

[Sh. K.S. Rao]
more. Let there be effective implementation. Let this Authority's presence be felt everywhere for improving the condition of roads and communication.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, to start with, I thank all the Members who have taken part in this discussion and for their valuable suggestions. Why did the need arise? Why did we think over about this Authority?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This will continue tomorrow. Then, you can explain.

[English]

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

Implementation of Desert Development Programme

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we are taking up Half-an-Hour Discussion. Shri Virdhi Chander Jain.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN (Barmer): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have initiated the half-an-hour discussion on Desert Development Programme. There are three types of deserts in our country—desert, semi-desert and the cold desert. The condition of the desert is the worst and the areas of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts have been constantly hit by drought due to scanty rainfall. Even at present, these areas have been in the grip of continuous drought for the last five years while the other regions of the country had a good rainfall, these desert areas are still facing drought. The Central Government started the Desert Development Programme in the year 1977-78 on the recommendation of the National Agricultural Commission. During the year 1977-78 and 1978-79, the Central Government provided a little financial assistance to implement this scheme and later on the scheme was executed during the period

1980-85. In the sixth five year plan, the total amount of expenditure had to be equally shared by the Central Government and the State Government. During the seventh five year plan, the Central Government decided to give the hundred percent amount as grant and the reply to my question also indicates that provision of Rs. 245/- crores was made in the seventh five year plan. I wanted to know the total amount of expenditure incurred since 1985-86 till date. When I happened to calculate it, I found that only an amount of Rs. 99 crore 97 lakh, 96 thousand has been incurred on this account. Now it is 1988-89 and in 1989-90, the period of seventh five year plan will be over but as per figures furnished in regard to the funds released by the Central Government during the year 1987-88, it stands at Rs. 39 crores and for the year 1988-89, it is Rs. 38 crores. Now the question is that if the amount to be released in the year 1989-90 is raised, it will be about Rs. 45 crores. The sum total of this amount comes to Rs. 145 crores. Now I would like to know that when the amount of actual provision was Rs. 245 crores, why the Central Government has reduced the amount to be released to the State Governments. Moreover, the Government would not release more than Rs. 145 crores by the Seventh Five Year Plan. Lesser release would lead to lesser expenditure.

I would like to submit that the State Governments utilised the entire amount which was released to them by the Central Government. The amount actually released has already been reduced from Rs. 245 crores to 100 crores by them. How can the full amount be spent if the Government is going to release only Rs. 75 crores each during the year 88-89 and 89-90 respectively. That is why our Desert area Development Programme has been a failure. One of the major reasons has been the inadequate expenditure on this head in the past. Amount of Rs. 245/- crores was allocated for the seventh five year plan only because of our pressure on the Government for the same. After that the situation worsened to the extent that no amount was given to the State Governments, due to which they could not

afford to develop their desert areas and remained incapable of extending its benefits to the people. That is why desert areas continued to get ruined. Even in regard to the development of forests, no progress could be made in those areas.

In brief, the Central Government paid a little attention to the development of desert areas and made no provisions for it. The State Governments did not spend the amount which was allocated to them. Then during the Seventh Five Year Plan, the rural development authorities dropped all the activities and programmes meant for the development of rural areas. What authority they had to drop the programmes which had been sanctioned by the Planning Commission and for which provisions had already been made by them. These officials have desperately misused their powers. The sanctioned plan had the following activities to be undertaken for the purpose:-

[English]

The following major activities have been taken up under this programme:

- i) Afforestation with special emphasis on shelter belt plantation, grass land development, and sand dune stabilization.
- ii) Ground water development and utilization.
- iii) Construction of water harvesting structures.
- iv) Rural electrification for engineering tubewells and pumpsets.
- v) Development of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry.

[Translation]

Implementation of the following programmes has been stopped by the Rural Development officers unauthorisedly.

The programme of Rural Electrification for energising tubewells and pumpsets is a good one under which irrigation and drinking water facilities are provided by digging tubewells and afforestation work is also done. This programme has been stopped by the Rural Development Department.

18.00 hrs.

Similarly implementation of the programmes like Development of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry have also been stopped. Not a single pie has been allocated for these programmes and strict instructions have been issued that no expenditure should be incurred on them. When a provision had been made in the plan by the Department of Planning, why the rural development programme has been abandoned. Thirdly the exploration of tubewells for ground water development and for construction of water harvesting structures has also been stopped. All the provisions relating to animal husbandry have also been done away with and not a single pie has been allocated for it. It has been decided that drinking water for animals would be supplied through reservoirs but in the absence of tubewells, how would reservoirs be fed? Thus this work has also been hampered. Thus the hindrances were created in the development of desert areas by not implementing the decisions and development programmes of the planning department. The objective of this programme was to prevent desertification and occurrence of famine to restore mycological balance and to create employment opportunities. I have seen that under the Hilly Areas Development Programme, fuel and fodder, alternate energy, drinking water supply, Health and Education programmes are taken up. Many things have been included in the development plans meant for the development of Adivasi areas while the situation in our areas is the worst because the nature does not play havoc in the Adivasi areas in view of forests, wood and rain fall, whereas all these things are not there in the desert areas.

The work relating to sand dunes stabili-

[Sh. Virdhi Chander Jain] zation was taken up under the afforestation programme but some sand dunes were lost due to growth of grass and plants with the result the hot winds which used to blow also stopped blowing. In this connection my suggestion is that grants should be provided to the farmers so that they could undertake sand dunes stabilization work and thus the programme could make progress.

The Indira Gandhi Canal is also covered under afforestation and here the territorial Army has started the work. Further progress can be made in the afforestation and grass growing programmes. But there comes the question of electricity. In Jaisalmer only ten per cent electrification work has been done against 62 per cent in the whole country. Even 132 K.V line is not there. My parliamentary constituency is equal to Punjab and double than Kerala. I mean to say that we will have to face many difficulties in making progress there. Therefore, until and unless Rs 2500 crore are provided in the 8th Five Year Plan, no development can be made there. Sand dunes stabilisation programme requires much money, therefore, it cannot be successful. Today, when there are no rains, we will have to engage our farmers in non-farming activities like village and Khadi industries. Every year there is famine and we can meet the situation by promoting industries. These farmers can be employed in cottage industries at the time of famine. There is a lot of scope for making progress in wool and carpet industries. Water has been found at places where there was no hope and that too with a speed of 40 thousand gallons per hour. If animal husbandry work is taken up, cattle farms and poultry farms can be developed which can help in removing poverty. No agricultural programme has been taken up there. I urge upon the Government to take suitable steps to check desertification. Arrangements should be made for setting up tubewells and pump sets and for the exploration of tubewells. Cattle wealth and horticultural programmes should be launched. It is hoped that you will extend the required co-operation in developing the

undeveloped areas and improving the situation there. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member Shri Virdhi Chander Jain has raised a very important subject today. In fact I share the concern of the hon. Member. There are no two opinions about the issue that we should improve the desert areas with this Desert Development Programme. The programme was started in 1977-78 as stated by the hon. Member. The objective was to control the process of desertification, restoration of ecological balance and improvement in the economic levels of the people through raising and establishing productivity of land, water, live stock and human resources in these areas.

There are two criteria. One is hot arid zone and the other is cold zone. The hon. member has raised a pertinent point stating that, when the allocation was Rs. 245 crores under the Seventh Five Year Plan, why that has been reduced, why the allocation has been cut. Now, for the benefit of the hon. Member, I may say that for Rajasthan the allocation was Rs 1096 Lakhs in the year 1985-86 and the release was also Rs. 1096 lakhs. The expenditure in that year in Rajasthan was Rs. 1106.70 lakhs only. Then in the year 1986-87, for Rajasthan, the allocation was Rs. 3000 lakhs and the release was also Rs. 3000 lakhs; but the expenditure for 1986-87 was Rs 3436.75 lakhs. Then in the year 1987-88, the allocation was Rs 3000 lakhs and Rs 3009.60 lakhs was the release; and the expenditure was Rs 3114.50 lakhs. Then allocation in the year 1988-89 was Rs. 3800 lakhs and the release was Rs. 1900 lakhs.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : The allocation was less.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : The

first instalment was of Rs.1900 out of Rs. 3800 lakhs. Then upto September 1988, the expenditure was Rs 1512.83 lakhs. There are five States which are having this programme and the total expenditure so far is Rs 1613.87 lakhs for 1985-86. In 1986-87, it was Rs 4357.51 lakhs; in 1987-88, it was Rs. 4026.58 lakhs; upto September 1988, it was Rs. 1865.62 lakhs; that means the total expenditure so far is Rs. 118. crores, 63 lakhs and 58,000.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : You have reduced the allocation and the release also.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I have given you the correct figure. For your information, the performance of Gujarat is not like that. In the year 1985-86, for Gujarat, the allocation was Rs 98 lakhs and the release was also Rs 98 lakhs, but the expenditure was Rs 110.81 lakhs. In the case of Haryana in 1985-86 the allocation was Rs 206 lakhs and the expenditure was Rs. 189.65 lakhs. It was less. And in the case of Himachal Pradesh Rs 100 lakhs was the allocation, and they spend more, Rs 112.32 lakhs. In the case of Jammu & Kashmir out of Rs. 100 lakhs they spent Rs 94.39 lakhs. In the case of Rajasthan, I have already given the figures.

Now, so far as the allocation in every year's budget is concerned, the amount has been released.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : But the allocation is less.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : So far as the allocation, yearly allocation in the budget, is concerned, we have been provided by the Finance Ministry that this is the amount every year, and we have released it.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : The Finance Ministry has reduced the allocation. Otherwise, how has it become Rs 245 crores under the Plan?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I did

not dispute that. The Seventh Plan provision is Rs 245 crores. So far as the yearly allocation for the department, is concerned, that is the allocation that has been made by the Finance Ministry to our department and we have released. Earlier there was delay in releasing the amount and there was concentration of power at the Centre. Earlier, the projects are sent to the Central Government, there they were evaluated and sanctioned and approval was given. Then only the amount was released. But after taking into consideration this sort of delay, we started giving powers to the State Government and they themselves now approve the projects now immediately the release is made by us in the first week of April itself. Thus, practically there is no delay in that regard.

Now coming to the point raised by the hon. Member there is a cut, the reason is paucity of funds, resources crunch. Whatever amount has been given to the Rural Development department, we released it. We are trying improvements also. Apart from these programmes, as the hon. Member is aware of that—he is a very intelligent member and today we have got all the three intelligent people, who are the questioners today here—we have to approach, we have to bring pressure on the Planning Commission and also on the Finance Ministry to release more funds and I will also do that.

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : Very good.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I will also write to them and further we have got more programmes. Not only these, we have got other such programmes also for the development of these desert areas. We have got various types of programmes. The objective of our programmes, so far as the Central Government is concerned, from our Central side, is, we give priorities for a long term programme, namely, afforestation, water resources conservation and development and the soil conservation and development and horticulture cattle breeding, drinking water supply, etc, livestock development, fodder development and so on. These

[Sh. Janardhana Poojary] are certain programmes for which we are giving importance and there are other programmes, there are other areas, which the State Governments have to take up and with their funds, whether non-Plan or Plan funds, they have to come up in a big way. Also, they have to spend from their resources, and they have to give importance to it.

Apart from this, we have also Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme and other programmes and in these programmes we are tackling the problems of the desert areas.

I fully agree with the hon. Member that it is not sufficient. We should not be complacent. It is nothing practically considering the vast area of the desert. I understand your feelings. We have to pay more attention to this matter. I request the hon. Member to come and sit with me for further discussion in this matter...

(Interruptions)

SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN : You must visit my constituency.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : When we talk, we shall discuss all these factors and how we can help in a big way.

I really congratulate you for your perseverance and also for your hardwork in looking after your constituency. When you said, it is bigger than Karnataka, I can really understand your difficulties; what type of constituency you are having; and the sufferings of these poor people particularly those who are living below the poverty line. We have to improve it. These are the only things I can say today.

[Translation]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Jain Saheb has already mentioned all things. I can say only this much that the centre has done well. It is

necessary that more allocation should be made but whatever allocation has been made is not less. There should be a proper monitoring to see whether the amount is being spent properly or not.

Recently, I visited Kuwait and saw how people have converted the desert into a greenery. I would request to the hon. Minister to send a team to desert areas of the middle East countries to find out as to how they have checked the desertification there.

More attention should be paid towards afforestation programme. During summer, Delhi is hit by dust-storms and consequently the desert is spreading here slowly and slowly. This is a serious problem and it should not be taken lightheartedly. As the hon. Minister has stated that the State Government should bear full expenditure on it. I would, however, say that the Government should pay attention to it as it is a very gigantic work. If the desertification is not checked and if no afforestation programme is implemented there, the desert will spread beyond Delhi.

I would like to refer to a similar point. I would like to draw your attention to a serious problem. Last year thousand acres of land in North Bihar had been converted into desert due to flood and no crop could be grown there. I request that a central team should be sent there to find out how desert is spreading there. A serious thing which has happened there is that so much sand has been brought there through the rivers originating from Nepal that nothing can be grown there. A serious note of this matter should be taken as its very fertile land has become barren. This desert is spreading not only in Rajasthan, Haryana or in its adjoining areas but also in the middle of the country. Therefore, it is very necessary to see as to how desertification can be checked and how afforestation programme can be implemented there. Afforestation should be taken up there from where these rivers originate and bring sand even if it is another country as Nepal. The Government should look into these problems seriously.

The Central Government has done well. In the end, I would only request the Government to see that whatever the amount is allocated is properly utilised.

[English]

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Panaji) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, when we are discussing the desert development aspect, it is unfortunate that the House itself is deserted. In any case, I would like to say only two things.

As Shri Jain vividly pointed out, if the items included in the Desert Development Schemes are the same times which happens to be a part of any other scheme, then the experience of Mr. Jain is, those aspects are sidetracked or stopped from the main Desert Development Policy. Why does this happen?

For instance, if there is any aspect of drinking water provision in the Desert Development project and a drinking water scheme prevailing in some other scheme, then why don't you simultaneously run both, the aspects of the Scheme under Desert Development and also as independent schemes. As far as desert development is concerned, no doubt, we have got a scheme and Government of India has spent quite a lot although the needs of Rajasthan and other States are more. At the same time, it is not sufficient to have schemes only. Are we or we not going to have a desert development policy for the country under which various schemes can be chalked out? Has any thought been given to enactment of desert development policy or not?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : Shri Rajhans and Shri Shantaram Naik have put very pertinent questions. In fact, it is the duty of the Central Government to give lot of importance to this problem and it should not shirk from that responsibility. It is true that while considering the magnitude of this problem, we should not give up the programmes which have been now taken up by the

Central Government for the improvement of the desert. But certain programmes have been given up. For example, rural electrification programme was deleted on the recommendation of Task Force of DDP in the year 1982-83. Programme of animal husbandry has not been given up but the programme of fodder, feed, etc. is being implemented. This is the most important activity of a desert development programme. We cannot take up all the activities under DDP. There are other programmes like IRDP, NREP, RLEGP. So far as RLGP is concerned, the Central Government is giving hundred per cent funds for the development of the districts. It includes also development of desert areas. Under accelerated water supply we are giving hundred per cent funds. It is true that we should pay more attention, and this programme has to be reviewed. With that purpose, the Central Government has set up a very high powered national committee of technical persons to review desert development programme, under the chairmanship of Dr. Alag. This committee is to submit its report by May, 1989 before the formulation of the Eighth Plan. If the hon. Members have got any specific points or suggestions, they can either write to us or to the committee directly. Whatever points the hon. Members have made today, I will cull out the relevant points and forward them to the committee. I personally view this as a very important subject. I am prepared to sit and discuss with the hon. Members as to what we can do in this matter. Hon. Members are welcome. Once again, at the cost of repetition, I thank the hon. Members for bringing this subject before us and we will definitely look into the matters. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to reassemble tomorrow at 11 A.M.

18.30 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, November 29, 1988/Agrahayana 8, 1910 (Saka)