

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, June 10, 1998/Jyaishta 20, 1920 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MEMBERS SWORN

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Secretary-General may now call the names of newly elected Members for the purpose of making and subscribing oath or affirmation.

Shri Maheshwar Singh (Mandi)

Shri Syed Hussain (Ladakh)

11.03 hrs.

REFERENCE TO VICTIMS OF TRAGEDY CAUSED DUE TO SEVERE CYCLONES

[English]

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (Kutch) : Due to heavy cyclone in Gujarat, 800 people have loss their lives.

MR. SPEAKER : I am making a reference also.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : As the hon. Members are aware, more than 100 persons are reported to have died and hundreds injured in the tragedy caused due to the severe cyclones in Saurashtra and Kutch regions of Gujarat and Jalore District of Rajasthan on June 9, 1998. Many are reported to have been rendered homeless also. There are also reports about disruption of power supply and communication links apart from loss of property.

We deeply mourn this tragedy.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed souls.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

11.03½ hrs.

[Translation]

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA (Jhabua) : Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, yesterday a severe cyclone hit Gujarat in which more than 400 people were killed. ...(Interruptions)

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, our sentiments have also been expressed through resolution to condole the tragedy in Gujarat. There has been a large scale loss of life and property. The Government in this connection will place a detailed statement before the House.

SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA : Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sir, you please visit that place, more than 400 people have been killed there. You send a Parliamentary Team there. The Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh is also affected by that cyclone. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BHUBANESHWAR KALITA (Guwahati) : A Parliamentary Team should be sent there. ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI DINSHAW PATEL (Kheda) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not a small issue, heavy loss has occurred there, more than 200 people were killed and 10,000 people have been rendered homeless. Therefore, the Central Government should provide immediate relief.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

11.05 hrs.

[English]

Modernisation of Canals

*202. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering modernising/upgrading of the canals in the country;

(b) if so, the State-wise details thereof;

(c) the total estimated cost involved therein and the funds sanctioned for the purpose, State-wise; and

(d) the proposed schedule for completion of work, if any, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) Irrigation being a State subject, Extension, Renovation and Modernisation (ERM) of existing major and medium irrigation projects is carried out by the State Governments as per their own priority out of their own resources. Modernisation/upgradation of the canals is normally one of the component of such ERM projects. Funds are allotted by the Planning Commission for major

and medium irrigation projects including ERM projects. Upto the end of VIII Plan, out of 170 ERM Projects undertaken in the different States, 60 were completed. The total estimated cost of the 110 on-going schemes is about Rs. 11890 crores against which an expenditure of about Rs. 4114 crores has already been incurred upto March 1997.

SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, first of all I would like to say that the hon. Minister has not replied to the question properly. The question was about State-wise details but the Minister has replied in general.

According to the statement of the hon. Minister, 170 ERM projects were taken up in different States out of which only one-third, about 60 projects, have been completed so far. It is known to the august House that the country is facing huge losses of crops due to inadequate irrigation facilities as a result of which several farmers in the country have committed suicides. I want to know from the hon. Minister the reasons for such slow progress and also the steps going to be taken by the Government for early completion of these projects.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is right when he observes that out of the 170 extension, renovation and modernisation projects, only 60 have been completed. But this does not mean that progress has not taken place in the case of the other 110 projects. Progress has been there. If the hon. Member wishes to have the details of State-wise allocations in this respect, I can give them here, it is a long statement. Or else, I can send them to him.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Naik, would you like to ask a second supplementary?

SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK : No Sir.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, the Ministry of Water Resources has a lot to do with the canal systems. Upgradation and Modernisation of canals can help irrigate many more acres of land. It is explained by the scientists that if the irrigation and canal systems are computerised, the same quantity of water can be utilised to irrigate about three to four times of the land under irrigation now. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has realised that this can be done. If the Government has realised that this can be done, what kind of steps is it going to take to see that not only simple upgradation and modernisation but also computerisation of canal systems and irrigation systems is done so that water which is available in a very small quantity can be used for irrigating more land?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Shivraj Patil is right in saying that water available through all the canal systems is not being fully utilised. There are several

reasons and factors leading to this state of affairs. Firstly, all the distributaries of the canal systems have not been constructed. Secondly, the field channels take sometime for the farmers to create, therefore, the potential which has been created is not really utilised. Thirdly, there is a change in the cropping pattern. The earlier design was based on the rainfed agriculture and later on these cropping patterns have undergone change. So, the water which is required now was not envisaged originally. So, there is a lag between the potential and the potential utilised. In addition to this, for better use, land levelling and lining of canals and field channels is also undertaken. It is being done in many States. Central loan assistance is being given under ERM projects for this. So far as modern techniques are concerned, sprinkler sets and drip irrigation are to be promoted. Subsidy schemes are going on where 70 per cent is provided for sprinklers and drip irrigation to a normal farmer, and for SC, ST and women farmers up to 90 per cent. These are being promoted.

But so far as computerisation is concerned, it has not been thought of so far. If need be, it can be imbibed as one of the components for modernising irrigation system.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of Hon'ble Minister that Uttar Pradesh is the largest state of the country. The Chambaltaal Project near Agra was formulated in the year 1988 and its expenditure was estimated at Rs. 16 crores at that time. Now 1998 has come but even today this work has not been completed and instead of Rs. 16 crores expenditure cost, an expenditure of Rs. 90 crores has been incurred. Therefore I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister what steps are being taken by the Government to complete such projects which are pending for years?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, large amount of water which we receive in the form of rainfall flows into sea through rivers and as a result the level of underground water is going down every year. Will the hon'ble Minister make efforts to collect and retain this water so that the level of water can come up and the area which remains unirrigated can be irrigated and the work of Chambaltaal project near Agra can be started properly?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Central Government has provided sufficient funds to the State Government of Uttar Pradesh in the Ninth Plan and in the earlier plans to modernize Agra Canal. If the Hon'ble Member desires, I will send complete details to him. As regards the second question in which the Hon'ble Member has stated that larger amount of rain water goes waste, it is true. I would like to tell that till now we are able to use only 17.25% of rain water. There is certainly a need to make more use of rain water.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Planning Commission has chalked out watershed management programme of Rs. 75,800 crore to be implemented in 5 five year plans and it has started implementing this from this five year plan itself. For this purpose a provision of Rs. 670 crore has been made in this years' budget. By implementing this programme, the problem which is pointed out by Hon'ble Member can be solved by taking permanent and long term measures.

[English]

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister was pleased to observe in his answer to the question that was raised by an hon. Member that he has got the State-wise break-up of all the canals where modernisation and upgradation has been carried out.

I would like to specifically ask him about the Krishna Western Delta. The Buckingham Canal is spoiled beyond repair. The silt is so much that it has not been cleaned. It has got to go all the way right up to Chennai but it does not go beyond Ongole. People are suffering very badly because of this. What is the position of Krishna Western Delta? Is it being modernised? The State Government had been saying that they are getting funds from the World Bank. But nothing has been done so far. May I ask him to just throw some light on this particular canal and the Western Delta of Krishna.

If you could kindly look into the situation in both these places, you can find out that not only thousands and thousands of acres of land but lakhs and lakhs of acres of land will be irrigated. May I just request him to throw light on these canals?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not readily have this particular information now. I would send the same to the hon. Member.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER : My request is, please do something while sending reply to me. ...*(Interruptions)* Please take some action on them.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : A huge amount of money is being spent to extend and renovate the irrigation projects as is evident from the details furnished by the hon. Minister. In the light of such details, may I know from the hon. Minister the volume of land involved in the 170 irrigation projects?

I would like to know whether the projects facilitate the overall growth of production. If so, what is the total quantum of production and the total volume of land to be involved in these projects?

SHRI SOMPAL : These schemes, under extension, renovation and modernisation, are being implemented by the States and the money is being given by the Central

Government. Sir, the details of the area to be covered under these schemes are not readily available, but under another scheme which is known as WRCP (Water Resources Consolidation Project) some figures are available and some States have taken this up. It is not that. These figures are not available right now, because the States ask for the funds and it is all implemented by the States. They will be collected from them and can be sent to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to tell the Hon'ble Minister that Bansagar Multi-purpose and multi-state project which was launched in Rewa in Madhya Pradesh in 1978 and which was to be completed in 10 year's time, has not been completed as yet. Only the construction of dam is in progress. Its full benefit are not being yielded as canal has not been constructed as yet. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister the time by which the work of canal will be completed and till date how much amount has been spent on this project?

[English]

SHRI SOMPAL : Again Sir, this pertains to a specific project. The details are to be sought from the State and then only they can be sent to the hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister should know that Canal is a state subject. As far as question of funding is concerned, the Government of India provides funds to state Government whenever they face financial problem. Through you I would like to know as to whether Central Government has entered into an agreement with Nepal recently under Kosi Barrage Agreement? Hundreds of Kilometres of land under jurisdiction of Nepal is eroded and the expenditure incurred for regulating the flow of the water has to be borne by the State Government. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Ministry of Agriculture and its experts have ever considered the fact that Ganges is a national river but its water level is receding? However it is a separate point because I am not aware as to which agreement they have entered into with Bangladesh under which the water level of Ganges is going up due to process of silting. Silt is accumulating in river bed. The same is the case with canals of Uttar Pradesh and other canals used for irrigation purposes. The silt is accumulating in those canals. The course of rivers is being diverted, erosion is taking place and a loss of billions of rupees is being incurred. I would like to know from the Government whether any measures have been taken to remove the silt accumulating in the canals through the rivers passing through Kosi Barrage

and if so what are the details thereof and what help does the Government propose to extend to the State Government of Bihar in this regard?

[English]

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, though the question is not related to modernisation of canal system, still on the Eastern Kosi Phase II project, Rs. 81.22 crore are to be allocated in the Ninth Plan.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Hon'ble Minister, Sir, I have asked the question in Hindi so please give reply in Hindi only. ... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I apologize. ... (Interruptions) In fact I should have given reply in Hindi. Though his question is not related to original question. ... (Interruptions).

[English]

SHRI VAIKO : Mr. Minister, why are you yielding to the pressure? ... (Interruptions) Sir, he cannot force the hon. Minister to reply in a particular language. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMPAL : It is a very small matter. ... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the question is asked in Hindi the reply should also be given in Hindi only. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hindi is our National Language. It has been the convention to answer the question in the same language in which the question has been put. If a member asks a question in English, the reply should be given in English and if he asks question in Hindi, the reply should also be in Hindi ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

... (Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Vaiko, please sit down. Shri T.R. Baalu, please sit down.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing is going on record.

... (Interruptions)*

11.23 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Lalul Prasad and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.

11.24 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Lalul Prasad and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Vaiko, please sit down. Shri T.R. Baalu, please sit down.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

... (Interruptions)*

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is an arrangement for simultaneous interpretation in the House.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Lalul, the hon. Prime Minister is clarifying.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ahamed, please take your seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : There should be no compulsion. Members are free to use any language they like. It should be left to the Member concerned. ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is not like that. Shri Ahamed, please take your seat. The hon. Prime Minister is on his legs.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Ahamed, please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please take your seats.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Madam, please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Kumari Mamata Banerjee, please take your seat.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You please sit down. What is this?

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there should be no objection if a question put in Hindi was being replied to in English by my colleague, however, it has been the practice of the House to reply in Hindi to a question put in Hindi.

[English]

But here, there should be no language controversy.

SHRI LALU PRASAD : We are not raising any controversy. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Sathiamoorthy, please take your seat.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE . There is an arrangement for interpretation. If you want to ask questions in Tamil and if you inform the Chair, there is an arrangement. All the languages are our national languages.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, we agree with the hon. Prime Minister that the House should not be divided on this issue. *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Now the Minister may respond.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question remains unanswered *...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Your question has been answered.

Flood Control

*203. SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to various states for irrigation and flood-control projects during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(b) the impact created by the measures taken in respect of irrigation and flood control?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The State-wise approved outlays for irrigation and flood control for the last three years, namely 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 are given in Annexures I, II and III respectively

(b) By various measures taken through major, medium and minor projects, the country has created an irrigation potential of 89.4 million hectares (provisional) at the end of Eighth Plan period against the ultimate irrigation potential of 113.5 million hectares.

Various flood management measures undertaken through embankments, drainage channels, town and village protection works have provided reasonable degree of protection to an area of 14.374 million hectares out of a total flood prone area of 40 million hectares.

Annexure I

Revised Approved Outlays in respect of Major/Medium Irrigation, Minor Irrigation, C.A.D. and Flood Control for the year 1995-96

(Rs. in Crore)

Sl. No.	States/U.Ts.	Major & Medium	Minor	CAD	Flood Control	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Andhra Pradesh	609.67	70.00	8.00	30.00	717.67
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0.50	15.95	0.46	3.22	20.13
3.	Assam	25.78	42.64	5.28	22.97	96.67
4.	Bihar	182.74	24.83	10.54	35.15	253.26
5.	Goa	30.28	4.00	0.90	0.30	35.48

* Not Recorded.