

[Shri Ram Nagina Mishra]

see what is happening today you are talking of amendments. The United States and Pakistan are making false propaganda today. Here also some people are making allegations that certain persons in the Government are receiving money, who are behind this kind of propaganda? These are those people who were in power yesterday and enjoyed the highest positions but are observing hunger-strikes today. Where was their hungerstrike, when they were occupying important positions in the Government and enjoyed power?

Madam, there cannot be two opinions that on the one hand the foreign countries are spending crores in India and on the other malining our Government.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please listen to me. You can speak tomorrow.

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16.00 Hrs.

DISCUSSION RE: DROUGHT SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up the discussion under Rule 193.

SHRI BIPIN PAL DAS (Tezpur): Madam, I take one minute to make a submission before Mr. Gupta starts his speech. He is going to raise a discussion on the drought situation based on the statement made by the hon. Minister. There is no doubt that drought is a serious matter but there is extensive floods in Bengal, Bihar and Assam and the hon. Minister himself visited Assam in this connection. So, I request the hon. Minister to make a statement on the flood situation in the country or allow us to discuss the flood situation along with drought. We will discuss it if Mr. Gupta agrees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us hear what the hon. Minister wants to say.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G.S. DHILLON): Madom, I did not anticipate that he will ask me to make a statement on floods. Let me collect the latest position about the floods. Then I will come forward.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The flood situation is coming under another motion. Since this is listed today, we will discuss the drought situation.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Let us discuss the natural calamities excepting the Government.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI (Adilabad): If somebody wanted to discuss it. He should be permitted to do so.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Some other motion is coming.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI (Adilabad): The hon. Minister can give reply while replying to the discussion.

DR. G.S. DHILLON: I have no objection. I have been there on the spot. But, I think it should be very up to date and unless we get the figures from Assam, it will not be proper for me to make a statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Since the hon. Minister is not fully prepared to make a statement on the flood situation, let us take it up when it comes before the House.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Are you going to finish it today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will discuss this upto six. We have allotted two hours.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): During these rather turbulent days which we had in the House in the beginning of this

session, some Members remarked once or twice that it was a pity in their opinion that the House was spending so much time and wasting so much time, according to them, on issues like Bofors and so on when so many more important and vital matters affecting millions of people in this country like drought, were not given sufficient attention. Well, I could agree with them. Now, I am rather disappointed to find that when this discussion on drought has come, many of those Members who were vociferous about it seem to be conspicuous by their absence.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (Idukki): Look behind your seat. How many of them are there?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Why are you having such a guilty conscience? I never mentioned you or your party.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: They are studying Bofors in the Library now.

(Interruptions)

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Please do not become a mind reader. Madam, it is not necessary, I think, for me to try to describe the drought situation which has overtaken the country. The hon. Minister has made the statement the other day.

16.05 Hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN *in the Chair*]

My own impression is that, that statement and subsequently some other statements and actions of the Government in this connection, seem to me to reveal a certain lack of urgency. And I do not think, they are yet willing to admit the seriousness of the situation. I know that this point of mine can be replied to. This is a debate after all. Somebody can reply by saying that we do not want to create an atmosphere of panic and this and that. It is not a question of panic. The fact of the matter is that perhaps the worst drought in hundred years, seems to be overtaking the country. We know from past

experience that the drought of this magnitude is not something whose effects will be confined only to the present or a few months, but a drought of this magnitude is likely to have long term affects, long-term adverse consequences for the entire national economy apart from the sufferings that it brings to the people. Therefore, it is a very serious matter. And it is rather regrettable to find - after all in a few days' time, we will be celebrating 40 years of our Independence - that after 40 years of planned economic development, the country's fortunes seem to remain at the mercy of mother nature. This is a sad commentary on the way the Government, over all these years has managed the water resources of this country.

As the Minister has stated the other day, out of 35 meteorological circles or zones in which they divide the country, only 10 of these zones have had more or less normal rainfall. The other 25 zones are afflicted by a very serious drought. We know that some of these States can be described as drought prone. They have a sort of chronic malady of drought from year to year like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh. There are some States which are flood-prone particularly in the eastern part of India. Equally there are States which are drought prone. I named some of them just now.

This year, it is not only the drought prone States but other areas and particularly the north-western zone, which is considered the granary of this country, which is the largest foodgrain producer of this country-Punjab and Haryana-is also seriously affected. In this area of Punjab and Haryana we know that agriculture is very well developed. The farmers are using a great deal of power for their pumpsets. They are very much electricity oriented. Energised irrigation system is there which has led to very good results in past years. But this time, the Bhakra Dam on which these areas are mainly dependent for their power, according to the reports I find, is holding at the moment 50 per cent less water than that of last year. The water has gone down by 50 per cent. In 47 major reservoirs

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in the country today, there is 30 per cent less water than there was in July last year. And the overall level of water in the reservoirs in the country, if you take the average, is down by 10 to 12 per cent. Uttar Pradesh, Himachal, where there has also been great scarcity of rainfall, and even some parts of Kerala are affected this year.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Northern parts of Kerala.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I said some parts of it. Out of 416 districts in the country, about 67 per cent, that is 280 districts are affected. The corresponding figure in the drought conditions of 1985 was only 187. So, the affected area is increasing in each successive drought and that is a very serious matter which we have to think about. That is why I said that the long-term husbanding and management of water resources in our country is obviously not up to the mark. There are other Asian countries like Japan, like China, like Korea which have husbanded and managed their water resources, I should say, much more effectively than we in India have been able to do. There is a report that two million drought-stricken people who are now engaged in what is known as relief works, who have been given employment on relief works in Rajasthan, have not been paid their wages for the past two months. So, starvation is bound to follow. Migration of people from the worst affected areas has begun in search of work. There are some areas in our country from which whole families migrate every year in search of work, even when there is no drought. Their plight this year one can well imagine. Cattle are also being moved from one area to another area in a desperate search for fodder and water.

The drought is bound to lead to fall in foodgrains production, and a fall in foodgrains production, and a fall in foodgrains production is bound to lead to a rise in prices of agrarian products—whether it is vegetables or foodgrains or pulses or edible oils, - to a lack of fodder, and now, as

we are experiencing even in Delhi, to a crisis of milk supplies. Apart from the rise in prices of milk, there is an absolute scarcity of milk developing because of the lack of fodder for the animals. Rice sowing has been adversely affected in West Bengal, in U.P., in East Madhya Pradesh, in Nagpur. The production of pulses in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh is badly affected as also the production of oilseeds in Saurashtra and even the production of cotton, jute and so on.

The water table of the subsoil water, as we all know, has gone down considerably over the years. This is one of my complaints against the Government that though it was known over the years that this subsoil water table is going down very rapidly, no long-term programmes were undertaken in order to see that this subsoil water is properly tapped. There is an acute shortage of drinking water, apart from rural areas, even in urban areas. The worst example probably is the city of Madras where you are considered to be lucky if you can buy a bucket of water everyday for Rs. five or Rs. ten. If this drought continues, I am told the inhabitants of Madras city will really be in a condition of acute drinking water scarcity.

Consumption of diesel oil may have to go up. The Government has already given some direction that diesel and electricity should be diverted, as far as possible, to agricultural operations. It means that the consumption of diesel may go up and, therefore, larger imports may be necessary in the coming years. And certainly larger imports of edible oil which we were cutting down on, we had begun to cut down on, but now larger imports of edible oil, of cotton and so on will become necessary which will strain again our foreign exchange resources which are anyhow under constraint.

Industrial production is in danger of being hampered by lack of adequate power. If the power is mainly to be diverted to agricultural operations, there will be a demand recession in some industries in this situation and those industries which are dependent on agricultural raw materials for their produc-

tion, they will also be effected. One of the Deputy Governors of the Reserve Bank of India, Shri C. Ranga Rajan, not our Ranga Rajan, he is not here he is more interested in Bofors; the other Shri Ranga Rajan who is Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank has said that 1% fall in agricultural production leads to a 2% fall in industrial production. They are so inter-linked. There will have to be larger expenditure. I hope the Minister will tell us about this larger expenditure on relief schemes, on relief works. How much, we do not know? Could it amount to say upto Rs. 1000 crores and will this also not lead naturally to Budget deficit in all the effected States and may be in the Center also?

The public distribution system will be called upon to supply at least an extra three to four million tonnes this year. That is apart from the foodgrains releases under the IRDP or other relief programmes which will also become essential. We are told that there are buffer stocks, ample buffer stocks of about 23 1/2 million tonnes of different types of foodgrains and so there is nothing to be alarmed about. These buffer stocks may be sufficient to tide over this year's crisis. That may be. But what is more important - that this demand supply management should be efficiently handled. If it is not efficiently handled, then a part of these buffer stocks will find their way in to the black market and will not reach actually the poorest people who are in need of it and also that will generate new inflationary pressure. How are these extra resources, but necessary resources, going to be raised? I do not know the Government mind. If they want to avoid further inflationary pressure in the economy, if they do not want to go in for further deficit financing, if they do not want to exceed this year's budgetary deficit estimate of Rs. 5600 crores which was presented here in February last then they must give us some indication and the country some indication, whether they are thinking of any other methods, or any other measures of raising the necessary resources.

I do not want to take much of your time. The cabinet has apparently set up some kind of panel of Ministers, the Prime Minister as

the Chairman, to work out some priority plan or emergency plan to meet this situation. But we do not know anything about the details of what they have worked out. In any case I am firmly of the opinion that a panel of cabinet ministers or some other committees of officials and so on is not adequate. It is not adequate measure with which to tackle such a widespread drought which is going to effect millions of people. For this, it is necessary to enlist the cooperation and the help of other people outside the Government also - various public organizations, even of various political parties who are not willing to set aside their political differences on other questions; But on this question to come together, in order mainly to bring relief to the people and to see that the relief is properly administered and reaches them. About that Government has not said anything so far.

Now, I would say that some measures are necessary immediately. One is of course that immediate relief measures must be undertaken for providing three things. One is work to the unemployed in those areas, the second is fodder for the livestock and the third is drinking water. Without these three, large numbers of people will not be able to survive.

Naturally talking about the poorer sections, particularly in the rural areas, they must be provided with work and for that work, they must be paid the minimum wages which had been notified by the respective Governments. They must be paid those wages and not sought to be paid sub-standard wages or perhaps as in the case of Rajasthan no wages at all. And the Government of India must give liberal grants to the State Government who are undertaking relief measures on a large scale. Many State Governments have already approached the Centre and many Chief Ministers at least have approached - from what we read in the paper - some asking for Rs. 100 crores, some other asking for Rs 188 crores and so on. So, in any case, the State Governments have to bear the main brunt of organising the relief measures in an affective way with popular participation. But the Centre must be liberal in giving them grants in order to carry out this

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work.

Secondly, in the affected areas I would suggest that all agricultural loans and land revenue which is payable, particularly by the small farmers, marginal farmers and the agricultural labour in these affected areas should be waived. Thirdly, the public distribution system does not work very satisfactorily. There have been many discussions and criticisms on other occasions in this House. But during this drought situation, the public distribution system must be geared up and the Government must provide essential commodities at subsidised rates to the people in the drought affected areas.

Fourthly, I would request the Government to see that all on-going irrigation projects are completed expeditiously. There are so many on-going irrigation projects on paper which make absolutely snail's progress and many of them which should have been completed long long ago are still in the process of construction. Now, in a time like this which is a time of emergency, practically the Government should see to it and take steps to see that all on going irrigation projects are completed speedily. All surface water and sub-soil water resources should be tapped. The Minister of Water Resources I think, should also be a participant in this discussion because we would like to know what they are doing. There is a total failure of mobilisation of the water resources of this country.

Sixthly, some depots should be opened for storing fodder, stocking and storing fodder. This is a very serious matter. Without fodder, thousands of heads of cattle and live stocks are going to parish. You know what the consequence will be for the farmers and for our agricultural operations.

Seventhly, I would demand that the supply of power for agricultural operations and agricultural services for some time at least should be at 50% of the normal rates. Lastly, there is no doubt of the fact which is mentioned so often in speeches and articles

and journals that these floods and droughts which are increasing in our country are basically due to a distortion of the ecological balance. And this ecological balance is being mainly disturbed and destroyed by this large scale denudation of forests, large-scale felling of forests. In some cases, as in Himachal Pradesh, this year because of the indiscriminate felling of trees in the forest on the hill-side, for which many types of people, contractors and big officials and other people are responsible. There is this terrible situation now in Himachal Pradesh. But there are areas where denudation of forest has been going on year after year and the result is what we are now seeing. The Government, the Prime Minister-not only the present but the previous Prime Minister-have spoken very vehemently against this practice of indiscriminate tree felling and destruction of forests. There are Members here who are very much interested in this problem of environment and ecology, who speak about this from time to time. But we do not find any concrete steps being taken, any strict measures being taken to stop this indiscriminate felling of trees or taking punitive action against the people responsible for it, who are doing it for their own profit. So, forests are being destroyed; they are not being replaced by new green vegetation which also the Government should have a long-term plan for. And because of this ecological devastation which is taking place, there is likelihood of future droughts and floods increasing several fold. I would like to know whether the Government has any plan for this. We are going to plant some trees, here outside the Parliament House Annexe. It is very good. But the drought and floods are not coming here. What about stopping the denudation of forest which is going on in a reckless, wanton and criminal manner, I should say, in various parts of the country? There is no plan or programme or any effective measure for the new planting of trees or of other green vegetation. Scientists have said that if we go on like this, in another 15 to 20 years, the forest will be reduced to such a condition that in our country, we may go on looking up to the sky as the Heavens and praying for rain or whatever it is. That is all

the poor farmers can do now. It is because we are at the mercy of nature. But nothing will help or nothing will stop the devastation which is going to come. Therefore, I would plead for this, along with other immediate relief measure. It is the long-term measures of husbanding of water resources and husbanding of various resources and the building of irrigation projects within a time-bound frame, which are absolutely essential. Without that, I am sure, that we are in for a serious trouble, this year and next year. The effects of this will be felt next year also it is for the Government to satisfy the House and the country that they are aware of the urgency of the situation and do not satisfy themselves simply by setting up a panel of some Ministers and saying that this is going to solve the problem. I do not believe it. This is a question on which the entire country should be mobilised and help should be taken, cooperation should be taken from all sections of people, from all organisations, public organisations and Parties which are willing to work together in order to save our people and the country.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH (Mahendragarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am happy that though late—nearly 2 weeks after Parliament met—the House has taken up discussion on the drought situation in the country on a motion moved by Shri Indrajit Gupta. It would have been much better and more in the fitness of things, if the House had addressed itself to this very terrifying situation at the earliest. The agenda, we all know was so far, forced by the Opposition, and we had been discussing certain other matters. I do not mean to say that, they should not have been discussed. They were also important. But probably they could wait, till after we had discussed the emergent problems which are affecting the entire country's population. A discussion on drought affecting the very economy of the country, is never too late. Shri Indrajit Gupta has very ably drawn our attention to the problems that we shall have to face. We may not be feeling them now in the acute matter. But, as you know, the rigours of drought are felt long after the rains have failed when the people have not been able to

raise any crops and when the water level in the ground has receded, our reservoir level goes down which ultimately results in lack of irrigation or insufficient irrigation for the next crop, when there is less generation of electricity on account of shortage of water and when there is scarcity of food, fodder and water, bringing in its wake many more very serious problems like hunger, starvation, epidemics and death of cattle and people all around.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the picture is very terrifying. I am glad that the Government has already shown its awareness of the situation, the Prime Minister having already set up a Cabinet Committee under his Chairmanship. This shows their concern. How far the Government shall be able to take effective steps to mitigate the miseries of the people which can be clearly foreseen remains to be seen. I do not feel happy at all when I hear people talking about drought situation prevailing in the country and at the same time differentiating drought and famine. Many of our State Governments are also making the same mistake. Some of them have not declared famine condition in their states.

I do not know what is the difference between famine and drought. If the farmers, cannot grow any food and fodder due to serious drought.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): That is because of hundred year old Famine Code.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Yes it is because a Famine Code was laid down by the British. Famine means starvation, hunger, deaths from scarcity and starvation. But what creates them, what brings them about? If it is a bad drought as it is already, there should be no difficulty for Government whether in the states or at the Centre declaring famine condition all over the country, except small areas in Bihar and Assam which unfortunately suffer from floods almost every year. Some of the states not only suffer from floods but also from drought simultaneously.

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So, it is recurring feature-floods and droughts, droughts and floods and sometimes both. It has to be admitted that famine has already set in this country. It is about the middle of August, 90 per cent of the rain falls within the months of July and August and there is no hope if it has not rained so far. The farmers may be hoping against hope because farmers live on hopes. A farmer may not be able to gauge the miseries that he is to face. But we should know better, the Government should know better and we should be prepared for what is coming. There is no hope at all now for raising a Bharif crop. Paddy crop has failed and where it has been planted, it has withered. There has been only from 30 per cent to 50 or 60 per cent plantations. On the average, utmost, we can say that only 50 per cent of the area has been planted. The rest could not be planted. What is worse is that fodder cannot be raised now. For Fodder crops of millets, bajra, jowar, and maize. Even more important is grass-if it did not rain in July right from the beginning of July-there is no prospect of grass growing now. That means that our cattle will perish and we cannot imagine the conditions of poor people in cattle-raising States like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Milk production will seriously suffer. We may have, on the average for the country, 30 per cent of our culturable area under irrigation. But, unfortunately, some of our States do not have more than 10-15 per cent of the area under irrigation so far. Madhya Pradesh is one of them. Hardly, 11 per cent of the area is irrigated so far. Then, Orissa is another State where hardly 18 per cent area is irrigated. In Gujarat, not more than 16 or 17 per cent of the area is under irrigation. Rajasthan, being such a large State, is also facing the same situation and 7 per cent of its area is irrigated so far. The question is that as Shri Indrajit Gupta has mentioned-what have we been able to do to take long term measures, so far as utilization of our water resources is concerned, to reduce the calamity arising from drought year after year or every third or fourth year. We had a bad drought in the year 1979-80. It was the worst drought of the century. In 1982-83 again,

there was a bad drought and larger areas were affected-larger areas than the earlier drought of 1979-80. But, we did not feel that the intensity was so much because we had gained some experience in drought management in 1979-80. I happened to be the Minister-in-Charge of Agriculture, responsible for drought management on both occasions-1979-80 and again in 1982-83. The Janata Party went out of office in the beginning of 1980. We had spent about-if I rightly remember -Rs 190 crores or so for drought management in 1980 after we took over.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: In one year?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: No. In the post monsoon period. After the rains failed, after the end of December. Then, our Government took over and we spent altogether Rs 300 crores or so for the drought of 1979-80. What I want to tell you is that the real problems arise after the Kharif season in the post monsoon months. When the rabi crop cannot be grown; then the shortage of water is felt, surface water as well as ground water; reduced irrigation; shortage of power; and then when two crops fail and even drinking water is not available, what will be the position? You will remember in 1980 we had to carry drinking water to the interior of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh not only by military trucks and all other available transport but also by railways. It is required a very big management effort. In 1979-80, our foodgrain production suddenly dropped from 132 million tonnes which were produced in 1978-79 to 109 million tonnes-a drop of 22 million tonnes at once-and then we picked up again. We had to help the farmers grow the other crops afterwards; it again went up to 129 million tonnes and then next year to 133 million tonnes. But in 1982-83, again, we came down to 129 million tonnes. It was a bad drought, but because of good management, the fall was only four million tonnes in 1982-83 as compared to 1981-82 earlier the fall was 2 million tonnes. And if the next crops were much better and production suddenly jumped up, that was also on account of good management of the drought year. After the drought of 1982-83,

in the very next year, in 1983-84, we could produce 153 million tonnes. But after that we have been producing 148, 149, 150 million tonnes. If we do not take effective steps whatever we have been able to achieve earlier will all go waste. It is necessary to stabilise production, to keep our food reserves, buffer stock, at the level which is required for this country. We shall have to remember that, if there is a good crop, good harvest, in one or two particular years, we should not talk about glut in agricultural production. We have not yet reached that stage. When we produced 84 lakh tonnes of sugar in 1983-84, everybody started saying, "There is a glut of sugar in this country; we cannot export". When we had good food grain crops in the last few years, we said, "We cannot maintain such a large buffer-stock". Our stocks have now started depleting. I do not know if it is correct, what Mr. Indrajit Gupta said, 23 million tonnes. The Agriculture Minister or the Food Minister should know better. I think, it has come down. 23 million tonnes were two or three months back...

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Buffer-stock?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Yes.

SHRI INDRAJIT SINGH: It is 23.50 million tonnes.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I mean 23.50 million tonnes, the buffer-stock. I do not think that it is at that level now. It is lower than that. And with the kharif crop which is mainly rice being what it is, we may be short of rice, we may be short of wheat also next year. I do not want that we should create panic. There should be no talk about saving money by reducing the buffer stock of this country. Till such time as we are sure that we have reached a stage where we can stabilise our agricultural production whether it is food, pulses, oilseeds or whatever it is. We have been talking about oilseeds production, stopping the imports. We all know, we had reached about 132 lakh tonnes of production in oilseeds in 1983-84. Next year, it came down to 116 lakh tonnes, suddenly a drop of

16 lakh tonnes.

Pulses and oilseeds came from dryland areas, unirrigated areas. 70% of oilseeds and pulses come from unirrigated areas. What is the real problem? The real problem is that we have not been able to pay adequate attention to our rainfed unirrigated areas.

About quantum jump, as we talk about in agricultural production after the advent of Green Revolution in 1966, 80% of the increased food production has come from irrigated areas only. Only 20% has come from unirrigated areas. And the unirrigated area is 70% of the cropped areas of this country. If we do not think of increasing the per unit field of dryland, we cannot hope to be self-sufficient, either in foodgrains or in pulses and oilseeds. What is required, apart from the short-term measures which Shri Gupta has talked about, some long term measures I will mention briefly. We have to immediately provide fodder to save cattle. At present already in the neighbourhood of Delhi, fodder is being sold at Rupee 1/- per kg.

AN HON. MEMBERS: More than that.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Maybe, since yesterday or day before yesterday. I am talking about the price at Gurgaon next to Delhi. It may be Rs. 60 a maund or maybe Rs 70 a maund in Rajasthan because all this fodder is being taken to Rajasthan.

Now, Rajasthan cattle will perish if something is not done on war-footing. The cattle wealth of Rajasthan existed because even if there was scanty rains, sand dune became green and the cattle could survive on grass for 3 to 4 months. Even people could have drinking water. This year have to be provided facilities for grazing. But where? In the earlier drought, we requested Madhya Pradesh Government and Gujarat Government to allow Rajasthan cattle to graze there. But now, Madhya Pradesh is equally bad. That is also badly affected. Gujarat also is the same. Where can cattle go? This drought may ruin



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our dairy industry.

Punjab is already short of water. Punjab won't be able to grow much paddy. Punjab grows little surplus fodder except from wheat and paddy straw which is not palatable for cattle.

It is very very grim picture. We have to think of the next crop. But before that, we have to see that the people and cattle do not perish during the next few months. We shall have to provide loans and employment to people. But we also have to see that food and water is available in all parts of the country. To prevent starvation deaths anywhere there will be large scale migrations. It will not serve any purpose to distribute foodgrains free, because that will result in malpractices. If the foodgrains are sold at low prices the contractors take it to the black market the official agencies make away with it. You cannot feed the people on cooked food also. So, the only other way is to provide work to the people. Provide employment and then against employment wages provide subsidised foodgrains so that the people who work will take it and it is properly utilised and not misused. That requires a lot of effort. The Agriculture Ministry and the Rural Development Ministry are not the only two Ministries, the finances have to be found. Therefore, Finance, Irrigation, Planning, Energy and Food and Civil Supplies Ministries have to be involved. The Cabinet has already set up a Committee. But what about the States and Districts?

There has been a talk in this country from time to time about farmers being rich. I hope this drought will open the eyes of those people who have not been able to see properly. Let those who talk about rich farmers living in villages be taken to these villages and made to stay there for four or five months. Let the Planners also be deputed to the States, let the Senior Officers of the Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development, Finance, Planning, Water Resources, each one of them be put in charge of these drought affected districts if you want to

manage. Let them stay there. Let them coordinate the efforts there at the district levels. That will show that we are tackling it on a war footing in the field and not here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please conclude.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: If you say yes, he will carry on!

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Was that done in 1977-80?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: No. It was not done then in 1979. We had deputed senior officers of the Ministry from 1980. They were put in charge of each State, there was coordination between these Ministries Concerned, 10 days in a month, these senior officers had to tour those States, come back and report to me.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Even that method is discontinued now.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: That is discontinued.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Because the portfolios are frequently being changed!

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: May be, better methods will not be evolved.

I have no dispute with those who think that farmers are rich. The farmers also hope very foolishly that they are going to be rich. The only difference in thinking is that some urban people, most of our bureaucrats, planners, industrialists and the businessmen think that all farmers are rich; but a farmer, even if he is the smallest farmer always thinks that he is going to be rich next year. That next year never comes. You cannot imagine the miseries of even a large farmer. And who is a large farmer these days when ceilings have been imposed? No farmer is rich these days unless he has got other property. A person having a farm for making black money white is not a farmer. Think of a person whose livelihood is farming. I am reminded of some poet's lines:

"Some people tell us there is no hell,  
But they have never farmed, so how  
can they tell?"

It is the outlook of such people which has probably been responsible for fixing priorities wrongly in the past. Those priorities will have to be readjusted. We have to take preventive measures to stop the recurrence of drought year after year.

As I mentioned, some of States have small areas under irrigation. Why? Orissa is floating on water, Assam is floating on water. In Assam not even twenty per cent area is irrigated. In Orissa also, only 17 to 18 per cent area is irrigated in Maharashtra on 12%. Why? It is because our surface and ground water resources have not been utilized. We have been thinking of large projects, which have a long gestation period. We shall have to find an answer against droughts and even floods in small reservoirs to store water small projects giving immediate results. That will have to be done. We should have even for a part of the village, say fifty or hundred acres of land. Life saving irrigation projects.

Four thousand water sheds were identified in 1982-83 during the drought. We had allocated funds. The idea was to try to conserve every drop of rain water in dry areas so that there could be small storage for cattle, small irrigation schemes etc. I would like to know from the Agriculture Minister in his reply what is the amount of money that has been allocated to complete those small water sheds projects.

DR. G. S. DHILLON: Not much difference from your time.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: But we had started. After that three years have passed. What has been done? No difference means nothing much has been done.

DR. G. S. DHILLON: I am happy that you are passing on the guidelines to me.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We made the guidelines and these were passed on to you. I am not blaming you. I am blaming the

Finance, the Planning Commission, who have not been allocating sufficient funds for these things.... (*Interruptions*). I am trying to cover not any particular areas, but I am trying to speak on behalf of friends of all the States.

This is a national problem. It is the concern of the Opposition as well as of the Treasury Benches. Everybody is deeply concerned. Mere discussion to meet the present situation will be of no use unless this House gives a directive to find out a permanent solution to this problem. It may take two or three days but we should evolve a strategy. I hope the Agriculture Minister will take our views into consideration; the Cabinet Committee will take our views into consideration and will evolve some definite long term strategy, not only for this year but for the benefit of the coming generations also.

17.00 hrs.

At this point, I would like to mention that liberal relief is provided by the Centre to the States. I know a lot of money is given. There is no dispute about it. In 1982-83, if I remember correctly, Rs. 440 crores or so were given as drought relief to various States. Even in 1983-84, which was considered as good agricultural year, nearly Rs. 200 crores were spent on drought relief measures. So, in terms of money value, those Rs. 440 crores would come to about Rs. 1,000 crores or so now. If this amount is properly utilised it will suffice, but if it is not utilised properly, then you may not perhaps be able to save the lives, be it human beings or cattle.

Another thing which I would like to mention for the serious consideration of the Government and House, is that we are discriminating between the misery due to floods and disaster due to drought. Famine, of course, can occur both even be on account of drought and floods. If in case of damage due to floods, Government of India can meet 75 per cent of the expenditure on flood relief measure, why has it adopted different rules for drought relief measures? Is it because in floods people and cattle are washed away and the death is sudden, while in case of drought it is a lingering painful death?

[*Translation*]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer): Sir, I had raised this point many times before the ex-minister, in this House and also in the 7th Finance Commission, but he could not do anything in this regard.

[*English*]

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Because I had taken it up and I had myself written to the Eighth Finance Commission, that is why I am mentioning it here. Do you have any objection to it?

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN: You were an utter failure.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Yes, I had been an utter failure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please address it to Chair.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: In that case, you better take over as the Minister of Agriculture. You are talking about Agriculture Minister being an utter failure. But I am mentioning those things, for which you and I had all along been trying. Why should you object?

Sir, we had written to the Eighth Finance Commission in this regard. Would the Minister for Agriculture be kind enough to inform us whether the Eighth Finance Commission had changed anything in the pattern of relief to be provided? If it is not sufficient, can you consider what we are suggesting now? Please take it up with the Ninth Finance Commission or the Salve Commission. Take it up again with the present Commission and please see to it that relief is provided for drought also, in such a manner that the States find it possible to meet the needs of the people affected by drought. That is all I am submitting.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

17.06 hrs.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: If you refer to 8th Finance Commission, you will have to take a decision!

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I am speaking about the Ninth Finance Commission now. Late Shri Chavan was associated with the Eighth Finance Commission. He was its Chairman.

These are some very important aspects which need deep thinking. We have to think over these problems continuously and again and again. After all, why are we not able to stop the fury of the floods? Why can't we stop 90% of our surplus water flowing into the sea? It is mainly on account of shortage of finance. Why are we not able to utilise our water resources properly? Again, it is due to shortage of finances. It is for the Government, for this House and for all of us to see that priorities are fixed in such a manner that the largest number of people in this country, viz. the agriculturists, people living in villages comprising 75 percent of our total population, will receive a fair share in development as compared to other sectors such as industry. I am submitting all this only with a view that these people should be able to live good lives. I do not understand why some of my friends are taking an objection to it.

As stated earlier, we have to take certain short term measures immediately. What is necessary is that the money should be utilised properly. People get fodder supplied through contractors, when there is a drought. These contractors bring fodder which is not edible and most of the money is swindled in this manner. Why cannot the Ministry of Agriculture suggest to the States that the transport subsidy should be given to the farmers in cash so that they can buy their own fodder? If this is done, they do not have to depend on contractors. These are very small things which can be done easily.

Now I want to say something about crop loans. Small takavi loans amounting to Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 are given to people and half of the amount is taken away by the distributing agencies. When a calamity occurs, Government of India announces that the recovery will be postponed. At times, interest is paid by the Central Government to the States on behalf of the farmers. In this way, some relief is, no doubt, provided. But ultimately, when recovery takes place, it is a double burden on the farmer, because when the next crop is raised, he has to pay his past dues as also the fresh ones which he again gets in the shape of seed, fodder, fertilizer and other things. It will be a good gesture if all short duration crop loans to farmers for six months, are remitted in drought affected areas alongwith irrigation and power dues. I know that Government supplies drinking water and other essential commodities. A lot is being done and it will have to be stepped up. People cannot be allowed to die. We are confident that effective steps will be taken by the Government. The time is passing. In this matter, there should be no delay. I hope, the Government machinery has already been geared up. What is required in the long term is a change of outlook of the planners with regard to agriculture. Agriculture has to be treated on par with industry. That is the only thing which can help the farming sector in the long run. Need for credit, remunerative price, export subsidies, cheap inputs, power, availability of water and protection of agriculture as an industry, will have to be taken care of. Full utilisation of the irrigation potential which has already been created should be ensured. I think it is round about 70 million hectares. But I doubt, even 50 or 55 million hectares is being utilised. This gap has to be bridged. It will need money. More irrigation channels have to be constructed so that at least some areas get permanent relief.

Better use of land and water resources and all these things are general needs which the Government is aware of. What is needed in the creation of awareness—awareness in all agencies of the Government, all over the country—that it is everybody's responsibility to help as this period is going to be a very

hard and tough period, not only for the farmer but also for trade, industry, labour and the people in general.

Agriculture is the mother of industry also. Nobody can prosper without agriculture. The Government also has to acknowledge that the economy of the country depends upon agriculture. Monsoon is called the Finance Minister of the Country. If monsoon fails, our economy will suffer. Our economy has already suffered because of this drought. To put it on the rails, agriculture will have to be saved by helping the farmers in every way. Whatever money we can fund, we should spend it on relief, to be able to grow better crops and to live through this most difficult period which is lying ahead.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (Dhenkanal):  
Sir, I compliment my friend Mr. Indrajit Gupta for having been successful in the third week of Parliament to get this discussion in the order paper.

My compliments to the hon. Minister, who has given us a candid statement of the actual facts of the failure of monsoon. But apart from giving us facts about the wayward monsoon which has resulted in only 10 out of 35 meteorological sub-divisions having had satisfactory rainfall, the facts still remains that the delay in rainfall, although might have been considered adequate according to the meteorologists has affected among other things, paddy transplantation.

The delay and the gap in the rainfall in some of the States, like my own State of Orissa, has had prolonged dry spells have resulted in evaporation, which has also affected paddy transplantation. It has been postponed twice in Orissa. Therefore, a State like Orissa was particularly referred to by our former Minister, the soldier Parliamentarian Captain Rao Birendra Singh who has a very intimate knowledge of Orissa too. This is a State which from 1964, apart from drought and floods, is also beset by cyclones. Sir, these three calamities have not only eroded the financial capability and the resource mobilization of the State of Orissa, but it is a State which has the largest

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number of people living below the poverty line. Sir, you can imagine the distress and the plight of a State like Orissa. Like Orissa, we have Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Gujarat, all having a substantial population and eastern U.P. as my friend Mr. Ranajit Singh Ji says—all these are areas which are very hard hit and in distress. Sir, for the last 20 years, as far as my memory serves me right, not a single year has gone when we have not discussed drought, floods or cyclones in this very august House or in the other House, viz. Rajya Sabha.

The Minister has been very prompt in convening meetings with the State Government. He has also issued various guidelines, instructions and given advice.....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You try to request the Minister for more funds from the Finance Ministry. Nothing can be done without money.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, Will you allow me to speak?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes; you can speak.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Sir, is the Minister walking out in protest?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is going to the Finance Minister to get money. Don't worry.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: He has been very prompt in holding these meetings. But if one goes through his statement, the entire onus of responsibility lies on the State Government. The Prime Minister has also been extremely quick in having the crisis Management Group in the Cabinet. I do hope that a systems approach and an integrated approach will be brought in to this very serious question of drought, because it is not only a question of the Agriculture Ministry being concerned, as the distinguished speakers Mr. Indrajit Gupta and Rao Birendra Singh have mentioned; the Water Resources, the

Harijan and Tribal Welfare Departments of the State, the Power Department, the Welfare Department, the Cooperation Department, the cooperatives, the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission have to be involved in this entire exercise, if we have to make a dent.

It is no use just reacting and responding to a situation as and when it develops, because we have been beset with these calamities. I refrain from using the word 'natural calamities', because it is of a natural calamity. All the three, at least the two, viz. drought and floods, are as a result of man's interference with the ecology, environment and nature.

In a previous debate also, the same thing had been raised when the Environment Bill was being discussed. In the United Nations Conference on Renewable Energy held at Nairobi in 1981, it has been said that if the present trend continues, as has been continuing, in India, by the end of the century, that is by the 21st century, South-East Asia and Afghanistan will be turned into a dust-bowl. Even Cherapunji, the place which has the highest incidence of rainfall, will also become a desert like the Rajasthan desert.

Although for this present drought we are trying to take certain immediate and short-term measures like trying to tap sub-surface and underground water resources, to give ways and means and margin money to State Governments for them to do scientific water management, because the Kharif crop is the only crop which is income generating to the farmer; and as has been rightly pointed out, 72 per cent of our kharif cultivation is rain fed; and this year, we have had all the more serious drought condition and serious failure of rain. Therefore, this phenomenon is going to result not only in distress but impoverishment and lack of income for the farmer. Now, we will have to do something concrete and very fast for these farmers not only to tide over the situation till the rabi programme but also, otherwise, because with husbanding our water resources at the moment which the hon. Minister has pointed out in this

statement of his, that he has issued instructions, guidelines to the State Governments to conserve water for the rabi programme, this is only a psychological effect which will have on the mind of the farmers for their own economic needs for their tiding over the situation till the rabi programme. We shall have to do something very concrete for them.

Now the States which have been hit by the drought continuously for the last 3-4 years are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and for the first time, we find Punjab is also short of sub soil and under ground water. Punjab and Haryana which are under the grip of drought also were the granary of India; and to add to them is also Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. Sir, this is a very bleak picture before us. Leaving long-term measures, even immediate future is not very bright for our People; and with 82 per cent of our People living in the rural areas, all of them not only have been bit by this drought but their income generating capacity has also come down.

Now as far as providing employment and gainful employment is concerned, one thing must be borne in mind that for the last 20-25 years we have been having these programmes and as late as 1985, when there was a serious drought, the Prime Minister had instructed Both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies to take advantage of the food security which we had; and this food security is because of our intrepid and courageous farmers who have been facing the vagary of the monsoon and the vagary of the weather and have been producing, crops, in spite of drought, a record foodgrains output. Therefore, supply management of foodgrains or cheaper foodgrains to the weaker section of the society could be possible to a certain extent. I say it with a qualifying remark because most of the organisations incharge of public distribution specially in the tribal areas, specially in the ITDP blocks, specially in the Mada area are either headless or there is no specific responsibility or accountability fixed on any one.

Only day before yesterday we had a Private Members' Resolution and the hon. Deputy Minister for Social Welfare admitted that even in a place like Koraput which has more than 80 per cent tribals, the ITDP blocks were not functional in 1985 because nobody knew who was going to do what. So, this sort of delightful vagueness can land us in serious trouble. Every day we read newspapers and come to know about the people who die of starvation deaths in the tribal areas; whether it is Andhra Pradesh; whether it is Orissa; whether it is Rajasthan; whether it is Gujarat; but, it is promptly, of course, denied by the State Governments, because no one admits starvation deaths.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Some say they die of heart attacks.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Some say that they die of over eating; it could not be more ironical than that; whether it is mal-nutrition or due to taking sub-standard or bad food, the fact remains that our people have died. In fact, I do not want to blame either the State Governments or the Press, but the fact is that we, Members of Parliament, can only go to our constituencies and see for ourselves. or read about it in the newspapers regarding the areas outside our constituencies. Yesterday, in one of the news items, Special Relief Commissioner of a particular State.....

AN HON. MEMBER: Orissa.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: I would not like to bring in the name; it is not fair; it has come out in the Press. He has been held guilty and there is a *prime facie* case held by none other than by the Speaker of the Assembly and a House Committee of all parties, the ruling party and the Opposition have held him guilty and there is a *prima facie* case of negligence leading to starvation deaths. This is a very sorry state of affairs.

I think all of us should hang down our heads in shame because we are part of this very system and this being the supreme

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forum of parliamentary democracy we have to reflect the views of the people. But let us not forget, or let it not be said, that while we are attacking this very problem, while we are taking certain temporary measures or short term measures people are dying because we have failed to take long term measures or evolve a permanent solution to drought and flood. Of course, there can be no permanent solution to cyclones. They occur due to pressure variations; wherever there is low pressure wind and gale come to form high pressure areas, and low pressure develops because of the indiscriminate felling of the trees and destruction of the forests.

In such a bleak atmosphere we are discussing this. I would like to offer a few suggestions for the hon. Minister to ponder over and to use his good offices, because none of the other Ministers are present here.

We are now in the middle of the Seventh Plan. It is high time for us to take a mid-term appraisal and I think that the Planning Commission does have a mid-term appraisal of this Plan because it is two and a half years since the Seventh Plan has been brought out or a little less than two years, if one goes by the fact that the National Development Council concurred in the Plan only in October 1985. We have to see whether the monies allocated for the medium and major projects have been completely spent and how those projects can be completed expeditiously so that at least 28 per cent of the land which is under assured irrigation can be augmented.

In my own State, and in my own constituency the Rengali multi-purpose project as started with Rs. 230 crores but the cost now has gone up to an astronomical figure of Rs. 700 crores. The barrage is complete but there is no drainage and there is no canal system. The State Government of Orissa does not have the wherewithal to complete them because of its scarce resources. Even if it tries to develop the system, the funds are neither compensated, nor reimbursed by the Planning Commission or the Central Gov-

ernment. Therefore it is a difficult matter to develop and it is no use giving doles. That does not offer any permanent solution. So is the case with the Kosi and Gandak projects. As members of the Estimates Committee and the Public Accounts Committee we have visited them.

So far as the question of Salal project is concerned, which is a geological wonder, in the First Plan it was estimated to cost Rs. 7 crores but now it has gone up to Rs. 500 crores. So is the case of Nagarjunasagar Project. Therefore, these are the things which we have to look at and take corrective measures to ensure that the money is not left unutilised. But the people should get the benefit of these projects.

Another point is the minor and medium projects. According to the present rules that are prevalent whenever they are coming up in the command areas of major projects which have been lingering from the First Plan, right up to the Seventh Plan and they are never completed. The people of those areas are also deprived of having the benefit of those minor irrigation projects. Those people will never get water for some years. I think an entire generation will probably be wiped out before water reaches those areas. Therefore, this aspect must be looked into, whether there is medium irrigation or not, or major irrigation projects are there or not. If there are perennial streams then cross-bunds and small dams could be put up where areas with smaller ayacut or some smaller catchment areas can be developed. Such smaller areas can be better financed because of the erratic behaviour of the monsoons because water is not evenly distributed, especially during the months of June to October. It is neither equitably distributed nor is sufficient for irrigation. Therefore, one feels that there are some areas which are drought-prone areas and drought and flood simultaneously occur also because of the untimely rains and failure of rains. This aspect must be taken into consideration because ultimately it is the people who are suffering, with a hope of getting a medium project or a major project, which is

capital intensive. When there is a failure of rain, they become useless, leading to power shortage. When there is rain, it is not necessary at all excepting generating power and sometimes like Mahanadi, it also results in floods. Sir, there are many medium irrigation projects and minor irrigation projects, which are held up here because of the Forest Conservation Act. Environment clearance has not been given.

Sir, when the last Environment Bill was going on, I had quoted an example of my own constituency-Sapua Barjore, an integrated medium project. For a long time, letters of proposals from the State Government are lying with the Environmental Ministry awaiting clearance.

It is very important that impact analysis of environment of other developmental project is necessary, but that does not mean that we keep on sitting over the files for clearing the project, which could have given quicker benefit with far less amount of investment. So, the fact remains that whenever there is drought or floods, in the last five years figures say that more than Rs. 2000 crores have been given as relief for floods and more than Rs. 1,874 crores has been given as drought relief from 1980 to 1986. Probably, these Rs. 4000 crores, which we have given as relief, have not given any permanent solution or assets to the community. We could have built so many minor irrigation tanks, cross bunds, we could have extended so many field channels and we could have repaired lift irrigation points. Today, we are thinking of tapping even the sources for lift irrigation points. Now how do these lift irrigation points function without the generation of electricity? The drought has affected most of the hydel projects. Today, there is shortage of electricity everywhere including Delhi. Therefore, Sir just having wishful thinking and pious hope of giving guidelines and advising the State Governments will not become a reality because of the very fact that the failure of the monsoon has affected even the generation of electricity. The failure of the monsoon coupled with destruction of forest and flora has resulted in the water

table going down. Therefore, tapping the existing water sources below the ground level is also becoming increasingly difficult even in fertile places like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere.

Sir, as I said, an integrated approach will take care of the question of husbanding and the management of the water resources because, in the management of the water resources, we have been rather tardy as sixty four per cent of our water resources flows down to the sea without being of any use to man or beast Apart from that, the green revolution which we talk about and of which we take pride, is only in the irrigated areas.

Now, the need of the hour is to go in for dry land farming, in areas where there is no assured irrigation facilities and which is rain fed. Sir, dry land farming based on such vagaries of the monsoon are far more difficult and far more complex than the green revolution, which has assured irrigation facilities. Therefore, the Agriculture Ministry in 1986 had formulated a scheme for the north eastern sector of India-Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and the seven sisters, and it would be the point of focus for dry land farming, for pulses and for other kharif crop, which do not require so much of water. This point, I hope, will be taken into account seriously because dry land farming without assured irrigation facilities and with vagaries of the monsoon can be a dismal failure, and would lead to a further distress to the people. This very year, people, who have been encouraged to take seeds from the Seed Corporation, have also run into rough weather, because sometimes the Seeds Corporation do give them seeds which get spoiled by the time it reaches the cultivator. In my own district and in my own constituency, such a thing happened and we had to seek the intervention of the Agriculture Minister of the State to see that the farmers were not penalised. Since the nationalised banks had been the guarantor, they bore the loss. It may not be possible if a large number of people are thus affected because most of the nationalised banks may not be in a position to re-



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imburse that money. This is a potato growing area, a place called Bangur Singha, which is known for the past many years for its potato. But this time, the farmers were totally at the receiving end and there was total failure of the potato crop. Same is the case of sugarcane, cotton and groundnut in those areas where these have been newly introduced. If the agricultural inputs are not proper and timely, then again it will be a set back to the farmers, who have been brave and courageous and who have been fighting the vagaries and irregularity of the monsoons and still producing for the country so that the country achieves the food security which it has achieved over the last few years.

The other point which I would like to just hurriedly go through, because I do not want to take much time of the House, is the socio-economic affects which it has as a result of water shortages. One is the health aspect which affects specially those who are the poorer sections of the people, those who are suffering from malnutrition and this leads to water-borne and water shortage phenomena like malaria, cholera, diarrhoea leading to death which can be attributable to the prolonged spell of dryness as well as malnutrition. Then there is the economically marginalised population which is pauperised. They are forced out of productivity and production processes and therefore, they become an economic burden on the society. Then there is the aggravation by the spread of disease. Then there is the relief expenditure which is non-productive. Neither it produces any permanent assets for the community nor for the country. Then, there is the mal-distribution of the water resources which has adversely affected many States. This has to be looked into because some of the States which are in the lowest rung of the economic ladder and which do not have the resource mobilisation position, must be brought up; otherwise the regional imbalance which we are committed to remove through our planning process, will only be a laudable objective and the regional imbalance will only grow rather than be removed.

A word about the drought prone areas programme. The areas have been identified many years back. The drought prone area programme also looks into the entire environmental health of the area which is primarily responsible for the loss of rain or failure of the rain. We must take a fresh look to this and see that the areas which are under chronic drought condition and those which are flood prone and are not included in this programme, are included so that the people benefit from this programme which has been doing fairly satisfactorily.

We must give purchasing power to the people, who have been struck by drought because the economic necessities of life cannot be acquired till the rabi season is over and it is still three or four months for this period to be over. In this period, the farmers and the people who depend on agriculture like agriculture labour and even the white-collared workers who also supplement their income from farming, will also face the difficulties unless we provided them gainful employment and other avenues for improving their productivity.

I would like to conclude here by saying that the entire thing has to be taken on a war footing for the immediate time because war footing, as it denotes, is a crisis management within a short and quick time. But apart from the fact that whenever there is drought or flood or cyclone, we always rise to the occasion and try to grapple with the problem. But immediately it is over, we tend to go a bit slow on these aspects and we wait for the next drought or the cyclone or the flood for us to be roused to take it on a war footing. Therefore, the only solution to this is a permanent solution and for this I agree with my hon. friend Mr. Indrajit Gupta that water management is the key to India's survival and development and the ecological balance and the environment protection is what is complementary to the management of water resources. Thank you very much.

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY  
(Hindupur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard the speaker who have spoken before

me. They have given very very valuable suggestions. Man is trying to gain control over the nature. Science has developed to a very great extent so that its control over the nature is almost complete. But in spite of making various strides in the scientific research, nature retains lot of control. That shows how pigmies we are. In spite of our efforts, we are not able to gain much control over the nature.

Now we are having a discussion on the severe drought conditions prevailing in the country. Seventy per cent of the country is affected by drought, that is, in these areas the rainfall has been very very scanty It has been very erratic and is not very useful, not useful at all for cultivation or for raising the crops. The scanty rainfall has thrown away the agriculturists into a very very peculiar situation where their capacity to raise crops has been curtailed. It has been said that out of 35 meteorological stations in the country, 25 stations have reported less rainfall by about 20-25 per cent. Only in ten stations in the whole country, the rainfall has been reported to be normal. So, when the rainfall has gone down by about 20 to 30 per cent, we are facing this peculiar situation where about 70 per cent of the area and seventy per cent of the population is affected. We are facing a very grave situation where the foodgrains are not likely to be available in future for all the people. Edible oils may become a problem. In the public distribution system also there may be so many defects and the common man will suffer a lot during this drought year. So, when such a thing is going to be there. We have to consider the effect of drought on all these things. No doubt every speaker is trying to say that the drought has pervaded the whole country. But the effect of drought in different parts of the country is entirely different, the miseries of the affected persons are entirely different. So, the Government has to take into consideration the extent of drought that each State is facing. The situations are entirely different. In each State it differs from the other States. Even in the same State, there is lot of difference in different areas because the rainfall itself has not at all been uniform. So, we are likely to face a very peculiar

situation because there has been 20 to 25 per cent less rainfall than the normal. When there is twenty-five per cent less rainfall, we say that this drought is through India. But is it a correct yardstick to be taken into consideration? This is a matter for the consideration of the Government. I would like to say that there are areas where the rainfall has been more than 1,000 mm. or more. In certain areas the rain fall is just 500 mm or so. In areas where the rain fall is 1000 mm, there also people are able to earn their livelihood. They are able to live. In areas where the rain fall is 500 mm there too people are making some livelihood. People live there. But when there is a variation of 20 to 25 % rain fall, you have to consider the effect drought produces. They suffer. In a place where the rain fall is 1000 mm, when there is variation of 25% to 30% there at least the average rain fall then comes to 700 mm. With 700 mm average rain fall a year, those people will be in a position to have one crop or the other. They can have their livelihood. The effect of drought is not so severe on them. The misery of those people will be minimal. Those people will be able to have some sustenance.

Now take the case of areas where there is rain fall of just 500 mm or so a year. Take for example- portions of Rajasthan, Karnataka, Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh, where the average rain fall is just between 500 to 600 mm. When there is variation of 25% to 30%, they will hardly get rain fall of 350 to 400 mm. There are States where rainfall is 300 mm after variation of 25% to 30%. Do you not think that they are suffering a lot? They cannot make both ends meet. Common man is finding the situation very very difficult. Some remedy has to be given to them. some relief has to be given to them.

Please-see the state of those people living in areas where rain fall is just about 250 mm to 300 mm. What is the fate of those people-intensity of drought, effect of drought on these persons with scanty rain fall, because variation of 25% to 30% is common. What is the net effect variation produces?

With 700 mm, you will be able to have

[Shri K. Ramachandra Reddy]

some produce, some kind of crop—if not Kharif, rabi. The underground water level will not be so low as to get water. Water pressure is all right. Drinking water is slightly better as compared to the other areas with lesser rain fall.

Please come to the area with just 500 mm rain fall for the whole year with variation of 25 to 30%. They cannot get more than 300 mm rain fall a year. With this can they be able to reap any crop? Is there possibility of raising crop, rabi crop? What is the effect on drinking water? What is the effect on cattle? What is the effect on fodder? So, you cannot equate these two areas.

You cannot give relief in the same manner for these two people. You have to make a differentiation between these two areas. What is the impact on these areas as far as these areas are concerned. Where the rain fall is very very meagre, the impact is very very severe. The drinking water problem is very very severe. People will not be able to do anything. Agricultural labour—small and marginal farmers, they will be completely out of work. Their misery is beyond human comprehension. When such areas are there, Government has definitely to consider what is the remedy to be given. You are not to give the same remedy to both. You cannot equate the two. You must treat those areas where rain fall is scanty and people are living in such a condition for so many years. You must give priority to such areas and see that something is done immediately.

The second point is—there are areas where drought is for the last one year only. Take for example, U.P., Haryana, Punjab. The drought situation in these areas has come this year only. In the previous years they had very good crops. They had probably saved some of those things. So, those areas are there. Now you take Rayalaseema, Rajasthan, Karnataka, some parts in Tamilnadu—these are the areas where drought has been persisting for the last ten years. Do you equate these two conditions? Do you consider these two conditions should

be dealt with in the same manner? What is the intensity of drought condition? What is the plight of these people who have been faced with drought situation continuously for the last to ten years? But what is the effort on these areas where the drought is just only for one year? So, the Government has to consider this factor and see what are the remedies to be done, what are the relief to be given, what are the help to be given and what is the amount to be allotted to these people. So, Sir, you have to take into account these factors into consideration and make a distinction and differentiation of these areas and understand the difficulties of these two different areas and give help according to the magnitude of the condition in these areas. There are areas where irrigation facilities are very very large. About 40% or 50% or 60% of the lands in these areas are under irrigation. But there are a number of areas in the country where only 10% to 15% of the land is getting below irrigation facilities and for the rest, people in these areas depend on their tanks for rain-fed crops for irrigation purposes. So, you take these two cases into account so far as irrigation sources are concerned. There is a reduction in water resources that is, of 20% to 30% in some areas. You saying "what is going to happen to Punjab, Haryana and U.P.?" It is just 20% or 30% decrease in water resources. What is going to happen? I can understand the plight of those people who have been endowed with nature with a lot of luck and they are facing this situation. I can understand this point. But at the same time I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the areas where the irrigation is just about 10% to 12%, not more than 10% to 12% and for irrigation of their lands they depend on tanks and wells. In the cases where there are areas in the country, where the tanks have not received water for the past 10 years, for decades the tanks were almost dried and in other parts of the country where irrigation depends on well, what will happen to those people? For example, you take the case of Chittoor and Anantapur Districts in Andhra Pradesh. There are no permanent sources of irrigation in these two districts and just 10% to 12% of the areas is irrigated. People

are depending on these tanks and wells for irrigation. Chittoor and Anantapur districts in Andhra Pradesh have got 1,50,000 wells and in these two districts the rain-fall is very very scanty. The average rain-fall is about 544 mm. For the past 10 years or so, these districts have not received even this average quantity of rain. They received about 300 or 400 mm. So, for the whole decade, all these tanks have dried up. No tanks have received any water. For the whole decade, people have been prevented from raising any crop under the tank irrigation system.

The next thing is that as far as 1,50,000 wells are concerned, they have completely dried up because of scanty rainfall that has been persisting year after year, almost 90% of the wells have gone dry. There is a very meagre quantity of water in these wells. Even this meagre quantity of water is not sufficient for the lands that they will have to irrigate. It will hardly be sufficient for 10% or 15% of their lands. Even for this 10% or 15%, water is not available this year.

I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister a very sad state of affairs that the wells in these areas have gone dry for 10 years now and in a number of wells grass has grown and also in a number of wells even trees have grown, for about 6 ft. to 7ft. high trees have grown in these wells. You can understand the plight of the people and there have been failure of rains for a continuous period of 5 to 10 years and under these conditions only the trees will grow in the wells. Then only, trees will grow in the well. In such a situation, what is the remedy that you are going to give to these people, these hapless people? Please compare these people with the people in those areas where 40% or 50% irrigation facilities are already available but this year, because the rain has been scanty, drought is there. Do you equate these two types of people in the same way and then provide the same remedy and relief? So, the two things are entirely different. The way in which you have to tackle this problem should be entirely different from the way in which you have to tackle in other drought prone areas where it is only there for

one year or two. No doubt, they are providing food for the whole of India. But the people in this area also have to live and they have to make a living. In spite of scanty rain, in spite of devastating circumstances due to continuous drought and famine conditions, people have been living in the area. Most of the dry crops in the area are completely rain fed. Whenever there is rain, some crop is raised and if there is no rain for the next three or four weeks, these crops wither away. So the agriculturists are forced to spend more amount for crops. He goes to land lord or businessman or some bank and borrows some money from them and then he raises some crops. After raising his crop, if it withers away, he loses the crop and his debt also increases. He has to discharge the debt borrowed from the businessman or the bank because they will not keep quiet. So, the condition in this area where rain fed crops are raised is completely different from the condition in the irrigated areas. The two things are entirely different.

So, when such is the case, I request the Minister to send a team of experts, not routine drought assessment team. Let them go to the areas, let them see the wells where trees have grown, grass has grown and let them see the number of wells which have completely gone dry. Let them see the fields which have not been irrigated for the past 5 or 6 years. Let them see what is the effect of this continuous drought on these people. And then, let them come forward with some scheme as to how to save these people, how to save their cattle-heads. So, a comprehensive plan has to be drawn. Then only, you have to make some ways and means to see that something is done to these people.

For a moment, forget of those people where irrigation facilities are provided. They may be suffering for a year. But see the conditions where the people are suffering for 10 years continuously. In this matter, what have you done? This is a case where you have to provide permanent irrigation facilities. There is permanent drought, and permanent famine. Therefore, you have to provide permanent solution. This is very very

[Shri K. Ramachandra Reddy]

essential. Even after 40 years of our independence, drought prone area projects and desert development projects remain only in paper. They have not made any impact on this area. Whenever there is drought, what is the type of people who are going to be affected? It is not big people, big land lord. It is only the small farmers and the marginal farmers and the labourers who are affected. They will not be able to get any work. When they will not be able to get any work, their purchasing power goes to the lowest level. When their purchasing power is almost nil, they are not able to get even single meal per day. So, they have first to sell out their cattle heads. When there is no work, leaving their aged parents behind, they have to go to far off places, big towns and big cities where they can get some work. Like that they are eking out their livelihood. This has been a continuous affair in the drought prone area in the past 10 years. These facts have been brought to the notice of the Government each and every year but the Government has not thought of finding any permanent remedy. As far as the drought prone areas are concerned, there is plenty of underground water available. The depth of a well is about 30-40 feet.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: How much time do you require?

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY: About 15 minutes more.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will give you five or six minutes. You please try to conclude. There are lot of speakers who want to speak tomorrow. Therefore, you try to finish.

SHRI K. RAMACHANDRA REDDY: You put in-well bore for Rs. 5,000/-. The agriculturists or the cultivators in these areas have been so overburdened with debts that they have not been able to even bear Rs. 5,000/- and put an in-well bore. If in-well bore is put in a well 100 feet, there is sufficient water and the cultivator is able to irrigate 2-3 acres. If you are able to give Rs. 5,000/- to that man by way of loan or subsidy, whatever it may

be, the man is able to put an in-well bore in that area which will at least help two or three families, one family of cultivator and two families of agricultural labourers. The land is ready. Other infrastructure is ready. Agriculturists are also ready to grow crop. If you spend Rs. 5,000/- in these areas per well, it will go a long way to help these people. Please see that something is done to these people to tide over famine conditions and this also prevents labour being exploited by the rich landlords.

The next point is as far as the water management is concerned, we are spending thousands of crores of rupees on projects. The gestation period is itself 10-20 years. You spend more money on minor irrigation. What is minor irrigation? It depends only on tanks. A number of tanks are there. These tanks were built by kings some 400 years ago.

Sometimes there is no irrigation at all. The purpose of these tanks is to improve underground water facilities. Wherver there is rain, water comes and stores up there.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can continue tomorrow. Shri Janardhana Poojary.

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18.03 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE-*Contd.*

[*English*]

**Notifications re. Making Certain Amendments to Prescribe Concessional Basic Custom Duty on Components for Manufacture of Two-wheeler Motor Vehicles.**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Notification No. 289/87-Customs (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 10th August, 1987 together with an explanatory