the supply of grains to the red card holders. Red card holders get food grains free of cost so that they could survive. How Government propose to arrange supply of grains to people living below poverty line. The machinery for the purpose, the policy framework and rules in this regard should be clearly laid down. It should be discussed as to how grains would be supplied to them especially as the number of red card holders is very high.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know, as to how all the grains are exhausted. Whether they are lying in godowns, or with Public Distribution System shopowners, or they are sold, or have gone to Mafia or in black market or because of the complicity of the administration. Discussion should be held as to how that grains would be supplied to those people. There should not be any politics in it. States should not be given a bad name. But how the Union Government propose to arrange supply of grains to them. Through what channel the supplies would be made. What are Centre-State relations in this regard. We should discuss the issue keeping all the above mentioned aspects in mind, but we only play politics here. The empathy that we should have for poverty, starvation, injustice and atrocities is no longer in us because of the politics. We only speak here because we want power and chair.



[Shri Brahma Nand Mandal]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am talking about empathy because, I have seen it all with my naked eyes. Now only one person of that family survives and he, too, is handicapped. After my visit, administration provided him aid of Rs. 10000. I talked about it to the local D.M. We should ponder as to how such a situation is still prevailing after 53 years of independence.

Hon. Minister of Rural Development was saying that we have adequate stocks of foodgrains. Godowns are full with grains. We export grains to 30 countries. But even then we see people dying of starvation. We should ponder over it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, we continue to debate here about flood and drought. Every year Bihar is devastated by floods and drought both. I would like to say that 18 districts of Northern Bihar are devastated every year due to flood. Infrastructure worth thousands of crores of rupees is destroyed and we are here only to debate the issue.

It is said that fifteen years ago, Planning Commission had estimated about Bihar, especially Northern Bihar, that the rivers Originating in Nepal, be it Kosi or Gandak or Bagmati, could be harnessed to produce 40000 mw of power every year. At present, the same water destroys 18 districts of entire north Bihar. 15 years ago, Planning Commission had said that the cost of generating one MW of power is Rs. 4 crore. Now that cost must have escalated. Union Government should talk with the Government of Nepal on this issue. Many purposes can be served through one project. Floods can be controlled, water can be used for irrigation, hydel power can be generated and the overall welfare of the farmers can be made possible. The very problems of flood and drought would be solved once and for all. Even after 53 years of our independence we have failed to do it. Why schemes are not being formulated in this regard? Is there scarcity of funds? I do not agree to this. I think it is due to lack of determination. We are no concerned about the agony of thousands of people suffer during floods. Houses, schools and roads get damaged during floods. But every time we just lament upon this issue in parliament and Legislative Assemblies. It is not that funds are not spent. Huge funds are spent

but I feel pain to say that politics is being played in this regard. People have elected us to fight for their cause and solve their problems. But we always work with an aim to regain the power in future. There is no shortage of funds. I have examples from my constituency. I will raise the issue of drinking water.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Another member from your party is waiting for his turn to speak. Please speak in brief otherwise he may not get time.

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have just started.

MR. CHAIRMAN : 25 more members have to speak. I have informed you that another member from your party has to speak. Therefore, please be brief.

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I always abide by you. I will not take much time. I just want to say that in order to solve the problem of flood and drought, members of all the political parties be in ruling side or in opposition, should seriously discuss this issue. Priority should be given to the basic problem especially the problem of flood and drought of all the States of the country. Substantial part of the budget should be spent to solve these problems. We may get rid of these problems if we are able to do this.

With these words, I conclude while stating that this adjournment motion is politically motivated and I oppose it.

17.00 hrs.

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, on behalf of the Government, I would like to provide some information to the House which would facilitate the hon'ble members to discuss the matter. The country is facing serious drought and it is a matter of satisfaction that the House is discussing it. I do not want to make a long speech rather I just want to intervene a little and through you, I would like to give suggestions as to how we can provide relief to the flood and drought affected areas. In this regard, on behalf of the Government, I would like to place some figures for facilitating the hon'ble members debating the issue.

Sir, the allocation during 2001-2002 was 400 lakh mt. tonnes. Last year Rajasthan and other parts of the country were in the grip of drought. The allocation in targetted PDS was 300 lakh mt tonnes last year and this year it is 445 lakh mt tonnes. Only 100 lakh mt. tonnes has been lifted during the last seven months. Under the scheme "Food for Work" the allocation for SGRY was 35 lakh mt. tonne in the whole country. 28 lakh mt. tonne was allocated for mid-day meal scheme and 6.00 lakh mt. tonne was allocated under other welfare scheme. Last year 32 lakh mt. tonne was allocated out of which 29 lakh mt. tonne was lifted. This year 54 lakh mt. tonne has been allocated under SGRY scheme and 40 lakh mt. tonne has been lifted so far, 27 lakh mt tonne for Mid-day meal scheme and 4 lakh tonne for other welfare schemes. In toto 96 lakh mt. tonne was allocated out of which 53 lakh tonne could be lifted. Central Government is providing foodgrains free of cost under SGRY. Under this Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were given 3 lakh mt. tonne, 0.50 lakh mt. tonne, 0.25 lakh mt. tonne, and 0.10 lakh mt. tonne, respectively during the recent drought. Jharkhand, Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Rajasthan were given 0.40 lakh, 2.00 lakh, 2.00 lakh, 0.5 lakh tonne 2 lakh mt. tonne, 1 lakh mt. tonne, 0.5 lakh tonne, and 7 lakh tonne, respectively.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, my submission is that the issue under discussion is how to tackle the problem of drought. From my experience of the last 6-7 months. I can say that drought affected areas are far flung areas which are difficult to approach and where transportation is expensive. These are mostly tribal areas. I do not want to get into the controversy of the news from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan.

I have given the figures pertaining to all the States. Government of different parties are in power in these States. You would notice that the work regarding identification of poor has been done effectively in South but not in North India. How these schemes would be implemented effectively unless the identification of the poor people is completed. These schemes would be fruitful only when we adopt a better way to identify the poor. South has really done a good job in this regard.

Regarding Antyodaya scheme, I would like to tell the House that North India's performance in this regard is about 72-89% where as in south it is more than 90% Antyodaya scheme meant for the poorest of the poor has been very successful. In this scheme, identification work of the poor people seems good as per the figures but not in reality. I would like to submit that the outcome of the inquiries conducted by our teams sent to drought affected areas of Orissa, Uttar Pradesh or Rajasthan reveal that poor have not been identified properly. Hon'ble members are also critical about the system adopted for identification of poor. They are also levelling allegations and counter allegations upon each other in this regard. I would like to submit that leader of opposition Shrimati Sonia Gandhi has initiated this discussion very effectively in the House. I would also reply in the same manner so that something concrete could come out of this discussion. The question before us is how to identify the poor.

If proper identification of the poor is done, then all the schemes such as JRY, food for work, Mid day Meal Scheme etc. would be successful; I would like to mention that an amount of Rs. 40 crore is being spent on Food Welfare Scheme only. Our Government have raised the allocation to such an extent only after the continuous efforts. It is a big allocation. The country has sufficient stock of foodgrains. Hon'ble supreme court also says the same thing. We are discussed this issue in the House but there must be concrete outcome of this discussion. The only thing which has come out is that poor were not identified. Earlier also I have mentioned that south has done better work regarding identification of the poor. The situation in this region regarding the foodgrains lifted is as good as that of allocation. I do not want to comment on the States of North-India but here the work culture and system is not streamlined. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI DHARM RAJ SINGH PATEL (Phulpur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister as to how the poor would be identified when Central Government has restricted the issuance of red or yellow cards to one crore poor people. Government have limited the number of poor people. Among whom the surplus stock of foodgrains were distributed ?

17.09 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset I said that the method of identification of poor people should be simpler. I have talked to Prime Minister also and said that Chief Ministers of all the States should be called to discuss this issue. Today different parties are in power in different States. We may level allegations on each other in the House but the reality is that we have kept 40 crore rupees for foodgrain welfare scheme. Just now Shri Shanta Kumar was mentioning that funds are allocated for rural development but is not being spent. There may be faults in funds management by the Government in this regard. I think the rules in this regard are also very complex due to which funds could not be utilized. Definitely corruption is a separate issue for discussion but the question before us is that we should identify the poor. I strongly feel that had the funds given for rural development been utilized appropriately, our villages would have been prosperous. However, this was not done.

Anyway, we should not lament upon the past. Our country is in the grip of famine and drought. Several areas are facing water crisis. We have sufficient stock of foodgrains, adequate funds and other means also. The need is to bring them to the ground i.e. to utilize them properly. I would submit that our team had visited Orissa and reported that PDS system there is faulty. Reports from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have not been received yet. The team sent to Rajasthan has also reported about the faulty system there. Rajasthan is the worst drought affected area. Earlier this area was not drought prone but this year drought has struck this part also. We provided 30% foodgrains but the fair price shops have not been opened in adequate number there. The need is to streamline the arrangements. Through you, I would like to tell the House that an easier way for identification is to include the poor landless labourers. We all should make collective efforts in this regard. The Government alone can not do it. I have talked to the hon'ble Prime Minister. Chief Ministers of all the States should be called upon to hold a meeting on this issue. There is no bigger challenge than drought. It would be really a big job if we successfully tackle this problem. Floods and droughts are the regular

features in our country. To tackle these problems. . . .  
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : A problem arisen when list of B.P.L. is formulated in villages. I had visited a village one month ago. In Panchayat system there is no problem to identify the poor. The problem is inadequate availability of the means for the poor due to which their number has to be restricted to a certain limit. Hence, indirectly, there would be a limit on the number of poor to be included in the list. How we would tackle this problem ?

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : In the very beginning, I have submitted that there should be a discussion on the loopholes prevailing in the existing system. It is necessary that what is being given should reach the people. Number of people under B.P.L. is increasing. Under Antyodaya scheme, they could have been identified but that could not be done. We agree that rules should be simplified to evolve a solution. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : The card should be given only to the people living below poverty line. However, it is being given to those also who are not included in below poverty line category.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : I have not understood. What he is saying. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAKASH PARANJPAE (Thane) : He himself does not understand what he says. . . .(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : He said sometimes people who are not covered under BPL get this card. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Athawale, please sit down.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : The country has sufficient stock of foodgrains. The House should commit that not a single starvation death would take place in the country. Government of India is ready to extend all possible help. This discussion should conclude with a resolution that not a single person would die of starvation. Government is ready to take all steps on its part. We can hold discussion to sort out the problem if any.

With these words, I conclude.

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA (Chikaballapur) : Sir, at the outset I want to congratulate Shri Pandian for not having any death due to starvation. But I really want to offer my condolences because many people died due to heavy rains in the last one month.

So, they are not suffering from drought now.

Coming to my State, Karnataka, unfortunately, we have been experiencing drought for the last two years. This year's drought is unprecedented in the last sixty or seventy years. We have never suffered from this sort of a drought.

Almost all crops have perished, and not a single drop of water is there in any of the tanks. Cattle are suffering without fodder. Human beings are suffering. They do not have proper work to do. We are not getting sufficient drinking water. Day by day, it is depleting. If we go beyond 600 feet, we are getting fluoride water. In many districts, we are suffering for want of drinking water also. Sensing this, our Government was benevolent enough to write off Rs. 127 crore of interest to the farmers. The House should, now, think of the magnitude of drought that we are suffering from.

The Leaders of all the Opposition Parties, and also the ruling party from my State, met the hon. Prime Minister twice, both in the month of July and in the month of August, with the delegation, and handed over Memoranda to him. But, unfortunately, nothing serious was done. No serious action was taken to mitigate the problems of our State. They have offered two lakh tonnes of rice. I thank them for that. Shri Sharad Yadav was telling that we have been given 2 lakh tonnes of rice. He must know out of that, we have yet to receive 50,000 tonnes, and whatever was given, I would like to tell him was more of wheat, and less of rice. Even wheat and rice that were given to us are dumped in the Bangalore Railway Station. They have not been moved to all the FCI godowns at the district levels. That was also a problem for us. We have already appealed to the Government to give us more rice. Our appeal is for 13 lakh metric tonnes but they have given us only two lakh tonnes. They do not know the severity. If any of their representatives comes to Karnataka, then he will know the real problem. He will come to know how many people have been engaged in one work.

Take for example desilting of tanks. For desilting of one tank, you will see five hundred or six hundred people are working. This is the problem in our State. It is a serious problem.

Sir, when we gave a Memorandum for the first time, that was for Rs. 525 crore. Afterwards a Committee came there. They went around the districts. They really felt that there was a real drought. They gave some recommendation to the Government of India. In the second Memorandum, we appealed for Rs. 1525 crore. Sir, let alone getting Rs. 1525 crore, we did not even get Rs. 1525. Whatever they have given us, they were according to Planning Commission's recommendation. They ought to have given that money. That money could have come to us otherwise. On that money, we cannot drill a new borewell. This is another problem. We can only deepen the borewells.

Sir, I am at a loss to understand why the Government of India is having a step-motherly treatment towards some States and is helping the other States. Probably those States that are supporting them in their malfunctioning or maladministration are being given better amenities from the Government of India and not those States, especially Congress ruled States, which are not supporting them. We are suffering. We are also in the federal structure of this country. We are also human beings. There should not be any politicisation between one State and another State. There should be humanitarian consideration. For the sake of that, I appeal to the Government of India, this will not only go into the federal structure of the country, but this will create unnecessary complications in the day to day administration in the country. So, they should be equal to everybody. They should understand the problems of each State and they should react quickly. They cannot skip over, they cannot have slumberiness. This is going to damage the fabric of federalism. I request the hon. Minister to take a note of it.

The other day, we read in the papers that under the chairmanship of Deputy-Prime Minister, Shri Advani, the Task Force Committee meeting was held and a package of Rs. 2000 crore is being given for drought relief. I do not know how much of it Karnataka is getting. We cannot understand.

[Shri R.L. Jalappa]

The position now is that all the horticulture crops are dying. We were already suffering on account of might menace. Coconut crop is drying and now arecanut crop is also dying. If the arecanut crop does not get water for six months, it will die and it will take another eight years to reproduce it again.

I request the hon. Prime Minister, Deputy-Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Agriculture to have some human feelings and not to differentiate between States. This will not take you anywhere. You may be there for some time, but next time you may not be there. That is not permanent. We may go there or you may come here. That is why we do not want to politicise this issue and please for heavens sake forget about this and be considerate and be helpful to all the States which are suffering because of this drought.

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA (Sambalpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, after day long deliberations on the serious drought situation in this country, at the end, I have nothing more to add. But one thing is, as you know, that almost every year this vast country is suffering because of so many natural calamities and almost every year on part or the other part of this country is reeling under drought conditions. This year, particularly, the drought situation is so to say unprecedented as a vast part of this country has been affected by serious drought conditions.

I would not like to enter into any controversy while discussing about drought because as you know, particularly on the party of we, the politicians, it has been a regular practice to change our stand every five years. As we change sides, this side or that side, we also change our stand. When we sit this side, we vehemently deny starvation deaths and when we come to that side, we vehemently allege that there have been numerous starvation deaths in the country. This is most unfortunate that we are trying to do politics on the dead bodies of the starving masses of this country.

I do not want to take such type of politics at least in this august House.

Sir, I would like to refer to my poor State, Orissa, as you know, which has been reeling under various natural

calamities consecutively since last four years. During the year 1999, it suffered unprecedented super cyclone, around 50,000 people died, and the poor State Government is still to recover from that unprecedented natural calamity. In the next year 2000, there was a drought situation in almost all parts of the State. Last year, again there was an unprecedented flood. Again this year, as it has been happening in other parts of the country, Orissa is also reeling under severe drought condition.

Sir, I do not accuse the Central Government of not extending the helping hand to my State. I appreciate the statement of the hon. Food Minister which he made a little while ago and I appreciate that he has admitted the truth. But what he has said is the tip of the iceberg. The Minister has admitted that there is rampant corruption in the whole Public Distribution System in the country. That is one of the prime reasons for which the millions of our countrymen are suffering though the Food Corporation of India godowns are full of foodgrains. I do not understand where the defect lies. I think, the time has come on the part of the Government and the time has also come on the part of the Opposition to ponder over it to have a self-analysis.

Sir, I cannot but agree with the demand made by our hon. Leader of the Opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. The Prime Minister has announced deferment of loan and interest this year. But in the next year, various State Governments and the Central Government are going to hit upon the poor people to collect that overburdened loan and overburdened interest. This is not going to help the drought-stricken people of various States. So, it is a just and genuine demand. The Government of India should, even if they do not want to waive the loan amount, the principal amount, consider to waive at least the interest portion of the loan of the millions and millions of farmers in the country.

Sir, I want to hit upon another point. That particularly this year, many farmers in my State have gone for crop insurance. Those who are loanee-farmers, those who have taken loan from the co-operative societies and banks, have insured their crops; and also non-loanee-farmers, those who have not taken loan from the co-operative societies and banks, have also insured their crops. But what is happening is that most of the State Governments – this burden of paying insurance money is shared by both the

Central Government and the respective State Government – as they are going through financial crisis, are not in a position to pay 50 per cent of their share, which they ought to pay. Therefore, the General Insurance Corporation is making undue delay in giving this insurance money to the farmers. The Government of India should take care of this aspect. Taking into consideration the peculiar financial position of most of the State Governments, I think, it is the prime responsibility of the Government of India to take this aspect into consideration so that GIC should be able to pay the insurance money to the farmers for their crops insured at the appropriate time. As you know, Sir, neither the Insurance Company nor the State Governments nor the Central Government is paying interest for the delayed payment of the insurance amount. So, this is a very important factor.

Sir, another thing I want to hit upon, as I said, is that millions of our farmers have insured their crops and most of the farmers this time are losing their crops, and they are expecting the State Government and the Central Government to pay their insurance money in time. But, Sir, in many of the States, particularly in my State, for the purpose of insurance, the block is one unit. Many Gram Panchayats, where the crops have been completely damaged due to drought, they are deprived of this insurance money.

When we approached the State Government of Orissa, they said this was not their duty; this was not coming under their jurisdiction and it was coming under the Central Government's jurisdiction. When we approached the Central Government, they passed the buck on the State Government. So I do not understand whose responsibility it is to fix whether the *Panchayat* should be a unit or the Block should be a unit.

So far as my State is concerned, I, particularly, belong to the backward area of western part of Orissa. I want to mention the name of Bolangir district, which many of the hon. Members might be knowing from Star TV, Zee TV and various other TV channels. Everybody thousands and thousands of farmers, who are having even three or four or five acres of cultivable land, are leaving their villages. They are migrating to other cities in other States for livelihood with their families and children only, leaving behind in the village their old father, mother and the disabled persons.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Prasanna Acharya, will you please conclude ?

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA : Just now I was referring to one thing which I would like to say. You cannot give me more time. I am saying a vital point. I know when I mention this point here, many would say that this is contradictory. When there is a severe drought situation in the country, there is another serious problem that the farmers are facing, that is, distress sale. This is very contradictory. When the country is reeling under a severe drought condition, every grain of foodgrain should be sold in the market. There should be buyers. Unfortunately and surprisingly, in some irrigated pockets of my own State, this is not happening. In my own State, I know there are a few irrigated pockets under the Hirakud Dam system which is a major irrigation project. I know other pockets also, particularly in the State like Chhattisgarh, which is my neighbouring State. I know some irrigated pockets in Madhya Pradesh also, where there is a serious drought condition. Even in the few irrigated pockets, not even a grain of foodgrain is being sold. The farmers are bound to sell their paddy and wheat in distress. The minimum support price fixed by the Government is not ensured to the farmers. It is very peculiar situation.

As the hon. Food Minister said, the total PDS system in Orissa has crumbled. But a good chunk of whatever is being lifted by the State Government under the PDS system, under the *Antyodaya Yojana* and under the Food-for-Work Programme, is being recycled and is again coming back to the FCI godowns. In this process, the poor farmer is being cheated. The unscrupulous traders and the millers' agents, in collusion with or in connivance with some corrupt officials of the Food Corporation of India and the State Government, have formed a *Vyuha Chakra*. They have formed a coterie and they are looting the farmers. The farmers in the irrigated belt are not able to sell their paddy and wheat at the minimum support price fixed by the Government. So, on the one hand, there is a serious drought condition. The people are starving. People are dying. On the other hand, there has been some foodgrain which the poor farmer is not able to sell. It is a peculiar situation in this country. So, I would urge upon the Central Government to look into all such factors.

[Shri Prasanna Acharya]

I will take a minute more. As the hon. Members have said, every year in every Session we are having a weeklong or a daylong deliberation on natural calamities like drought and flood situations. My point is, what is the long-term strategy adopted by the Government of India to deal with such situations? Drought is not new this year only. Every year, we are facing this drought situation. So, what is the long-term strategy adopted by the Government of India to find a lasting solution to this problem? That is most important.

With these few words, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI (Katwa) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I fail to understand why discussion on the things happened 6 months earlier, is being held today.

People of Kalahandi and Shivpuri area of Orissa are drying due to starvation. I am surprised and also sorry to say that Deputy Prime Minister is the Chairman of the task force committee constituted during the month of August on drought issue but we are discussing it today. I have all the figures with me which show 213 districts and other 14 districts as drought affected. 328 out of 523 districts are facing shortage of water. Only 18 reservoirs out of 70 were having adequate water level and the remaining were having low level. Only 18 reservoirs were having full water level i.e. 130 billion qb. meter.

After much delay, discussion is being held today. Figures, show 7 lakh hectare of land with cotton cultivation, 28 lakh hectares with pulses, 2700 hectares with edible oils, 44 lakh hectares with coarse grains and 41 lakh with paddy cultivation. My question to hon'ble Minister is that six months have elapsed since then. What happened to that allocation? Please tell us the Outlay. Centrally sponsored schemes are not for drought prone areas. Is any relief given under these schemes during drought? My submission is that no relief is given under these schemes. Task force has asked not to take strict measures regarding loan rather some relaxation should be given.

Just now hon'ble Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister were presenting this views. Hon'ble Prime Minister

asked to waive off the interest of the farmers. It means they have to pay the principal amount of loan. Then what would be the plight of agricultural labourers affected by drought.

NCCP had demanded Rs. 17 thousand 461 crore and 109 lakh mt tonne of rice worth Rs. 40-50 crores. But please tell what was given by the Government out of it.

The Chairman of Standing Committee on Agriculture is sitting here. We had visited the drought affected areas with the committee. We were surprised to see that coconut trees were also dried up due to drought. We witnessed the effects of drought in the adjoining area of the village. Thousands of coconut trees there also had dried up. Before that I was not aware that Banana trees also dried up due to drought. This is the present situation. We are discussing the problem of drought after six months of drought hitting the country. A committee was also constituted to tackle this problem. Hon'ble Minister is present here.

In Consultative Committee, we have drawn the attention of the hon'ble Minister towards drought problem. Information regarding impact of drought as per meteorological has been given and according to this information 14 States were affected by drought but their number has increased during the last six months. Just now, hon'ble Minister has told that 13 States have been affected by drought. There is some mistake in figures given by the Government. As per my information 16 States are still in grip of drought and some more States have been hit by drought. It has been stated that a package of Rs. 2000 crore is being given. Announcement regarding several packages like Bengal package and other packages have been made earlier. The hon'ble Prime Minister has recently stated in the House that the production of foodgrain will double by 2010. Under such a situation how will the production of foodgrain double when 16 States are in grip of drought.

Today, several hon'ble Members have stated that rabi and kharif crops have damaged. As such, how will the production double. Rather it will decline further. A good policy has been formulated but four more points should be added to that.

My several friends have raised the issue of water and gave suggestion to link various rivers. I have already told

that Bihar is a good example for this where some parts of the State suffer drought and other parts face flood. Both these problems can be solved if water of flood affected areas is diverted to drought prone areas but for that purpose some projected and policy should be formulated. Agriculture policy has been formulated by the Government.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Zahediji, your time is over now.

SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI : I will conclude in one minute. I do not have much to say. I would like to suggest that there should be total loan exemption. Farmers have to pay interest if loan remains pending. Farmers would suffer financially if they pay interest on that loan. It should be corrected. PDS should be revived for proper food supply. Hon'ble Minister has made a good point here but reality is different. I would like to submit that in place of figures and paper work ground reality should be taken into account. People living below poverty line should be given free of cost foodgrain and the people living above the poverty line should be given subsidised foodgrain.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the issue of water has been raised here. I would like to say that attention should be paid to the old projects. So far the issue of fodder is concerned, I, myself have gone to Rajasthan. Condition is very bad there. Arrangements for fodder should be made in agricultural farms established there. The farmers affected by drought have a feeling that if it is done, fodder would be made available in that area. I have also visited Purulia and Bankura districts of Bengal which are getting good crop at present. Farmers of that area have asked me to say this point in the House. Farmers of Bankura and Purulia had dealt with drought problem sometimes ago, in the same way the farmers of other States in the country should solve this problem at war footing level and become self-reliant by growing various crops. They have sympathy with drought affected farmers. Progress of farmers will make the country prosperous and strong. Farmers of Bengal are with farmers of drought affected areas in tackling the problem of drought and they will make more efforts in this regard. Bengal is not a separate State but a part of the country. There will not be drought problem in any State, if the country is united. Farmers will help the affected farmers and this should be done, at war footing level. Otherwise farmers will suffer a lot.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kakahandi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the adjournment motion, the reason being that when the mover of the motion was moving the motion, she said that nothing should be discussed here politically as it is a human problem which we are facing today. But in the same vein she mentioned about the lethargy of the Government and the slow progress the Government is making. I think, by now she must have heard the two hon. Ministers who intervened, the Minister for Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution and the Minister for Rural Development and heard their reports.

I would like to mention here that, when the monsoons were delayed and due to the delay in the monsoons, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, a day after the Indian Meteorological Department's forecast for monsoons to hit Orissa failed, had taken prompt action. I would like to quote :

"The Union Agriculture Minister Shri Ajit Singh today reviewed the situation with senior officials of the Ministry, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Indian Meteorological Department. Later he said a contingency plan was in place and an officer of the level of Joint Secretary would coordinate relief for farmers now that the Indian Meteorological Department's forecast is that renewal of the monsoons will not be in the next five days."

But these monsoons never came and therefore, today we are discussing an Adjournment Motion on drought, which is an unprecedented drought in the history of natural calamities in the country. Before this, we had never had a drought of such a serious nature.

Sir, there has been deficient rainfall and as everybody has mentioned here and as per the sense of the House, about two-third of the country has been severely affected by drought. Now, the biggest task in front of the Government lies in mitigation of drought. How do we mitigate the drought? I would like to remind the august House that there was a particular Government which ruled this country for 42 years and also the mover of the motion has mentioned that in these 42 years, they have been able to create irrigation facility for only 40 per cent area of the



[Shri Bikram Keshari Deo]

country and 60 per cent of the country is still dry. It depends completely on monsoons. Today, it is an admitted fact that rural population of the country is 60 per cent, and the agriculturists and the rural India contribute about 20 per cent to 24 per cent of the GDP. Today, that sector has been severely affected. I am sure that the Government is in its full stride to fight the drought. Therefore, Sir, I am opposing the Adjournment Motion.

It is necessary and I would also request the Opposition to drop this motion. It is more so because the Members from the Opposition have expressed that it should be a non-political issue and the human aspect should be dealt with to reduce human sufferings in the future. Also, I would like to remind the august House that when there was a discussion under Rule 193 in the House about deaths due to malnutrition in Kashipur, in the KBK districts of Orissa, at the time, the hon. Member Shri Shivraj Patil had also mentioned that 'when we are discussing about hunger, when we are discussing about starvation, when we are discussing about drought and the miseries of the poor people, there should be no party-lines.' It should be on humanitarian basis because we are all citizens of this country. We are not enemies. As we say, we are all of the same country and we belong to this country. We have to mitigate the sufferings of the poor.

Sir, I would not like to lengthen my speech because all the hon. Members have spoken vividly about drought. I would just like to give some remedial measures which can be followed by the Government. It is for the first time that crop insurance has been introduced. It is a progressive step taken by our Government to introduce crop insurance. Here, there are some anomalies. For example, when the crop insurance of a non-loanee is being done, they are taking block as a unit to determine drought. I request that a *panchayat* should be taken as a unit to determine drought. Secondly, they are seeing the cropping pattern and the crop output of the last three years. So, for the previous two years, there were successful monsoons and there was record production, and in this third year of drought when the calculation is made, the average will become low and the farmers will be denied getting the benefits of crop insurance.

I would like to make another suggestion. Another progressive initiative for the farmers which our Government has taken is Kisan Credit Card. Kisan Credit Cards should be properly validated. They should be re-validated so that in the future, farmers can take further loans, and the Government should come forward to provide cereal and should subsidise seeds and other inputs for agriculture.

The third remedial measure that should be taken up is regarding relief codes. The relief codes are outdated because these relief codes were made during pre-independence days, and that was just copied by the State Governments. That should be recast and the yield per acre should be raised.

MR. SPEAKER : Your time is over, and you have to conclude now.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : I come from a very drought-prone area; I belong to the KBK area. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, when her late husband was alive, visited Kalahandi, Nuapara and Khariar. Then, in 1985, I was the MLA, and I had the occasion to meet her and receive her at the Airport.

MR. SPEAKER : Is that the reasons why I should give you more time ?

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Everybody is pointing an accusing finger and saying that the Government is implementing GATT. Who signed the GATT in 1993 ? In GATT, the paragraph on 'Agreement on Agriculture' is blank because you never insisted on it or never deliberated upon it properly.

Generally, drought relief measures are taken by any Government to mitigate the sufferings of the people. At the same time, there is a Plan expenditure under which the Central and State Government implement their projects. There is a lot of money in that. However, most of the Central and State Governments' projects are being delayed because of the Forest Act, 1980. This Forest Act, 1980 should be looked into so that the projects can progress in the right direction immediately.

On the climate change, the hon. Minister, Shri Baalu, led the delegation to Johannesburg, South Africa. We came to learn a lot there, though our performance was

average. We must have a climate policy made for this country. Recently, a Climate Conference was held in New Delhi where 187 countries attended the function. In the Conference, it was assessed that these monsoons might totally fail in future. It means that we might not receive the South-West Monsoon in future. I would like to know how far it is true because monsoons contribute about 80 per cent of the precipitation that results in rainfall in our country, and the remaining is contributed by snowfall. The situation is completely different in Orissa and North-East as compared to the situation in North, that is, Punjab, Haryana, etc., which is different, and it is because their rivers are fed by the snow, but in our case, the rivers are fed by rainwater.

Today, in the KBK districts of Orissa, we are passing through hell, migration, malnutrition are seen there. Therefore, I request the Government that the amount of money which was promised to us, that is, Rs. 200 crore to be given to that area for its all-round development, for building dams and for AIBP, should be immediately released. They have released only Rs. 50 crore till date.

There is a severe problem of drinking water in my State of Orissa. All the 30 districts have been affected severely. There are pockets where the situation is very serious because the fluoride content is more and thereby people are suffering in Nuapara district, Bodan Block. I would request the Government to kindly rectify these problems.

Lastly, in the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, major lift irrigation points should be included in the programme so that it could solve both the problems, that is, drinking water and irrigation.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today in this august House the leader of Opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi initiated discussion on drought under Adjournment Motion. I do not agree to that because during the course of discussion on this issue hon'ble Members tried to take political mileage out of it.

18.00 hrs.

They were saying that it is not a matter of politics. It is really a matter of serious consideration that even after

elapsing 55 years of Independence we are unable to tackle drought problem. When poor people and agricultural labourers in villages do not get food due to drought how can we deal with drought problem. Our country has witnessed heavy rain during the last 55 years and if this rainy water had been checked from flowing waste into the sea and conserved. We would have not got opportunity to speak on the issue of drought here.

Sir, 387 districts of 16 States are in grip of drought and these States have demanded Rs. 31 thousand crores to tackle this problem. The Government have sanctioned only Rs. 483 crore. The Government say that there are Rs. 7000 crore for calamity fund. I urge upon the Government that this funds should be given to States. They have demanded Rs. 31 thousand crore. The Government claim that States are not spending the funds. The States have no problem in spending if required funds are given with good intentions but States do not have funds, how will they spend it.

Sir, Sonia Gandhiji has moved a motion in the House to discuss drought issue under Adjournment Motion. What is going to happen in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. I would like to say that there is need to think over seriously on the measures to be taken for tackling drought problem. I have repeatedly requested that a plan should be formulated to conserve rainy water in Mumbai and Konkan Patti and divert it to drought prone areas of Sholapur and Pandharpur in Maharashtra. This proposal should be considered seriously but so far no progress has been made in this regard.

18.02 hrs.

*[SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA in the Chair]*

Madam, we are trying to conserve rainy water but they are trying to sideline us and fail our efforts. I would like to say that we cannot be stopped in this manner and there is need to consider the issue seriously. The country have been suffered by drought as BJP and NDA have got a chance to come to power. This situation would have not arisen if the Government have tried to conserve rainy water during last four years since they have come to power. The Government have asked as to what was done by Congress Party during last 55 years likewise, I would like to ask that what has been done by this Government during last 4

[Shri Ramdas Athawale]

years. The Government face shortage of funds but what has been done to generate resources. The Government should make sincere efforts to generate resources but that is not being done.

Madam, our friends were telling that 40 thousand megawatt of hydro-power can be generated by utilising the Ganges water which is going waste and it will cost Rs. 1 lakh 60 thousand crores. There is need to make efforts for generating power. Shri Anant Gangaram Geeteji is present here and he knows very well that farmers are demanding more power in every village and we are unable to provide that and therefore, there is a need to consider the issue of power generation seriously.

Ajit Singhji is also present here. He is son of a farmer. But he has changed his side. He should work for welfare of farmers. I would like to say that like Maharashtra 'Employment Guarantee Scheme' should be implemented throughout India after studying the model of Maharashtra carefully in this matter. The Government should think over it seriously to avoid starvation deaths in any part of the country. Efforts should be made to tackle drought problem. The Government know that it will aggravate this problem further if timely action is not taken in this regard. There is a need to tackle the problem of drought in place of playing politics on this issue.

Unitedly we should face this problem. I would like to appeal that a time bound scheme should be formulated to tackle the problem of drought so that the country could be benefited. We should make efforts in this regard collectively.

SHRI RAMJIVAN SINGH (Balua, Bihar) : Madam Chairman, I hail from rural area of Bihar. There is a saying in my area that jackal hawls in the night when he feels cold and plans to dig a big den in the morning to save himself from the cold. But in the morning when he feels the heat of the sun, he forgets everything. I just want to say that the first famine struck the country in 1949. At that time a detailed discussion was held in the House on this issue. Since then this issue is debated in the House regularly. Every time when flood or drought hit the country, the debate takes place in the House and Government

gives its reply and the House is adjourned, but no solution is evolved to tackle the problem. We could not get rid of this problem till date.

Even today 330 districts out of 593 are affected by drought. Discussion is being held in the House in this regard. It is really ironical. Israel is a small country, which was established in 1945. The country had barren land and always had to fight a war. But still, with their vigour, willingness and policies, they have flourished. Today Israel is a self-reliant country. Egypt has the capability of lifting up the water by boring upto thousand feet in the mountains for irrigation and to promote agriculture. In this way it is earning more than nine crore dollars. In India where the natural resources are in abundance and we have many rivers, flood water but we have not been able to use that property. That is why we are facing this situation. Nine projects have been completed. Crores of rupees have been spent on these projects but still it is being stated that we could generate the irrigation capacity upto 50-55 percent only. It means that on an average we have enhanced only 5.5 percent irrigation capacity through each project. We have failed to cater to our need. This is an important issue.

Today, leader of opposition has brought adjournment motion in the House though it was not an issue for which adjournment motions should have been moved in the House. Monsoon comes in the month of June in our country. During June, July and August, the country was facing drought. The session of the House was going on during this period. It is not that drought struck the country all of a sudden after that session. Even then the Chair, considering the seriousness of the issue relaxed the rules and accepted the adjournment motion on it. Today discussion is being held on this issue. We have heard all the members properly and the House has taken it seriously. My submission is that the mere discussion over it will not solve the problem.

I would like to say and many other friends have also stated that a meeting of senior leaders of all the parties should be held and agricultural scientists and experts should also participate in that. Apart from that, if needed, a meeting of progressive farmers should be called in which a solution to tackle the problem of drought and flood should be evolved. A policy should be formulated in this

regard. Governments may change but that policy should not be changed. If the House is really serious about these problems, then we should think in this direction.

As I have stated we receive good rains. We can harvest the rain water by building reservoirs, check dams, water harvesting dams, ponds etc. so that we could utilize this water at the time of need and this would not even require heavy expenditure.

Today the Government says and it is a fact that there is paucity of funds. China invaded our country in 1962. At that time Rs. 262 crores were spent on defence. The need for spending on defence was felt after the Chinese invasion. Thereafter, an economic emergency was imposed. Various small schemes were discontinued and more funds were spent on defence. Today there is a need for over all restructuring of various plans in order to tackle the problem of drought and floods. There are various schemes which are useless. You have been a Minister and are aware of these facts. We may require these schemes later on but we must set the priorities. Today, our priority is to get rid of flood and drought as it affects agriculture which is our back-bone. 65 percent of the population is associated with agriculture. 25 percent of domestic production comes from agriculture. When agriculture production declines it badly affects the country's economic situation.

10th Five Year Plan is going to start. It's draft has been prepared and has also been approved by the cabinet. However, I would like to say that if required, the plan may be restructured. During the course of discussion held in this House in 1977 on such a plan, I suggested to give names to every scheme like irrigation scheme, power scheme, industrial schemes etc. Schemes should be formulated specifically otherwise country would not be benefited. Basic problems of the country cannot be solved without it. Therefore, I repeat that the tenth five-year plan should be specifically named as Irrigation Scheme for tackling the problem of drought.

Today, our country is facing a drought. We can exploit the sunlight for solar power. Rs. 5 crores are spent for generating 1 MW of electricity and that is a very costly affair. We can use non-conventional energy resources for agricultural sector. Today, we have good quality pumps of

10-20 horse power, which can be run by using non-conventional energy resources. We must utilize them.

Today, we have irrigation facilities. Tamil Nadu has created 96 percent irrigation capacity and 83 percent in Punjab, 73 percent in Rajasthan, 69 percent in Haryana, 63 percent in Andhra Pradesh, 67 percent in West Bengal and 43 percent in Gujarat has been created. But Rajasthan is still facing drought because the problem is to make the maximum utilization of various resources available for irrigation.

There are about 5 thousand State tube wells in Bihar. You will be surprised to know that not even 100 tube wells function properly there. Bihar has about 2000 lifts out of which not even 50 are functioning properly. Lakhs of rupees have been spent on them. We must find out as to what deficiencies are there and how we can properly use the irrigation capacity and also how we can raise that capacity. It will enable us to make the irrigation capacity more useable. Alongwith the increase in irrigation capacity, proper water management should also be considered. For this purpose, the farmers must be trained and they should be provided with the additional facilities so that they make the maximum utilisation of available water resources.

Hon'ble agriculture Minister is sitting in the House. I would like to State that various research works have been undertaken in agricultural sector, and so it should be ascertained as to which crop may be grown with the minimum water. Since we cannot control the nature, information regarding such crops should be disseminated among the farmers so that they could sow such crops during drought.

Initially, when Monsoon was about to reach Meteorologists forecast that there would be normal monsoon this year also, but it proved otherwise. Can we evolve any sort of mechanism whereby we can achieve accuracy in judging weather forecast. Adequate research work has been done in this regard, therefore, now we should take up this task.

Many members held discussion which I do not want to repeat. In 1967, Shri K.L. Rao stated in this very House that flood and drought causes loss to the tune of Rs. 38 thousand crore every year and about Rs. 9 thousand crore

[Shri Ramjivan Singh]

are spent on relief work by the Government every year. Therefore, he suggested for linking of rivers. Linking of rivers will help in increasing agriculture production worth Rs. 75 thousands crore. But rivers could not be linked. We should take steps to link the rivers with each other.

In 1956, Dr. Lohia told that river conservancy work be undertaken since rivers get silted slowly. It raises river-bed whereby rain water flows down to the sea as a wastage.

Therefore, in 1956, Dr. Lohia advised that every 10 years river conservancy work be undertaken. These days several employment oriented schemes are in vogue. If we utilise these schemes for river conservancy work, we can increase river depth thereby and we can use the silt removed during conservancy work in the field and increase agriculture production. We should take initiative in this regard.

Each district in the country should have adequate stock of grains and the task of its distribution be entrusted to the collector who will be held responsible in case of any starvation death. Today, hon. Minister of consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and the Minister of Rural Development said that if anyone dies of hunger while there is enough stock of foodgrains in the country, there can not be more shameful thing than this. We should realise that the fault lies with the system. As Food Minister has said rules may be amended if need arises.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Conclude it now, there are many more speakers.

SHRI RAMJIVAN SINGH : Well, I will conclude. To sum up, I would like to say that a suitable policy by framed and funds be provided and as hon. Food Minister has said, if need arises rules may be amended as the House is supreme. In the end, I would like to say that we should formulate development oriented policy and mere criticism of each other or mere discussion will not serve my purpose. The Government should initiate in right perspective than only this problem can be over come permanently otherwise we will keep on facing the same problem.

With these words, I oppose Adjournment Motion and would like to say that we should ponder over this issue seriously and try to find a way out.

[English]

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore) : Madam Chairperson, I rise to support the Adjournment Motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi. The Government of the day has failed to meet the drought situation with a comprehensive policy. Even after 50 years of Independence, a country like ours has to depend on the mercy of the monsoon. Around 60 per cent of our arable land is not irrigated so far. . . .(Interruptions) This is not a discussion in regard to the Left Front.

I am not only accusing the Government of the day. Since Independence, most of the Governments have shown their apathetic attitude in this respect. That is why our country is facing such a crisis where we have to depend on the mercy of monsoon.

We are today deliberating about meeting the challenge of such a drought situation and we can give our suggestions. My point is that we have to study the problem in-depth before taking any major step towards having a permanent solution. This year, the drought was widespread right from the bread basket in the North to the South. I think about 16 States have been affected and more than 360 districts have been declared as drought-affected. It affected the production of Kharif crops like rice, wheat, pulses, coarse grains and cereals as also pisciculture, floriculture and everything. Water table has gone down in many States. All this has further worsened the plight of the small farmer and the landless labourer. There has been a steep fall in rural income and accentuation of the drinking water problem in most of the drought affected areas.

This is like a national disaster today. But I wonder why the Central Government has not declared it as a national disaster in such a situation. They have shown an apathetic attitude in this respect. Yes, one Central Team has visited fourteen drought affected States. But it is not understood as to why they did not visit West Bengal. The West Bengal Government has declared three districts – Bankura, Purulia and Paschim Midnapore – as drought affected districts. But, it is not understood as to why the Central Government has not declared West Bengal as a drought affected State. Yet, I must thank the Committee as they have submitted a memorandum for assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund. But the Union Government has failed

to respond to it. The Team demanded – as has been answered on the 18th of this month to a starred question – an amount of Rs. 31,146.01 crore assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund. Today I have heard the interventions made by both Shri Sharad Yadav and Shri Shanta Kumar. But they did not mention anything about the National Calamity Contingency Fund. They have stated some figures as to how much they have released towards foodgrains and towards other crops. But this is not adequate. This is too little and too late. States are not at the mercy of the Central Government and this is not a favour done to beggars either. About two-thirds of our country has been affected by this drought situation.

They are laying the responsibility on the States. We heard the debate here from the Treasury Benches. They were accusing the States and some friends or colleagues were accusing the Centre. Madam, this is the responsibility of both the States and the Centre. You have to admit that this is a national disaster.

**MADAM CHAIRMAN :** Please be brief. There are 16 more. Members to speak.

**SHRI PRABODH PANDA :** It is a matter of concern that the same Central team did not visit West Bengal and I have mentioned it earlier. The Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) suggested the following. (1) Extension of subsidy on agricultural inputs irrespective of the size of the holdings; (2) Waiver of interest on loans obtained by farmers; (3) Restoration of fertilisers subsidy; and (4) Removal of the distinction between APL and BPL. It is not understood how the Government is responding to these points. Madam, I demand that not only the interest on loans but also all kinds of agricultural loans in 2002-03 obtained by the farmers in the affected areas should be waived. At the same time, I would like to say that more stress should be given on food for work, watersheds and crop insurance. Necessary amendments should be made in these aspects. It is said that while considering these subjects, panchayats should be taken as units. More burden has been given to the States. It is not only that. Earlier, the share was one-third to the States and two-thirds to the Centre. Now it is 50 per cent to the States and 50 per cent to the Centre. This should be amended. These points should be considered.

My last point is to have a permanent solution to check the drought situation. There they must have a National Commission on it so that they would come out with concrete proposals and we can go forward based on those proposals.

*[Translation]*

**SHRI RAMANAND SINGH (Satna) :** Madam, drought, the topic of discussion is very serious one. During last session also, it was discussed under Rule 193 and this time it is being discussed through Adjournment Motion. The sincerity and cordiality observed by hon. Leader of the opposition while moving Adjournment Motion makes me to feel that the discussion on it could have been held under Rule 193 without moving Adjournment Motion. Sensing the gravity of this issue she has moved Adjournment Motion. It is the right of the Opposition and it is under discussion in the House. But, discussion is being held in such a way as if it is being held under Rule 193 as entire House took keen interest in it leaving no chance for bitterness. I know, I have limited time. So, I would request only Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Food and Minister of Rural Development to implement Food for Work Scheme in Rewa division of Madhya Pradesh which covers my constituency, and to provide some relief to the people over there and see the functioning of Public Distributions system as to how it works? Irrigated area in M.P. is just half of that of our country and it includes three percent of Rewa, Sidhi, Shahdol, Katni and Jabalpur. It is most drought hit area of M.P. which often faces the fury of severe famine.

Madam Chairman, drought situation is quite severe this year. It rained one-and-a-half month late and then farmers sown crops including paddy. But after one and half month the water dried up. Later rain played truant. Thus paddy crop got totally damaged. Soyabean was not sown. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi ji has aptly said that agriculture labourers, rural labourers and marginal farmers are most sufferer. Madhya Pradesh is ruled by the Congress, therefore, he has not provided further details. Because, it was his compulsion but broadly, he has expressed the situation very nicely and with sincerity. Hon. Shanta Kumar ji has presented figures so nicely. He said that about 4.30 lakh tonne foodgrains was provided to Madhya Pradesh but during last 6-7 months just half of it that is 2.15 lakh

[Shri Ramanand Singh]

tonne grains was lifted. I want to know as to why it was not lifted whereas people were dying of hunger there. Hon. Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan from Vidisha constituency also has expressed his views. Congress is ruling M.P. and people are dying of hunger there. Hunger does not bring instant death. Malnutrition spreads slowly. Further, I would like say that corruption is rampant even in distribution of Old Age Pension in M.P. Even widows get monthly pension after months. Muster rolls are prepared and people are asked to sign for six months at a time. It is also one of major reasons. Foodgrains are not supplied to rural areas of Chitrakoot. Tribals in this area eat Samba grass and they get affected by malnutrition. Not only Madhya Pradesh, whole country is reeling under drought. . . .  
(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNDER LAL TIWARI (Rewa) : Hon. Member is talking baseless thing. There is no substance in his talks, there are preposterous. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMANAND SINGH : Has the Chief Minister awarded a contract to his father. . . .(Interruptions) I mean to say that people in Madhya Pradesh are facing malnutrition. Madhya Pradesh is not lifting foodgrains and it is not availing the benefits of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes. I am sad to say that the Chief Minister of M.P. is a king who has neither seen poverty nor has any concern about it. May I know to whom the contracts have been awarded under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sarak Yojana of the Central Government. Contracts are being given to special type of people. Rs. 450 crore have been provided under this scheme but even Rs. 50 crore have not been utilised. . . .(Interruptions) I would like to tell that the name of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sarak Yojana has been changed and no work is being undertaken. Funds are being misused under this scheme and relatives are being made feudal lord.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Ramanand Singhji many hon. Members of your party are to speak so you may sit down please.

SHRI RAMANAND SINGH : The leader of the opposition has very seriously demanded a drought relief package of Rs. 10,000 crore. The Chief Minister of Madhya

Pradesh alone has demanded Rs. 5000 crore and if every State seeks similar amount it will run into several thousand crores. The Central Government has recently provided Rs. 60,000 crore for rural development to Madhya Pradesh. But no work has been done there so far. All the scheme are just on paper. People are dying of hunger. The sole intention of the State Government is to have funds from the Centre, collect money for elections, help the favourites and earn money. Government officials make crores of rupees in every scheme. Only 2.15 lakh tonnes foodgrains was lifted out of 4.30 lakh tonne released. Why did the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh not lift 2.15 lakh tonne foodgrains provided for drought relief. Sonia ji, what action you are taking against your Chief Minister and speaker. . . .(Interruptions) Who tried to sacrifice a child. . . .(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : See, your time is over and I have called the next Member to speak, therefore, you may take your seat.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : I am calling the next speaker.

(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : I will call the next speaker if you do not finish your speech.

(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Shri K. Srinivasulu to speak now.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAMANAND SINGH : Scheme of Madhya Pradesh should be completed. The Government of India should constitute an Inquiry Commission so that corrupt Congress can be exposed. . . .(Interruptions) A Committee consisting Members of Lok Sabha be constituted to tackle drought situation in each State and so as to ensure that none dies of hunger in any State. . . .(Interruptions) They should control their CMs. Misappropriation of funds by them should be checked and their working be monitored. . . .(Interruptions) We all should endeavour that no one dies of hunger.

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Shri K. Srinivasulu, please start.

*(Interruptions)*

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Hon. Member, please do not disturb him. Please sit down.

*(Interruptions)*

MADAM CHAIRMAN : It is not going on record.

*(Interruptions)\**

MADAM CHAIRMAN : I have called the next speaker. Please stop it. Nothing is going on record.

*(Interruptions)\**

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Shri Srinivasulu, please start. You have five minutes to speak.

SHRI KALAVA SRINIVASULU (Anantapur) : Madam, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in this discussion.

The entire State of Andhra Pradesh is reeling under severe drought conditions. With the limited resources available, the Government of Andhra Pradesh, under the able leadership of our beloved Chief Minister Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, is providing all relief measures. It has set apart Rs. 250 crore for this purpose. The State Government has asked the Union Government to provide Rs. 1680 crore and 22 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains to take up relief measures in the State.

I represent one of the most worst drought-hit districts, that is, Anantapur. Ours is the second lowest rainfall receiving district in the entire country after Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. Anantapur district receives every year only 540 mm rainfall. This year, only 250-300 mm rainfall has been received. In this decade, we witnessed seven drought year. For three years, there is no sufficient rainfall. We are facing this year severe drought conditions. No farmer has sown seeds in his land. Only 30 per cent sown area was recorded this year. I fully associate with the opinion of our leader Shri K. Yerrannaidu.

I reiterate the situation in the district. In my district, the desertification has already started. The Desert Development Programme is being implemented for the last four years. But there are no results because insufficient funds are received. So, we have to plan for long-term measures to combat the drought situation in that district.

I urge upon the Union Government to prepare a long-term plan for Anantapur district because it is the second lowest rainfall district. The Union Government should adopt our district and prepare a special plan. Our beloved Chief Minister has announced Rs. 350 crore as a special package for the district. Like that, I would request the Union Government to release more funds on a priority basis for the Anantapur district because the farmers' children are not studying in schools and colleges. They are roaming about on the streets. Some of them are seen as suppliers in hotels. Some of them are seen in garages as child labourers. This is the situation in that district. All farmers are becoming labourers, rickshaw-pullers or daily wage earners.

So, once again I urge upon the Union Government to please see that Anantapur district gets more funds and special packages amounting to at least Rs. 500-600 crore for a five-year or a six-year plan.

[Translation]

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN (Coochbehar) : Madam Chairman, I am grateful to you since you gave me an opportunity to speak. It is not for the first time, we have been discussing drought every year since 1995. Hon. Leader of the Opposition also raised this issue and suggested for formulating a scheme whereby a permanent solution to drought and floods can be found out. But it depends upon the Government whether to pay to it or not. We would keep on holding discussion and people would continue dying of drought and flood.

Today, the country is passing through such condition. A point regarding creation of river grid to tackle drought, emerged today during discussion between Congress and the ruling party, which should be extended from Brahmaputra to Ganga and Ganga to Couvery. But, is the Government serious about it? The Government are not paying any attention towards it. Have they said anything regarding



[Shri Amar Roy Pradhan]

ruling of Supreme Court in this regard. There is a dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over water. The people of Tamil Nadu are praying "Allah, megh de, pani de." But they are not getting anything. The people of Tamil Nadu are asking for glass of water but Karnataka says that if we give them water today, what shall we do tomorrow. The Central Government is sitting as a mute spectator. The policy of Divide and Rule is prevailing today. Thank God, it rained in Tamil Nadu on 29 October and people of Tamil Nadu got a sigh of relief.

Sonia ji mentioned many other things. During premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru scheme regarding Brahmaputra and Ganga was evolved in 1956. That time its cost was estimated as Rs. 506 crore only. Some one has just said that at present it will cost more. All other rivers, including Cauvery should also be linked under this scheme. Supreme Court has said that it will cost Rs. 6 lac and 50 thousand crore more. There is no need to made hurry in this regard. The ruling party should see it in right perspective. It should be done in the national interest with a view to save farmers and others. A sum of rupees five thousands crore is not a very big amount. The Government spend Rs. 10-10 lakh on relief work. Enough funds are being spent on Food for Work programme. The funds being spent on this programme can be spent on this scheme. Enough politics has been done in this matter earlier also. Teesta Barrage Project was executed for six districts of Northern part of West Bengal in 1973 with an estimated cost of Rs. 69 crore 72 lakh. It could not be undertaken during Congress rule. It was implemented when left parties came to power in West Bengal. Rs. 838 crore have been spent on this project and the Government of West Bengal have been demanding continuously that more funds be provided for completion of this project. But, the Central Government are not paying anything. 60 percent of the amount sought by the Government is to be provided as loan. The Government are not providing even that. Rs. 700 crore are required for this project but the Central Government are not providing even a pie. Completion of this project is in national interest. No politics should be played in relief work meant for drought affected people. Please leave playing politics. My submission is that the

amount of Rs. 600-700 crore demanded by the Government of West Bengal be provided to it.

DR. SUSHIL KUMAR INDORA (Sirsa) : Madam Chairman, drought is a natural calamity and alongwith it ignorance of man not only destroys human life but also take cattle, and plants in its grip and worsen the situation. According to the Meteorological Department 330 districts are badly affected by the drought. Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana are among the 14 States of the country which are badly affected by the drought. If assessed, it will be clear that 29 percent of area of the country is affected by the drought, which include 10 percent area severely affected by the drought. According to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economic Survey, there was acute water scarcity. Last year, it was 4-5 percent. There was 90 centimetre rainfall on an average which was less by 19-20 percent. This scarcity has not only affected agricultural projects in the entire country, but also the industrial units. This way 10 to 20 percent industries have suffered loss. According to the Government's estimate, this year Standing crops on 20 million hectares of land have been destroyed and 10 million hectare of land has not been ploughed due to lack of rainfall. The Planning Commission has estimated the loss of 12 thousands crore rupees this year. In order to meet the situation different State Governments have demanded 31 thousand crore rupees from the Centre. The demand of Rs. 1800 crore had also been made by my State, Haryana.

In last month of September, an inspection team visited Haryana and submitted its report to the Centre. After that Rs. 109 crore were allocated to Haryana. Relief cannot be provided to the drought affected farmers of Haryana from this meagre amount.

Madam Chairman, it is very sad that a responsible Minister in the Government during his visit to Hisar gave statement that Haryana Government has not made any demand for relief work. The august House is a witness that while initiating debate on drought and flood, Shri Ajay Chautala had made the same demand, it is in record. How can the Haryana Government, who follows the policies of Late Chowdhary Devi Lal, can go against the farmers? The Statement of hon'ble Minister of regrettable.

18.54 hrs.

*[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Haryana Government had demanded Rs. 1800 crore. If the hon'ble Minister say that we have not demanded, then today we demand that Rs. 1800 crore should be allocated to Haryana. If the Minister, who claims to be the well-wisher of the farmers, give this type of false statement, it is very sad.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I demand that the funds demanded by the Haryana Government should be immediately given to it. But alongwith it, I would like to appeal that it is a common collective appeal. It depends on time, but if we see history, as we have heard from our grandparents that there was a time when people used to eat bark of trees at the time of drought. Today, the hon'ble Minister himself has agreed that our godowns are full of foodgrains. We are not short of foodgrains. Today, we are in need of only 23 million tonnes of foodgrains, while we are having 69-70 million tonnes of foodgrains in store.

Haryana is a State, after Punjab which gives maximum contribution to Central pool of foodgrains. In that regard, I would like to say that our water management system is not good. Many big projects are lying pending. If we connect the basins of cauvery and Ganga, it will be beneficial for the country. The Supreme Court has given the ruling that SYL should be constructed before 15 January. But as per date nothing has been done over there. Can the construction work of SYL canal be completed in such a short time? I would like to submit to the Government that pending water projects, particularly SYL project should be completed in the stipulated time limit so that the farmers of Haryana, particularly of Mahendergarh and Narnaul of Southern Haryana may get its benefit. There is no dispute with any State. It is the Supreme Court's ruling.

In the end, I would like to say that sometimes ruler and administrator doubt whether they will be able to reform the system with strict compliance to rules, but I would like to say that in view of public interest rules should be strictly complied to in case of SYL canal. If done so, it will be in the larger interest of the country. You are repeatedly giving me signal, that time is over. While expressing my

gratitude to you, I conclude and appeal that we all should work together to tackle the drought situation. The opposition has some responsibilities in this regard, at the same time. Government has more responsibilities. The poor suffers more, therefore, special attention should be paid towards the poor. With these words, I conclude.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the hon'ble Prime Minister will intervene.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not risen to give reply to the discussion, the discussion will continue. . . .  
*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR (Akola) : Sir, after Prime Minister's intervention, nobody will sit in the House.

MR. SPEAKER : I will be here, I will listen.

SHRI ATAL BIHAR VAJPAYEE : My colleague, the hon'ble Minister of Agriculture will give reply to the discussion. Shri Yadavji has presented some information in regard to the situation arisen due to drought during the discussion. It shows that drought is widespread, severe and Union and State Governments are making efforts to handle this situation.

19.00 hrs.

Sometimes this allegation hurts me that Union Government is discriminate among the States on political ground. I deny this allegation. If it is the part of politics, then I do not want to say anything but during last three-four years, we have not discriminated among States on any matter. The fact is that we have taken initiative in helping those States, where BJP Government is not in power. . . .*(Interruptions)* NDA moves with the cooperation of regional parties. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Ramdasji, please let him speak. You may please sit down.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I have some figures with me for comparison. I do not claim that I am the winner

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

in any argument but when allegations are levelled, the befitting reply has to be given. Severe drought hit the country in 1987 also. I would like to mention the steps taken by the then Government.

In 1987, 8-7 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were distributed under different employment schemes, whereas in the current year we have distributed 19-25 lakh tonnes of foodgrains free under 'Sampoorna Gramine Rozgar Yojana'. In 1987, Rs. 842 crore were spent on employment generation, whereas in the current year, already 2000 crore rupees have been spent, and more will be spent in future. . . .(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : Everybody listened to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. Now would you not listen when the hon. Prime Minister is speaking? She would speak later on.

MR. SPEAKER : You please keep quite.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, effective steps have been taken in view of the severity of the famine this year. Centre is fulfilling its obligations and is providing assistance to the States. The financial condition of several States is not satisfactory. Hence while formulating the schemes we are paying attention to the fact that the interests of the States should not be neglected.

A provision for 10 thousand crore rupees has been made for the Food for Work Scheme wherein States would be provided the foodgrains worth 5 thousand crore rupees annually. The remaining Rs. 500 crore is to be given as cash to the States. Similarly the State Governments can implemented various small irrigation projects and water harvesting schemes. We want that such schemes be completed in time so that the people may get relief from the drought.

Sir, steps have been taken in the entire country to provide some relief to the farmers regarding the burden of loans. The interest realisation on the crop loan has been stopped. We have said that the loans on crop along with

the interest thereon would not be realised during the current financial year. The Government have announced for providing relief in the payment of crop loans in view of the severity of the drought. This benefit would be available to all the drought affected areas.

We do not want the issue of drought to be politicised. There is no dearth of the will power, rather it is strong. Decisions are also being taken without delay but the root cause of the problems coming to the fore at various places in the system have been received in legacy and we have failed to rectify in the last four years. We provided foodgrains and it became available to the States but the problem was how to send it to the districts, tehsils and the villages. Some States stated their problem in that though the centre is providing free foodgrains to them, who would bear the cost of its transportation when they lack sufficient funds to meet it. This is the problem and the decision have been taken keeping this thing in view.

I would like that we should consider by sidelining our political interests even though the politics goes in for the entire 365 days and the elections also do take place every now and then. The issue of vote also comes to the fore at some place or the other but in view of the severity of drought it can be said that unless States and the Centre cooperate with each other and all the political parties cooperate even in the centre, it would be very difficult to overcome this crisis. I would like to appeal all to extend their cooperation in combating this drought.

Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji said that the all party meeting has not taken place. Now a days even the meeting of the Chief Minister is an all party meet. The meeting of the Agriculture Ministers had taken place. We maintain contact and exchange our views and we have also extended our cooperation to the States which have constituted their all party committees. We should avoid the instinct of playing politics and I do not know as to how much we can do so in electoral years.

All of us are suffering from the same disease and I shudder to think as how far our country would face this dreaded drought. Drought strikes every two to three years. There are no foodgrains, fodder and the drinking water and a permanent solution to this problem be found out.

Though this issue was considered after Independence but desirable attention was not paid to this issue. May be the dearth of resources was the reason of failure. Effort to link all rivers can be made. Still only 40 per cent land is irrigated and the rest is still without water. Water is life and if enough attention had been paid earlier towards the various water harvesting projects situation would have been different. However, I would like to urge upon the House to cooperate me in this regard. All of you should decide collectively. I assure you that there would not be lack of funds in the project for linking all the rivers.

When the projects to broaden highways and construct new ones was started, doubts were raised regarding the mobilisation of funds at such a large scale. The money is in the country, the need is to spend it properly. Rivers can be linked and the talks can be held with the neighbouring countries. There is a need to raise this issue at a war footing. How long would we continue to face the drought? Allegations and counter allegations would follow and the life would become even more miserable. Now, the foodgrains production has increased and our farmer and the scientists deserve congratulations for this. However, the news of starvation deaths are being reported despite the availability of foodgrains. The truth of the news is only revealed later on. Clarifications are given but what impression does it convey to the psyche of the people abroad and they are forced to ponder as to what kind of country this is where the people are dying of hunger despite the fact that the godowns are filled with foodgrains.

This is not an issue of party. Today different States are being ruled by different parties. We have to take every Government along with us and extend our support to all as well seek everyone's support. However, the starvation deaths lead to controversies. One part of media is interested in such happenings to keep their newspapers running. This is not right and I do not want to dwell in it detail.

Such an incident has also taken place in Orissa. Somebody had gone there to take a photograph. When he got the news that a person had died due to starvation but to his dismay he found that there was no death and he declined to take photograph. Rather he waited for him

to die. Later it become clear that there was no possibility of starvation death there. However, ensuring the proper distribution of foodgrains is the responsibility of the system and we are somewhat lacking on this count. We will have to find a solution for it.

However, I was talking about linking rivers. Supreme Court has taken initiative only later on after our meeting in the Centre had taken place. One presentation took place and the Government and the Ministry was asked to formulate a scheme. I invite Soniaji to cooperate with us in this work. This would change the destiny of our country. It will take time to link all the rivers and to find a solution to drought problem but we have enough time to accomplish our task. A task force on Cauveri and Ganga has been set up.

Now-a-days I am associated with the Cauvery dispute and the dilemma is whether to hear Karnataka's arguments or look at the Tamil Nadu's interests. Court though arbitrate, takes a lot of time. How can we resolve these riparian disputes? The decision of the Supreme Court should be accepted but how long the issue of sharing the river water would remain as the bone of contention between us. I am of the view that the entire House should start thinking and making progress in this direction and it is what we want to convey through the session and Government's programme.

There are several other issues and I would not say much on it. I would like to reiterate that drought be kept aside of the politics. Drought be viewed as a humanitarian issue. There is no fodder for the animals. Though we have been supplying it yet it is not adequate. Similarly there is a dearth of drinking water. Transportation of the free drinking water, fodder and foodgrains is being done by Railways. There is no shortage of foodgrains in the country but there is a problem of its distribution and I invite that all hon. Members give their suggestions to improve the condition in their respective constituencies to the State Governments and send the copy of the same to the centre also. The menace of the drought is going to last long. Now new crop is to be sown. How much losses will be suffered is hard to estimate but we should be ready to face all the circumstances. I wish that the discussion prove fruitful from that point of view.

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA (Alipurduars) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I extend my thanks to you for having given me permission to speak on the adjournment Motion. I, on behalf of my party support the Adjournment Motion which has been introduced as it involves a very serious issue.

The hon. Prime Minister, during the discussion, gave valuable suggestions viz, the role of NDA Government at the centre vis-a-vis Co-ordination required with the State Governments etc. were especially emphasised by the hon. Prime Minister. I feel the adverse effect of drought on farmers is almost similar to that of floods because both ruin tea gardens in North Bengal. Just as during floods people are displaced, tea plants get swept away similarly during drought tea plants get dried. We made repeated requests. I tried to put my points in the Previous session whenever there was a discussion on drought or flood or any natural calamity. I have repeatedly requested the NDA Government at the centre that if we wish to protect the tea gardens, agricultural fields-the property of our country in the northern areas of Jalpaigudi, Darjeeling and cooch Bihar in West Bengal, we should seek the cooperation of Bhutan and constitute Indo-Bhutan Joint River Commission. The Union Government are quite competent in giving assurance but how far is it implemented, is doubtful. I would, therefore, once again, like to draw the attention to the Government in this direction that the Government should give assurance that they would fulfill their promises in order to solve the problems of poor people arising out of conditions of drought or flood.

Instead of accusing the Union Government I would suggest them to make efforts to get the cooperation of the State Government after having proper talks with them. The Union Government would be able to find right solution to the problems if they get Co-operation of the State Government. But I feel that the present Government are taking more interest in the disinvestment Process than in giving priority to the poor people. The Government are paying attention more towards giving profits and benefits to the affluent class, which is already earning huge profits. The economic policy adopted by the Government Proves the same fact. And that is why I am afraid that the Government may get entrapped in the policy beneficial to the affluent class as a result of which the poor people may be deprived of the help in conditions of drought. I have

apprehensions that the poor people, farmers and labourers experiencing problems may not have to meet the same situation for long. I, therefore request the Government to practice what they say otherwise the common people would give a befitting reply in the next elections.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI HARIBHAU SHANKAR MAHALE (Malegaon) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I extend my thanks to you for having given me time to speak. I rise to speak on behalf of the Janata party (secular) in support of the Motion introduced by the leader of the opposition in the House, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi.

It was a good discussion and the hon. Prime Minister has also given proper assurance but I think even he is Maharashtrian and many other persons from Maharashtra are also here. A severe famine occurred in Maharashtra in 1972 which affected the entire Maharashtra. Shri Vasant Rao Naik was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra at that time. He did good work. He paid the labourers, Provided fodder, water etc. And also made good arrangements during crisis also. During crisis also, the situation was tackled meticulously and that is why things went right during crisis period.

I request the Government to look into the facts as to how to make good arrangements during the period of crisis. Maharashtra was hit by famine at that time, but now it has two-three serious problems. Sugar cane farmers are facing crisis. Prices of Sugar have fallen since the Government have imported sugar. So, the farmers are facing serious problems. Secondly at that time there was no power-crisis.

Presently the power-crisis is so acute that there is no power available for the farmers to work on their agricultural fields. Despite availability of water, irrigation is not possible without power. And that is why this crisis needs to be immediately tackled. Mr. Speaker, is well aware that rice is grown in abundance in Maharashtra. Similarly 'rayee' is also grown there. And most of it is grown in tribal areas, which has resulted in crisis in these areas. Hon. Prime Minister have also given assurance for providing work. 'In Indian mythology, yamraj had blessed savitri with eight sons, but how can one have sons without husband.

Similarly the forest laws etc. create hindrance in the work of construction of roads, big and small dams, or canals. It is right that these laws were enacted during the regime of congress party but the Government should think seriously to annul these laws so that they may not be a hurdle in providing work to the tribal people.

*[English]*

DR. C. KRISHNAN (Pollachi) : Sir, thanks you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in this debate.

I am speaking on behalf of the MDMK headed by Shri Vaiko, who is presently imprisoned due to the misuse of POTA.

I belong to Pollachi Constituency which is situated both in Coimbatore and Erode. The farmers are suffering a lot of problems due to failure of monsoon for the last two years, particularly in Coimbatore and Erode districts. Due to failure of rain, the groundwater has gone down to the level of 1,000 feet. Many bore-wells have become dry and water is not available when new bore-wells are opened. You do not get water even at the depth of 1,000 feet.

There are about ten lakh coconut trees in the above districts. The coconut trees are long-standing crops, and it takes, at least, seven years to get yield from a tree. In my Pollachi Constituency alone, about four lakh yielding trees have become dry and dead once for all. The small and marginal farmers are unable to remove even the dried up trees and to plant new saplings for want of funds. Further, the coconut farmers are suffering due to poor yield caused by ereophyte attack for the past three years. Even for the poor yield, the farmers could not get a reasonable price. The benefit of purchasing dry coconut (copra) by Government has also not reached the farmers.

All these difficulties and the present severe drought condition due to failure of monsoon have created great financial loss to the farmers. Hence, I would request the Central Government to provide Rs. 1,000 per dried up tree as compensation for the affected farmers to enable them to plant new saplings.

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Krishnan, your time is over, please conclude now.

DR. C. KRISHNAN : The allotment of Rs. 36 crore for compensating the loss of coconut trees may be sufficient, and more funds should be allotted.

MR. SPEAKER : Your time is over.

DR. C. KRISHNAN : At least, Rs. 500 may be given for each coconut tree, and rice also should be given.

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Krishnan, please sit down, your time is over. The last speaker is Shri Prakash Ambedkar.

DR. C. KRISHNAN : Further, the failure of monsoon has caused scarcity of drinking water in many places in Coimbatore and Erode districts. I would request that Coimbatore and Erode districts may be declared as drought -affected areas. Remedial measures should be undertaken on a war-footing basis by treating this drought as a natural calamity.

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR (Akola) : Sir, I only have a few points to make.

Sir, I have seen drought conditions as prevailing in the country. I would like to request the hon. Minister to kindly be attentive to this because he has to face this situation. There is a very good book titled 'Everybody loves a good drought' by Shri P Sainath. It is a book that speaks about what goes on in the Administration when a drought takes place. However, I am not going to deal on these issues.

Sir, the hon. Prime Minister pointed out that drought is one condition that we have been facing after every three years. There are areas that are known as Rain Shadow Areas. We have not been able to mark these Rain Shadow Areas in the last 40 years. These are areas where the average rainfall is less and they are the first affected areas. I would like to request the hon. Minister to kindly pay special attention to this aspect. Now with the help of satellites we have been able to eliminate both arid and non-arid land both geographically as well as geologically. This would go a long way in solving the problems of Rain Shadow Areas.

Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned about linkage of rivers. But this would take a long time. This is not going to happen in a short period of time. Then we have to contend with climatic changes. We have been

[Shri Prakash Yashwant Ambedkar]

observing that the period of rainfall is getting shifted in the areas where there are dams. There is a standing instruction to the authorities to open all the gates of the dams up to the month of July and they should be closed after the month of September. In the last five years my constituency has been a victim of this changing pattern of rainfall. We have a drought situation in the months of June and July and then again a wet drought like situation in the months of September and October. This is the case across the country. Therefore, I would like the hon. Minister to kindly look into this aspect.

Sir, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned about the financial conditions of the States. I would say that the States today are in a debt trap. They do not have enough financial resources of their own. The States today are asking even for the transportation cost to make available the help, to the common man, that is given by the Centre. I would like to impress upon the hon. Minister to impose a professional tax, which is already there in Maharashtra, which could be used to make available the assistance given by the Centre to the common man. If that is done, then I hope that dissatisfaction expressed by the hon. Prime Minister over the fact that the help given by the Centre does not reach the common man would largely get reduced and things would reach the common man.

Sir, we have said that there should not be any politics played with drought. I do not know whether the Centre would clear it or not but the State Chief Minister have already started playing politics with drought. In some States even though there was no drought like situation, yet those States have been declared as drought affected States. Central teams are sent to assess the situation and if they say that there is no drought, then help is not given to those States. I would like to impress upon the concerned Ministers not to play politics with drought in order to save their own seats. I have seen this thing happening in two States this year.

Sir, I would also like to impress upon the Minister, through you, that sites that were available for digging ponds have now got exhausted in the last 50 years and those sites have now been silted. This is a period where we can de-site such sites and make provision for

increasing the sources of drinking water. I would like to request the hon. Minister to see that such programmes are included in the policy. Neither the *Zila Parishads* nor the State Governments have the machinery to de-silt the ponds in order to increase sources of drinking water. I would like to request the hon. Minister to look into these aspects.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing the drought situation in the country today. The Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Gandhi used the Adjournment Motion to discuss this sensitive issue. Although it does not fall under that category, considering the seriousness of the situation, you good self allowed discussion under Adjournment Motion.

I am happy that this august House is discussing and deliberating on drought and that many Members have gone beyond the purview of drought and discussed the situation of the PDS, the problem of water, climatic changes, and how this drought has affected the rural economy. I am happy about it because this debate has focused attention on these issues. I hope the debate and deliberation here would lead to some thinking not only in the Central and State Governments but in many other organisations involved in this subject in order to look into why our Public Distribution System is collapsing, why the rural development programmes are not really helping in developing the rural areas, and in general, why our farmers are feeling distressed.

I am sure everyone here knows about the seriousness of the situation but I would like to give some statistics. At the end of the South-West Monsoon, the deficiency in rainfall was about 20 per cent. It was 24 per cent in 1987 and 30 per cent in 1972. So, if you look at the Statistics, you would think that it is not a very serious drought and our media has projected it that way. If you read the papers and watched TV, in July-August there was a grim situation in the country. But they have forgotten all about drought in the last two months because, as the Statistics show, rainfall was deficient only by 20 per cent. However, July rainfall is crucial for Agriculture and this July was the driest ever July since we started keeping statistics in 1875. Therefore, the distress is much more in fact.

Let us also remember the fact that there are other natural calamities too. There are cyclones, there are floods

and their effects are severe but they last a short time. Drought is something whose effects linger on for a long time. The soil situation is changed, the water table goes down. Although there may be no starvation deaths, it increase malnutrition and children's health is affected. As the Prime Minister has said, we should be prepared for this drought extending beyond the next crop also.

As far as *kharif* goes, we expect that the loss would be upwards of 15 per cent. Out of about 900 lakh hectares sown, normally 160 lakh hectares had 50 per cent damage or more. Twenty per cent area was not sown at all. So, the drought is severe, there is no doubt about it. It is much more widespread than the earlier droughts. The Government is serious about it. I want to assure you, the Prime Minister has assured you, that there is no politics involved in this. If you really look at the figures, in this House itself the Leader of the TDP said that they have been given less money, although the opposition party keeps complaining that we always favour the States ruled by our alliance partners. Shri Yerrannaidu himself mentioned that in this case we had discriminated against Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) : I had shown the statement also.

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY (Narasaraopet) : It is alleged that there is discrimination against Andhra Pradesh under pressure from the Congress. Is it right or wrong? That is what Shri Chandrababu Naidu had said. You kindly clarify it.

SHRI AJIT SINGH : I would like to assure the hon. Members that there is no discrimination involved in the assistance we have given so far. The procedure has been laid down by the Eleventh Finance Commission.

The details about how the money has to be distributed, what are the norms for which money can be allotted, have been laid down by the Eleventh Finance Commission and it was with the consent of all the Chief Ministers that these norms were laid down. So, there is no question of discrimination against anybody. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI N. JANARDHANA REDDY : So, you say that there is no pressure from anybody. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT SINGH : There is pressure from every State. As I said, there is pressure from every political party, which

is normal because, after all, people are suffering. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : He has not yielded, Shri Janardhana Reddy.

SHRI AJIT SINGH : Sir, the Leader of the Opposition will be speaking after me. Therefore, I hope whatever he wants to say would be reflected in his leader's speech. So, let me say what I want to. I have heard all of them. I am not going to say anything which is going to hurt their sentiments. I have no intention to hurt their sentiments. All that I am saying is that there is normally pressure in such a situation. It is expected because after all people are suffering. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : What he wants to know is whether the Congress Party's pressure has reduced the quantum of foodgrains given to Andhra Pradesh. That is what he wants to know. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the Minister speak now. Please sit down. Yes, Mr. Minister, you may continue your speech.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT SINGH : Sir, I mentioned about Andhra Pradesh because that is just an example. There has been an on-going campaign that Andhra Pradesh is favoured. This time, they have received less money than what Karnataka got, which is ruled by the Opposition Party. So, what I intend to say is that there is no favouritism. The situation might have been different when Andhra Pradesh was given more foodgrains. The situation would have been like that at that time, and so, it was done like that. But now the situation in this drought condition is different, at least as far as the reports that we have about the data that we have. It is an on-going thing.

The Task Force on drought which met has given assistance only for three months. We will review the situation in January again. If they again feel that the situation has got worse, I am sure, all these things will be considered again.

Anyway, as I was saying, the procedure is laid down. The State gives a Memorandum; there is a Team which goes from the Centre which discusses with the State officers; their report is submitted to an Inter-Ministerial



[Shri Ajit Singh]

Group which is a Group of Secretaries. There is a Task Force constituted by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of the Deputy-Prime Minister, Shri Advani. That looks at those things and decides how much money can be allotted to each State, etc.

Once again, I would like to say that the Task Force has agreed to whatever recommendations were made by the Inter-Ministerial Group. If we had changed anything, then you might have said that there is some politics involved in it. We have, *in toto*, accepted the recommendations made by the Inter-Ministerial Group.

I need not go into the details as to how much assistance has been provided because my esteemed colleagues, Shri Shanta Kumar and Shri Sharad Yadav have given you those statistics already. I am sure, all of you are aware through the Media also, how much is given and what has been done about it, etc.

Hon. Leader of the Opposition did mention that there was probably no urgency and the urgency that ought to have been shown was not shown in this case. I would like to mention that the Agriculture and Relief Ministers' meeting was held on the 24th July. The Task Force was constituted on the 31st July. It has met six times. There were many complaints that the Task Force was not meeting, the reports are coming and they are not discussing the reports etc. The Task Force, since it was constituted on the 31st July, has held six meetings; they met on 1st of August, 16th August, 10th September, 20th September, 11th October and 16th November. As I said, the assistance they have provided is for three months. We will review the situation again in January. If the situation in each State has not improved – whatever is warranted and whatever memorandum is received – we will examine and we will seriously look at them.

As regard urgency, the second instalment of CRF was released on 7th of August itself. The Task Force made the recommendations on 16th of this month and we had already released advanced instalment of CRF so that the States could not say that they did not have ready cash to spend for the drought relief.

I would also like to mention that there was a meeting of the Leader of the Opposition along with the Chief

Ministers of the Congress-ruled States with the Prime Minister and his colleagues. She has mentioned in her speech that they gave a memorandum but she was not sure what action has been taken on that. They had requested to initiate Food-for-Work Programme. It was initiated immediately. They said that the financial assistance should be given. As I mentioned, the second instalment of CRF was given immediately. The memorandum also said that it should be declared as a national calamity. I would like to say that there is no such provision in today's rules, regulations, and the Constitution. There is a Committee headed by Shri Sharad Pawar which is looking into this situation. There is formation of Crisis Management Group which was constituted on 31st August itself. The NDC memorandum also mentioned that NDC should consider the short and long term measures. I am sure that the next meeting of the NDC would consider that. The Prime Minister mentioned what steps he is planning to have a long term solution for the drought problem.

There was a mention that the corpus of the Contingency Fund should be increased to Rs. 10,000 crore. I would like to mention that NCCF has no limitation. Whatever the situation demands, the Government is committed to provide from NCCF. It has an initial Provision of Rs. 500 crore. But the 11th Finance Commission itself has mentioned that money can be raised if it is needed. The Task Force has cleared Rs. 2000 crore. Therefore, I am sure that the amount which would go from NCCF would be more than Rs. 500 crore.

The Memorandum also wanted extension of the time for the Crop Insurance Scheme. Any State which recommended for the extension of time, it was done. Here is would like to mentioned that Rajasthan is the worst affected State in this drought and this is the third drought in four years. . . .(Interruptions) It is fourth or fifth drought, whatever it is. I am saying that it is the third year in four years because last year Rajasthan had good rains. I expected that Rajasthan should be the first State to use Crop Insurance Scheme. It is because having three droughts in four years, I understand, the Rajasthan Government's financial situation may not be good.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Sir, crop insurance scheme has not been implemented in Rajasthan.

[English]

SHRI AJIT SINGH : This is what I am saying. Nineteen States which include Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Orissa, have implemented that Scheme. The Rajasthan Government has no excuses for not implementing that Scheme because if that scheme was implemented, they would not have been facing this problem today. We understand that Rajasthan situation is very bad.

The Government has allowed free movement of the fodder and water for Rajasthan. Not only that, we have allotted more than 30,000 metric tonnes of wheat for animal feed for Rajasthan. Rajasthan's main wealth comes from animals. Realising the problem faced there, we have spoken to NDDB, and they have increased the amount to five lakh litres of milk per month from Rajasthan which is more than twice what they normally take. Normally, in November and December, price of milk is reduced but they have agreed that if the drought continues, they will consider what price has to be paid to the farmers.

As far as long-term programmes are concerned, there are many programmes like Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme; Drought-prone Area Programme; Desert Development Programme; Integrated Wastelands Development Programme and *Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana*. I do agree that in view of this drought we have to consider what to do about water because that is going to be a problem. The Prime Minister has mentioned about the disputes between different States. The Government seeks cooperation of all the Opposition Parties in our efforts because water is to be treated as a national resource. Without that, we cannot solve this problem in the long run.

It is not just the question of linking up the rivers. Our traditional methods of water conservation should be followed. We have Bawlis, Johars and tanks in the village side. They all have been taken over and houses constructed. So, we have to go back to our traditional methods of water conservation. For this again, we seek your cooperation as most of the States today are ruled by the Opposition. Therefore, as the Leader of the Opposition herself mentioned in the morning, this fighting against drought has to be a cooperative venture between the Central Government and the State Governments.

Let me also mention one point about what the Central Government can meet. Besides allotting money for different schemes, we do not have any implementing agency. We can allot foodgrains, but for getting it to the hungry, we do not have any machinery. I have written to the Chief Ministers that the input subsidy of Rs. 2000 crore should be deposited directly into the affected farmers' accounts instead of giving it in cash or in kind. We can only request the States and it is up to the States to act on our request. Many hon. Members wanted all-Party meetings and also formation of an all-Party Committee. This question was also raised last time when the same subject was discussed. In my letter to the Chief Minister I have requested them to create a Committee at the district level of all the elected representatives who can supervise this drought relief work. I do not think many States have done that. Therefore, all I want to emphasise is that while it has to be a cooperative venture, at the Central level we can only authorise you to use the Plan money for drought relief; we can give you money from NCCF; we can tell you how to use that money; we can give you free railways transport for the fodder and foodgrains for feeding the animals. But ultimately the implementing agency is under the control of the State Governments.

It is not a question of blaming anybody. Let us work together. There should be no shirking of responsibility on the part of anyone. We have foodgrains, but people are dying of starvation. As the Prime Minister has said, in such a situation we should all hang our heads in shame. We are producing enough foodgrains to export to the world at large, but people are malnourished here and people are under-nourished in our own country. We have to look at our PDS once again. We have to look at our rural development programmes both of the Central Government as well as State Governments all over again. I would also request the media to please keep it in mind. The drought is not yet over. There is a lot of distress in the rural areas and we are alert to that. The Task Force would be meeting whenever needed. We seek your cooperation in alleviating the misery of the people in the rural areas of our country.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we had a very long day with many important speeches.

[Shrimati sonia Gandhi]

I will not take very long so that everyone can go home after this tiring day.

Now, this morning, when I spoke, I asked the Government for all possible support to be given to the drought affected States. I spoke for all the States affected by this problem. I did not speak for only Congress-ruled States and I believe that this really ought to be the spirit in which we must face this tremendous challenge.

This morning, I had made a number of suggestions. Many of these suggestions were supported by a number of colleagues from all sections of this House and since some of them have not been touched by the hon. Minister in his reply, I would just like to reiterate or repeat them.

Now, I refer to the first demand which was for setting up an all-Party Committee to galvanise the implementation of relief packages. I think this would go a long way to help the co-ordination between different parties and, of course, subsequently the States.

Then I had also said, that a special meeting of the NDC would also be most helpful to co-ordinate between the Centre and the States. Of course, you have mentioned about the Task Force and several other Committees but I believe that this would also be important.

I had asked for the waiver of interest on loans taken by farmers and launching a large-scale Food for Work Programme in traditionally vulnerable areas. You have mentioned the Food for Work Programme. Of course, we know that it is in place but it is necessary to strengthen this particular programme.

I also had asked for expanding the Antyodaya Programme which is a fairly successful programme. That is why, if the Ministry could expand it, it would be extremely helpful to those who are suffering most these days on account of drought.

I also had mentioned about the issue of transportation. The Prime Minister briefly touched upon it but this transportation cost of foodgrains is a constant issue being thrown from the States to the Central Government and back

and forth. This could also be looked at as revamping and strengthening of the PDS also. But the most important of all, I feel, and this is something that you have not really touched, is the drought management code. If Government could look at it, it would be extremely good.

The Food Minister and some other hon. Members mentioned that large amounts of foodgrains have been sent to States like Madhya Pradesh which have not been lifted. Some Members mentioned it and I think even the Food Minister also mentioned it, if I am not mistaken. But I would like to ask as to how much has been sent specifically for drought relief. I have already quoted figures in the morning to show that all foodgrains sent for drought have been lifted not only in Madhya Pradesh but by most Congress-governed States.

Then, some hon. Members were also referring to foodgrains allotted under other-on-going schemes like the PDS. Now, the PDS itself is defective and many hon. Members agreed with it. I think, in fact, the Food Minister himself admitted the need for strengthening and revamping the PDS.

**20.00 hrs.**

Then, the Minister for Rural Development, Shri Shanta Kumar, mentioned figures to prove how much he has released to the States and again how little the States have utilised it. But I do not want to go into this because we do not have the time. We can perhaps discuss it separately. These aggregate figures, I think, can hide many things. There are many schemes being run by his Ministry. It would be interesting to know how much was released and for which scheme, how many of these schemes have special relevance to the drought-affected areas, when were these releases made, what percentage of this was for plan expenditure, for instance. There is no time, as I said just now, to go into the details. But these are very relevant questions for which at some stage we would like to have answers.

Hon. Prime Minister hinted that we have said that there is political discrimination in giving assistance to the States. This is not what I said this morning. All that I said was that criteria for assistance should be objective and transparent. That was all I said. To this day, we are still

unaware of the formula on the basis of which assistance is being calculated for each States. After all, there is no connection between what a State has been demanding and what the State is getting. Here is another question for which perhaps we would like to have an answer. The Prime Minister has compared the 1987 support to the drought areas with that of the 2002. If he had given the details of the foodgrains stock then, the rupee value and the total Budgetary outlay of 1987, then it would have been, perhaps, much easier to evaluate how serious we are responding to the present magnitude of the problem in comparison to 1987.

I think, I can say that across the board, virtually all the Members really spoke of the inadequacy of the assistance given by the Central Government. Here I repeat that this is not intended to be political criticism, this is intended to be constructive criticism. I think, if constructive criticism, discussing weaknesses and pointing out what we see as weaknesses is mistaken as politicising the issue, I am really sorry, I do not understand it. But we shall carry on exposing and bringing out weaknesses wherever we see them because after all this is the only way we can help each other to improve the situation in various fields. I was saying that many Members across the board have mentioned about the inadequacy of the Central assistance released so far for the States affected by drought from the National Calamity Fund. Now, this is an aspect which really needs to be looked into with some urgency. The Government says that they will release more when the reports of the Central teams have been examined. But all these formalities really should have been completed much earlier. Each day's delay naturally compounds the misery of the people. Therefore, I urge the Centre to at least now accelerate that process so that no more time is wasted.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think this debate has really placed a major responsibility on the Government. We, on our part, shall do all we can. But the major responsibility is that of the Central Government. Therefore, through you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I once again request the Government to urgently reach all possible help and support to the millions of people who are suffering today throughout the country on account of this drought.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, I am going to put the Motion to the vote of the House.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi) : Sir, I just forgot to mention a very important issue which the hon. Prime Minister has brought up and that is of linking river waters. We welcome this proposal and we are happy to participate in it.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the House do now adjourn"

*The motion was negatived.*

20.05 hrs.

#### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377\*

MR. SPEAKER : Item No. 13 and 14 shall be taken up on a later date. Item No. 15. Matters under rule 377 be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

#### (i) **Need to open a Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Karauli District, Rajasthan**

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI JAS KAUR MEENA (Swai Madhopur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Government of India had targetted to open one Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in each district of the country. There are a few districts in Rajasthan, which were created five years ago, but are still deprived of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. One of such districts is Karauli, which is in my parliamentary constituency and also the local people are demanding for long for that. The region is dacoit affected and dang area, the region lacks in education facilities and the children here are being kept deprived from the benefit of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya.

Therefore, through you, I would like to request the hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister to give necessary orders for setting up a Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Karauli district without delay.

---

\*Treated as laid on the Table of the House.