

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER
Price Policy for Raw Jute for
1992-93 season**

17.01

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BLARAM JAKHAR): The Government of India has fixed the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for TD-5 grade of raw jute in Assam for the 1992-93 season at Rs. 400 per quintal. This marks an increase of Rs. 25 per quintal over the price fixed for the last year. The corresponding prices for other varieties and grades of raw jute shall be fixed by the Jute Commission of India, Ministry of Textiles, in the light of normal market price differentials.

The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will undertake price support operation in raw jute as and when required. The Corporation would take its decisions in respect of jute transactions on a commercial basis and make its purchases from the cultivators at prices that may be warranted by the prevailing market conditions, but in no case below the MSP.

The increase in Minimum Support Price is expected to encourage the farmers to invest more in jute cultivation and raise the production/productivity of raw jute.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Drought situation in various parts of the country-contd.

17.02 hrs.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Bhogendra Jha.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to seek just one clarification from the hon. Minister on Jute. There is the need to do something as the Jute Corporation of India is not directly procuring jute from the farmers, but from the traders who buy at cheaper rates from the farmers.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): The matter will be taken up with the Minister of Textiles and we have asked them to intervene in the market. We have conveyed it to them. You better take up the issues with the Ministry of Textiles.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to dwell on the rivers of Central Bihar viz Sone, Punpun and Falgu which flow in the opposite direction. I have come from the area only yesterday and lots of water flows down these rivers and if it is tapped from both sides, then to a large extent irrigation requirements can be met.

Secondly, I would like to suggest that by constructing small 'Cross Dams', water can be stored and used for irrigating large areas. The danger with these dams is that during floods they might get washed away, but even then these are cost-effective as within a week hundred times more land could be irrigated. The hon. Minister will give the excuse of it being a State subject, but due to paucity of funds these cannot be built even if willingness is there. Right now I do not want to dwell on the sincerity element. Drought situation in North Bihar can be effectively tackled if in addition to installation of tubewells and pumping sets, cross dams are built without delay.

Thirdly, I would like to dwell on tubewells. I would like to make a suggestion that the Government of Bihar has promised to provide 90 percent grant for tubewells. However more than this needs to be given to the marginal, small and even to big farmers and it will be appreciated if some assistance is also made available to them by the Centre. Despite my request the Government of Bihar is not prepared to buy P.V.C. pipes and I smell something fishy in it, probably some commission is involved. P.V.C. pipes are easily available at half the rates. Therefore, the Government of India should make these available on large scale. It will be nice, if the tubewells are installed by providing 90,60 or 40 percent of grant is given by state Government of Bihar, these will also prove to be

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permanent assets for the farmers and they will be able to harvest three crops in a year. I am in favour of P.V.C. pipes as these are cheaper and are longer lasting. Iron pipes get rusted in mud and PVC pipes are rust proof. On experimental basis this was launched in the districts of Darbhanga and Madhubani with the Government assistance, but the Government of Bihar is not prepared to launch it on a larger scale.

be no need for doles. There is nodoubt that only out of compulsions charity is asked for and it is not considered good by any party. Therefore, this work should be expedited.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Bamboo-boring.

SHRI BHOGENDR A JHA: Bamboo-boring gets putrefied after some years, but PVC will last longer. PVC is rust proof and is also durable and the expenditure involved will also be reduced to the half. Therefore, I urge supply of these on a large scale because the water is available at 40 to 250 feet.

Now I would like to dwell on the power crisis, especially in Bihar. During the rule of the Congress power plants were generating 35-36 percent power against the installed capacity of 55-56 percent and so the power generation has further come down. During the reign of the present Government power generation has further declined to 20-25 percent from 35 percent. In power generation the performance of the present Government is worse than that of the former Congress Government. The Electricity Board Employees Union of Bihar has openly advocated to adopt a particular system of management and have also said that with their cooperation power generation can be increased by 15-20 percent within a month. I remember, the Chief Minister himself favoured handing over of Barauni and some other areas, but the Bihar Electricity Board did not agree to it. This crisis will not be resolved for sometime and therefore the pumpsets will not function. The Government should supply diesel at concessional rates so that the river water can be pumped into the fields and tubewells can also be used for irrigation purpose. On a large scale one or two tubewells could be dug at a time and there is no dearth of agencies to undertake this work. The Government is requested to take urgent steps for irrigation, then there will

Now, I want to give some concrete suggestions. Recently the House passed a Bill for inland waterways in the country. Fortunately the Rajasthan Canal has not gone dry and the sand is also wet. Thar desert has also witnessed floods. Unfortunately, the Rajasthan Canal could not be completed for the last 30 years. Completion of the Rajasthan Canal will be a giant step towards prosperity of the country and will especially better the lot of the people living in the rocky terrain through which the canal flows. Similarly Kosi Canal's Eastern part has become useless due to heavy silting. And because of that irrigation is not possible. In the name of dredging looting is going on there, but the condition of canal has not improved a bit. I would like to make a submission that in 1982-83 the then Minister of Water Resources Mr. Ansari, in consultation with the then Prime Minister, while replying to my speech announced the taking over of the Kosi Board and the expenditure likely to be incurred on it. However, this was vehemently objected to by then Chief Minister of Bihar, who is now the leader of the opposition in the Assembly. This also proved the fact that the Congress Government of Bihar was stronger than the Lok Sabha as the announcement made here firmly was scuttled. My submission is to implement it immediately so that as my hon. colleague, Shri Surya Narayan Yadav, stated that 35-36 lakh acres of fertile land could be irrigated. In Western Kosi Canal upto 7.5 thousand cusecs water can flow but due to non-completion of branch canal and drought last year just 500 cusecs water flowed in the canal. The Government should inquire into how the money allocated for Branch Canal was diverted by the Government of Bihar. Owing to non-completion of 2-10 percent portion of a branch canal lakhs of acres of land could not be irrigated even though there is lot water in the Kosi Canal. I am submitting all this with a view to facilitate proper irrigation to end the need for doles by boosting

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production. In addition to all this I suggest installation of tubewells on warfooting in consultation with the State Governments, as there is neither shortage of PVC pipes nor diesel engines in the country, and you should supply diesel on concessional rates for speedy development.

Fifteen years ago mud pumps were built by efficient potters of Prabhakar Potteries in village Ijra, division Manigashi in district Darbhanga. These Brahmins by caste were not well read, but knew the art of potter's wheel. They invented these pumps and 25 of which are in operation since 1982-83 without giving any trouble. These 4 inch pumps costs 1/5 of the cost of iron pumps. These pumps were installed for two-three years in these two districts with the Government assistance. However the Government of Bihar is not prepared to go in for the PVC or the mud pumps.

I request supply of these by the Department of Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and I am prepared to accompany them for an inspection tour. Mud does not putrefy burnt mud, but it rusts iron and PVC is more durable than this.

Wherever remains of earlier civilizations are there these are found in the form of articles made of baked earth. These articles are imperishable. Models of such earthen pumps can be seen in Darbhanga, Madhubani etc. If the Government takes an initiative it can bring about a revolution in irrigation by means of earthen pumps. Its cost of production is very meagre. It would suffice the requirements of the whole country...*(Interruptions)* In view of the fact that we have constraints of funds, this type of irrigation would be more durable. Therefore, my submission is that if my suggestion is accepted, it would prove very beneficial. The Government should take initiative in this regard as early as possible because water is being wasted, fields are drying up and it is really very heart-rending. It would have been altogether a different thing had there been no water. We will have to take some concrete measures. We will have to liberalise

the rules in order to implement it at the earliest. Mr. Chairman Sir, a similar drought had occurred in 1967. I would like to give just one example and then conclude. There was an Executive Engineer at Jay Nagar. There is a river named Dhauri. Two canals had been dug out on both the sides of the river. Kamla Nahar is one of them, but no structure had been constructed over the river. There were about 35,000 acres of agricultural land on the other side of the river. When I asked the Executive Engineer to take immediate measures he expressed his inability and said that it would take not less than one and a half year. I asked him to raise an earthen dam. He was afraid that it would be washed away. When I wanted to know the approximate expenditure on such a dam, he said that...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am about to conclude. I asked him to construct the dam. I wrote in my capacity as an M.P., I also got it written by the village headsmen. The dam was constructed. It was washed away after 3-4 months. But crops on about 35,000 acres of land were ripe. When the auditor audited the work he was astonished how such an achievement was made with an expenditure of just Rs.3500/- and appreciated the work in his report. Now this is the same area where water is being wasted. Fields are drying up. Hence the Government should take immediate measures in this regard. I would like this to be implemented wherever it is possible throughout the country. It would mean more irrigation with less expenditure. Moreover it would check famine. The Government, the soil and also the water that flows in the country do have the capability to meet the drought situation

With these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRIE. AHAMED (Manjeri): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a matter of gratification that the Government has come forward to have a discussion on the drought situation in the country.

I would like to confine my speech only about the droughts effected in Kerala during the first quarter of this year. It is quite paradoxical for us to discuss about the droughts during the monsoon season when monsoon is in full swing in Kerala and perhaps we may have an opportunity to speak about the floods during the summer season. It is a strange phenomenon. Here also, I find a sort of a drought on the attendance of this House, even in the representations by the Minister. We have a Cabinet Minister and 5 Ministers of State for the Ministry of Agriculture. One can very well appreciate the difficulties of the Cabinet Minister to attend here as well as in the other august House. But, I do not know why my friend, the minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, Shri Mullapally Ramachandran, has not have the assistance of his other colleagues. Of course, he is very capable. he will deal with the situation.

I do not want to deal with all such matters when we are discussing the serious effects of drought in this country and particularly in my State.

In Kerala, the damage estimated was about Rs.138 crores. The Kerala government have made a request for the assistance of Rs.138.47 crores. The amount given to the Kerala by way of assistance was only Rs. 17.43 crores and that too from the fund of Natural Calamity Fund provided to meet such requirements. The basic question before the Government should be what is the policy of the Government to meet such drought situation or the flood situation or such natural calamity and whether the money already provided to meet the requirement is sufficient enough taking into account the gravity of the position. The Finance Commission has provided a provision of Rs.30 crores for the States of Kerala in such a situation where the pattern of assistance is 75:25; 75 from the Centre and 25 from the States. The Government of India have released only Rs. 17.17 crores whereas the total demand was Rs.138 crores. The damage was extensive. For example, 19,656 hectares of land was fully damaged in Kerala

in the drought which affected our State in the first quarter of this year. The estimated cost of the damage by way of full damage of this land was Rs.97.84 crores. The partial damage of the land was to the extent of 91,838 hectares and damage estimated was Rs. 28.58 crores. So, the total amount was Rs. 126.42 crores. Kerala is one State which earned a lot of foreign exchange by cash products. Cardamom is one such product. The damage caused to the cardamom plantation was extensive. One thousand one hundred and sixteen metric tonnes of Cardamom itself has been lost and damage due to the drought and the cost estimated for this alone was Rs. 30.40 crores. The area damaged was 6,995 hectares and the estimated cost of damage was Rs. 18.19 crores. The Government of India, by all means, should have provided immediate and urgent assistance.

But unfortunately Government did not give any amount even for drinking water which has been affected due to the drought. The medical assistance sought for was only Rs. one crore, which was also not provided, except that what is included in the natural calamity aspect.

The Government's criteria of categorising the droughts as a 'serious drought' or 'ordinary drought' or 'potentially serious drought' is quite irrelevant. When a State has been affected by drought, it is the duty of the Government of India to come forward with necessary urgent and immediate assistance. But unfortunately, as far as Kerala is concerned - the hon. Minister is also from Kerala - the Government's lethargic attitude towards the drought situation affecting the people of Kerala was quite unsatisfactory and, I hope, the Government of India will mend its attitude.

As many hon. friends have pointed out here, agricultural land is very important and agriculture plays a very constructive and meaningful role in the building up of this country. I hope the Government will take immediate necessary measures to assist the State Government to meet the damage

With these few words, I end my speech, again reiterating my request to the Government of India to come forward for the assistance of the State of Kerala.

[Translation]

*SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Palakkad): Mr. Chairman, drought and floods and other natural calamities occur every year. We have been trying to find a solution to this problem during the past 45 years. But we have not been able to find a durable solution to this problem. Every year, the Government spends hundreds of crores of rupees for relief works. Now, we have a Calamities Relief Fund in some States, there is drought and in some other states there is floods relief fund. This is a strange paradox we find in the nature. This year because of the failure of North-East monsoon Kerala experienced very severe drought. Similarly, the drought condition in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Manipur is very grim.

In every session of the Parliament, we raise a discussion on drought and floods. In all those discussions we have demanded that a long term steps should be taken to solve the problem of natural calamities in fact, I myself participated in almost all such discussions. United Nations has declared this decade as the "Decade for Reducing Natural Calamities". Accordingly, the Government of India, it is said has set up a National Advisory Council and is going to formulate long term schemes to solve this problem. This should have been done long back. At a time when science has made phenomenal progress, we must utilise this progress and find ways to save man from the menace of natural calamities.

Having said this, now I come to my State of Kerala. Kerala is a monsoon State. We get two monsoons there. One is the South-West monsoon and the other North-East mon-

soon. This year, North East monsoon failed and this resulted in very severe drought conditions. Almost all the districts of the State experienced acute shortage of drinking water. It is estimated that in 1.12 hectare of land, crops have been damaged. It is the poor people who are worst hit due to crop damage and shortage of drinking water. Kerala has demanded Rs. 138.47 crores of rupees for relief works. The Central Government has decided not to release special assistance to the State on the ground that the drought situation in the State is not very severe. That is not true. The people who have gone through it know that it was a very severe drought. Therefore, the Central Government should give special assistance to the State of Kerala. The Palaghat district is the hardest hit in regard to drought. In the Chittur Taluk 6 Panchayats, 3 Panchayats in Mannarkard Taluk, 2 in Alathur, 2 in Palakkad Taluk and 2 in Ottappalam Taluk have been seriously affected. There is very serious shortage of drinking water in all these Panchayats particularly in the Kozhinganpara area, this problem is very acute. In attappadi most of the inhabitants are Adivasis. The State Government has taken measures to provide relief to the drought affected people of this area. Free ration and other facilities have been provided to them. In this connection, I would like to say that Attappadi lies in the rain shadow area of Western Ghats. Every year severe drought occurs in this region. In fact this should be subjected to a scientific investigation.

The monsoon has started and this caused floods and land slides in many parts of the State. In Attappadi alone, 200 houses have been damaged. Crop damages estimated to be Rs.50 Lakhs and 3 persons have lost their lives here. The Wayanad district has experienced the worst kind of land slides which has resulted in the death of 11 persons. This area falls under the constituency of the Minister of State for Agriculture, Shri Mullappally Ramachandran. Since he cannot stand up in the House and raise this issue, I though I should take this oppor-

tunity to highlight this problem here. In the Edukki district, 4 people lost their lives. Similarly, the high ranges in Kerala which produce the maximum quantities of cash crops have also suffered heavily. We produce Cardamom, Pepper, Ginger and other valuable cash crops and spices which earn us valuable foreign exchange. Loss of these crops is a serious problem and therefore, the Government should provide special assistance to the State Government to help the affected farmers.

As I said in the beginning, it is always the poor people who suffer the worst in times of natural calamities. In the Kizhakancherry Panchayat in Palakkad district, the damage occurred due to land slides on 5th July is Rs. 70 lakhs. Within a radius of 3 kms in Palakkuzhy, Tendillus and Atikalkund land slides have occurred resulting in heavy losses. 7 houses have been completely damaged and 22 houses partially damaged. More than 30 families have been shifted to other places. The Agricultural Department has estimated that different crops in 150 hectares of land are damaged. These crops include banana, pepper, paddy coconut, rubber, ginger and cardamom. Besides, bridges and culverts too have been damaged. Due to the land-slides, this area remain isolated. The people affected need to be helped immediately.

I would, therefore, request that central assistance should be rushed immediately and a study team should be sent to make an on-the-spot study. In all other, cholera broke out due to the consumption of contaminated water and about ten persons died.

What is required is long term measures, to fight this menace. The Hon. Agricultural Minister is not present here at the moment. Being a farmer himself, he knows the problem of the farmers who lose their crops due to the natural calamities. As I emphasises in the beginning, we must think about long term measures. I request the Government to formulate durable schemes in this regard so that we can save the people from this natural calamities.

[English]

PROF. SUSANTA CHAKRABORTY (Howrah): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a serious situation that we are discussing. Sir, I remember that during the Budget Session the entire House discussed the problem of starvation deaths in the Sarguja District of Madhya Pradesh. Very often in this House we have raised such issues that are occurring in different States of our country. Sir, in Tripura too, this sort of thing is happening. We drew the attention of the Government to this situation caused by the drought. Sir, it is a pity that even after 34 years of Independence our country is still today depending on the blessings of monsoon. We talk of planning; already seven Five Year Plans are over. Still today we are depending on nature and we have no means in our hands. Nor the Government have any political will to combat such a situation.

Sir, the South-west monsoon has made a delayed arrival this year. Still today what we see is that several States are reeling under drought of great intensity and the Government machinery is not able to cope up with this situation. Villages are in a pathetic plight, people are not having minimum food that they require, scarcity of water is there, power generation is suffering and all these have raised the question about the management of the food economy adopted by the Central Government. Whenever any such situation arises, Govt. seems to move and that too when we raise a hue and cry, only the Central Government send their team to collect reports. The States too send their reports. But what do we find is that there is a difference between the reports sent by the State Government and the ones secured by the Central Team. Now, this situation is going on we feel very sorry when we see that Ministers visit the States, come back and assure the people that something will be done. The States stake their claims over the calamity relief fund, but we do not know how much of the fund is sent there, how has it been utilised, what the Government is going to do as a short-term measure, as an emergency plan and what the developmental goal

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in the right perspective set by the Government is. If this situation continues, if the situation created by the drought of this severe magnitude is tackled by the Government in this way, then, Sir, I am sorry to say that the lot of the people is not safe in the hands of such a government.

Sir, I raised a point about water management and I had already referred to the problem of agricultural growth. It has a severe social and economic implications. When there is drought, we have to give emphasis on certain points. But, funding alone cannot solve the problem. Does the Government have enough stock of foodgrains? This year, all of us know that the stock of foodgrains is very little. What is the reason for it? Is it that our country did not produce sufficient foodgrains or is it that foodgrains was there, but it was not marketed? From the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, there is an increasing gap between the marketable surplus and the market arrival. The Second Foodgrains Inquiry Committee drew the attention of the Government to this matter, but till today, the Government seems to sleep over this matter and is doing nothing. The procurement prices are being raised every year at the insistence of the rich agricultural lobby. But why does the food not come to the market? You will have to answer that. The Government should announce why they are not being made available? Why is there a wrangle between the Centre and the States? How is it that there is no price stability?

During the Budget Session, the Government was euphoric about the structural adjustment and about the fiscal deficit the Government was able to cover. But, when we talk of Sargojia or Tripura draw attention to the basic problem of Indian economy they remain silent? There are a lot of problems like poverty and malnutrition. A country where more than 50 percent of the population live below the poverty level and a country which has to live on the blessings of the monsoon, in such a vast country or ours, the Government should be more serious about the management of the food economy. But, there is a lack of will as reflected by the defective

arrangement. The Government should correct it.

The Government is talking of a revamped public distribution system. What is our experience? Our experience is that the minimum food that can be made available through the public distribution system do not reach the people. Sometimes, the Government comes out with a reply that there is a dearth of wagons and sometimes it comes out with a reply that there is a dearth of storing places. There is no coordination between one department of the Government and the other. There is no coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food; there is no coordination between the Department of Civil Supplies and the Ministry of Railways. Can we allow the things to go on in this way? If things go on in this way, how can we expect the problems to be solved? No, this cannot be done. So, what I suggest is that the Government should think of the social implications of the situations like drought and flood. That aspect must be emphasised and in order to cope with it, an emergency plan should be there. The emergency plan must consist of good storage facility of food and a proper distribution system. So, the public distribution system should be revamped. Secondly, in such a situation, the Government should arrange for certain schemes which will give jobs to the people as well as food to them.

The question of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is there. But that is the annual plan. That is not an emergency plan. Some emergency plan in this regard should be framed by the Government taking into account the long-term perspectives.

As regards crop loss due to drought, there is no such mechanism in our country which can actually say, this is the amount of crop loss. So, I shall request the Government to think of constituting a permanent body taking the people from the States as well as from the Centre which can assess the amount of crop loss.

The third point is about the Central

assistance. The starving people cannot wait for the report of the X Finance Commission to come. As an emergency measure in this case arrangement should be made. To cite an example about the attitude of the Government, I can speak of the experience of the people of Tripura. For two consecutive years, the jhoom cultivation has failed. The Chief Minister went there; the Prime Minister too went there and gave assurance to the people. But what has actually gone there, we do not know. We do not know even today how much from the relief fund has been actually given to each individual State which is in need today.

The fourth point is, wherever drought situation occurs, we shall have to think of the future and assess the requirements of seeds for the coming years. These are programmes that shall have to be taken in advance. But I do not know whether the Government is thinking on those lines.

About water supply in the agricultural fields and about drinking water supply to the people—the question raised several times in this House what plans do the Government have in their mind? They should come out with a holistic approach to the use of life sustaining resources like land and water.

Again I charge this Government of its inaction, of its delayed action in the watershed management problem, and of its apathy towards the drought affected people. Do not make politics about it. It is a problem created by the bad planning and a planning which is not need-based. It is you people who are in the power at the Centre, who have prepared such plans. It is for you to mend it. Please rise up to the situation.

With these words, I finish my speech.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO
VADDE (Vijayawada): Thank you, Mr. Chairman for giving me an opportunity to speak on this important item of business today.

Several hon. friends have already spoken on the drought situation in various parts

of the country. In Andhra Pradesh also, the situation is very bad. Out of 23 districts, 12 districts have received very low rainfall and the agricultural operations are very badly affected in 16 districts. The Southwest monsoon has entered very late and even after the entry of the monsoon, the rainfall is very very inadequate.

The green gram, sun-flower etc., crops which are rain-fed, are not sown at all, for example, in my Constituency.

For the first time, during the last 25 years—never before it happened—in the Krishna delta at Vijayawada which is 140 years old, having 13 lakh acres of irrigated ayacut, by this time usually 50 percent of the transplantations are to be over every year. But this year, not even just a few thousands of acres, not even 4,000 hectares, is transplanted. Then you can imagine the situation in our State.

There is a saying "While Rome was burning, one great friend Nero was fiddling." Similarly, our State Government is least bothered about the drought situation. It is very unfortunate.

The Chief Minister is very much taking care of how to continue in the seat while his adversaries in the same Party are trying to pull him down. They are playing that game, the dissidents, and in the process, the farmers, the people of Andhra Pradesh are suffering.

Only a few days back, on 9th July, the hon. Agriculture Minister, Shri Balram Jakhar has informed this House about the drought situation in some States. But he did not mention a single word about the drought in Andhra Pradesh.

Long time back, Dr. K.L. Rao, the great eminent engineer and former Minister for irrigation and Power, suggested Pulichintala balancing reservoir for our State of Andhra Pradesh especially to protect the interests of 140 year old Krishna delta because subsequently Nagarjuna Sagar, Srisailem projects

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came up in Andhra Pradesh, besides Upper Krishna and several other projects which have come in Karnataka. So, to protect the interests of Krishna delta, he suggested Pulichintala reservoir and our State Government headed by Shri N.T. Rama Rao has laid the foundation stone in 1988 for the project and he has set up a Division to undertake a detailed survey of the contours and how the channels should be dug. Unfortunately, the present Government has even wound up that Division. The entire work has stopped. Today the farmers in Andhra Pradesh, especially in my district, under this Krishna delta system, are facing drought situation. Even if we take ten bags of lesser yield per acre, the total loss of production will be to the tune of Rs.240 crores. It is not only the loss to our farmers, not only to our State, but to the nation as a whole.

We have experienced severest drought in 1987. For nearly three years, the drought was there. Because we were having abundant reserves of foodgrains at that time that drought could be overcome slowly the stocks have depleted. The production of foodgrains this year is hardly 173 million tonnes as against the target of nearly 182 million tonnes and the Government is in panic. We are all aware at one point of time, the Government was saying that it intends to import wheat and rice, if necessary.

What I mean to say is that our grain reserves are in a precarious condition. In this drought situation, if there is no good rainfall in the days to come, we are really going to face a very severe situation. Even the 1987 drought has not made this Government to re-think about its strategies which it has been adopting all these years. Fortunately for our country, it has got abundant water resources. We are having perennial rivers. Even during summer, snow in the Himalayas melt and we get plenty of water. But unfortunately, Government's apathy towards agriculture and irrigation is causing a great loss to the country and great harm to the country. Actually, as against the initial estimated potential of around 113 million hectares, the latest estimate is that we have an irrigation potential of

173 million hectares. Technically, it may not be possible. But theoretically, it is possible to give irrigation to every hectare of cropped land in our country.

All these years, the Government was spending hardly nine percent to ten percent on irrigation projects. Even in this present Eighth Plan you are not allocating more funds to irrigation. My suggestion to the Government is to kindly reconsider its strategies and enhance the allotment to irrigation and more so, to minor irrigation because by this, with less capital it will be providing more irrigation facilities to more areas.

During this drought operations, usually what happens is that some works are taken up which are of a purely temporary nature.

My suggestion is, unlike the present way in which the drought situation is being tackled, please take up works of a permanent nature. I have a solid example in my own district. During the British days, when a big famine had occurred, they had constructed irrigation canals, very big canals for e.g. K.T.B. canal in my district to irrigate some thousands and thousands of acres of land. And during the past nearly three decades, I have not been able to see even one such big work of a permanent nature. There are still nearly two lakh villages which do not have all-weather road to reach the village. My suggestion is, let the Government take necessary steps to put up the roads to the interior of the villages. Apart from providing help to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and the rural people, it will also facilitate road to that village also.

Similarly, if cross walls, check dams are constructed on small rivers and rivulet, they will help a lot because more water will percolate into the soil and that will re-charge the underground water reserves. It will bring the water table up and thus help the farmers and rural people not only for the purpose of irrigation but also for the purpose of drinking water. My suggestion is to take all possible steps to construct this and to take up the work of a permanent nature. I appeal to the

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hon. Minister Shri Mullapally Ramachandran to send the Central team immediately to our State of Andhra Pradesh. Till now the Central team has not visited Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Minister has made a very very tall promise in the Anantpur District that the Government is going to take up some scheme involving hundreds of crores of rupees. But even a few crores of rupees have not been allotted.

My humble request to the Central Government is please send the central team immediately and take all necessary steps to help the Government of Andhra Pradesh, to meet the drought situation and help the farmers and the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla): Mr. Chairman, Sir, a discussion on drought and flood is held every year in the House. There has not been even a single year when a discussion to this effect was not held. Even after 45 years of independence concerns are being expressed on drought and flood. It proves as to how our Governments have been indifferent to this issue. They never took firm action on this situation. They took temporary measures and never tried to find out a permanent solution to it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when the discussion was going on, one of our hon. friends said that it has started raining. The crops have already dried up and damaged. If at all it rains, it is scattered and not raining everywhere. Agricultural production has not been up to mark. Discussions on piecemeal basis won't ease the prevailing situation. Some parts of the country experience drought and some parts flood. Discussions are held but effective measures are not taken. Relief is provided in the name of drought and flood to the affected people. But it is not properly accounted for as to how much of the amount

reaches the affected people. I remember, once Shri Rajiv Gandhi had said in one of his speeches that out of sanctioned amount of Rs. 100/- by the Government, only Rs. 15/- reach the affected people. It means that Rs. 85 are embezzled in the process. How can development take place when such evil practices continue.

I remember that a long long ago somebody had thought of a plan of doing something concrete for the prosperity of the country. For this purpose, king Bhagirath with great efforts brought Ganga from the Himalayas. Today this river flows across the country. But unfortunately even after 45 years of independence, the water of this river has not been utilised for agricultural purpose. Water of Ganga and all other rivers flows into the sea. As a result of that tubewells are being installed at various places in fields at a distance of every 50, 100, 200 yards. Due to installation of a large number of tubewells and lack of proper norms, the ground water level is going down. This has been the reason that pump sets and boring have failed. The places where the water level was below 25 feet earlier has gone down to 50 feet and from 50 feet to 100 feet. The Government will have to think seriously in this regard and find a way out to meet the drought situation. However, solution to this effect would not be possible by holding discussions on piecemeal basis. Last time the hon. Minister had stated during the Question Hour that the provision was made for those states which had made a request. Is he a Minister of any particular State? Is he not a Union Minister?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS AND DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): Mr. Chairman Sir, the House is normally supposed to adjourn

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at 6 o'clock. I would suggest that if the House
is agreeable to continue this discussion
tomorrow after the lunch recess for an
hour, then we can adjourn at 6 o'clock today.

Now the House stands adjourned to
meet again tomorrow on 28th July 1992 at 11
a.m.

18.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time of the House
is up; the hon. Member may resume when
we meet again.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, July
28, 1992/Sravan 6, 1914 (Saka)