

of the revenue budget is allocated for the purpose of education. These allocations do not meet the purpose. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether an enhanced allotment would be made for popularizing and propagating education among rural girls, and also other socially and educationally disadvantaged sections of the society ?

SHRI K. C. PANT : I am grateful to the Hon. Member for his support. I think he is trying to convert the converted. He knows whom he has to convert. He has to help me.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : The percentage of educated rural women, specially among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is very low. It is only 5 per cent to 6 per cent. What steps is Government going to take to increase the percentage of the educated ? Is Government going to establish any women' university just as in Andhra Pradesh; is Government going to support such of the universities in the rural areas, and is it going to provide amenities to the women's colleges and women's schools, where there are no toilets and other facilities to the girls who are specially facing difficulties in rural areas ?

I want to know from the Hon. Minister what proposals he has got to increase the facilities to the rural women, belonging specially to the SCs and STs.

SHRI K. C. PANT : Government is not proposing to set up any women's universities. Some States have set up women's universities; and they are given assistance in the usual course. But universities are co-educational institutions, by and large. They are meant for girls as well as boys. Girls do take full advantage of education at the university level. I agree with my friend that toilets are also a problem in the schools in rural areas, for girls also. We have a scheme for giving assistance to the States, to make education free up to Class 12 for girls. We have asked those States which will get this money, and which will have something extra, to use that extra money for providing toilets and dresses for girls, etc., in rural areas.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI PRABHAWATI GUPTA :
Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether he would allocate

special grants to such colleges in the rural areas of Bihar whose number is very small or negligible.

SHRI K. C. PANT : The expenditure on education is met by both the central as well as the State Government and assistance can be provided only within those limits.

[English]

SHRI D. K. NAIKAR : May I know from the Hon. Minister whether he is aware of the manifesto given by the Congress-I Party during the last State Assembly elections in some States in '85 ? In that manifesto, it has been provided that basic education upto third level will be given free by the Government. In view of the increasing illiteracy is he willing to bring some sort of a legislation to implement that promise of giving basic education at all levels free of cost ?

SHRI K. C. PANT : If legislation could achieve this objective, I will gladly bring this legislation. Some Governments have gone in for legislation, but on that account they will not be able to achieve universalisation of the education. It is not a question of intent or will or lack of law; it is a question of the resources and the determination to get this done. All I can assure my Hon. friend is that we are going to seriously try to reach this target by 1990. I have gone into the matter. There are various difficulties. I do not want to minimize or underestimate them. But we will try in all seriousness to tackle this problem; and I will come before the House once we have gone into this matter deeply enough to discuss in the House exactly what are the limitations and how we are trying to overcome them.

Facilities to Passengers

*879. **SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Railway Reforms Committee in its Report submitted to Government has recommended improving the facilities to passengers;

(b) if so, what are the precise suggestions/recommendations made by the committee in this regard; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government to implement them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA) : (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A number of suggestions/recommendations have been made relating to :

- (i) Improved Reservation, Enquiry and allied facilities;
- (ii) Setting up of Indian Railway Catering Corporation to improve the standard of catering;
- (iii) Establishing Hotels at important stations;
- (iv) Improvement in the upkeep of the Retiring Rooms;
- (v) Promotion of tourism by running Holiday and Tourist Specials;
- (vi) Introduction of inter-city fast trains and running of commuter services by electric/diesel hauled long trains;
- (vii) Removing congestion on platforms;
- (viii) Provision of water coolers to ensure cool and potable drinking water in the trains;
- (ix) Standardisation of requisition for bed—rolls and their proper laundering arrangements;
- (x) Provision of cushioned seats, berths in second class and more air-conditioned chair car and A.C. Sleepers in future production of coaches;
- (xi) Improvement in the design of the coaches to improve ratio of toilet to passengers, increased water storage facilities and provision of electric water coolers;
- (xii) Improving sub-urban services;
- (xiii) Qualitative improvement at the terminals.

Details of these suggestions/recommendations are given in the Reports of the Railway Reforms Committee, which are placed in the Parliament House Library for the perusal of Hon. Members.

(c) Implementation of suggestions/recommendations made by the Railway Reforms Committee is a continuous process dependent upon the availability of adequate resources. Action has already been initiated to implement the suggestions/recommendations to the extent feasible.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : While replying to the question, the Hon. Minister has stated in part (c) of his reply that—

[English]

“Implementation of suggestions/recommendations made by the Railway Reforms committee is a continuous process.....”

[Translation]

It means that the implementation of the suggestions/recommendations of the Railway Reforms committee is a continuous process, the process of bringing about efficiency and improvement in the catering services. He has said under item (ii) of part (b) of reply to the same question that—

[English]

“Setting up of Indian Railway catering corporation to improve the standard of catering.”

[Translation]

Is this also a continuous process and have you taken some steps to set up such a corporation and to expand it ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The Indian Railways arrange catering service through contractors at about 3,500 places and departmental catering facilities are provided at about 125 stations. The proposal for the setting up of Railway catering corporation is still under the consideration of our Ministry, but we are of the view that a pilot project may be taken up on the basis of a pilot scheme and based on the experience of such a scheme, we shall consider the setting

up of the Railway catering corporation or to expand that catering service. This pilot project has been taken in hand for New Delhi Railway Station and it is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The consultancy in this regard has been given to I.T.D.C.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : The Railway Reforms Committee have also recommended the introduction of inter-city fast trains and you have introduced some fast trains also, but it has been seen that when we compare the two railways – the Central and the Western Railway for instance the trains on the Central Railway running between Delhi and Bombay or from the Hyderabad side to Bombay run always late by an hour or two hours and sometimes even by 6 to 7 hours, whereas, the trains of the Western Railway run on time. I would like to know the reasons for that.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The reasons are the same and efforts to bring about improvement in this regard continue. There are some restrictions, such as, crossing problem, chain pulling, etc. and these are the reasons which cause late running of trains.

[English]

SHRI A. CHARLES : If I understand correctly the Himsagar Express is the longest distance running train in this country. This train connects Kanyakumari and Kashmir and it can be said to be a symbol of the unity of this country. But quite unfortunately there are no catering facilities in this train. In every bogie there is a notice saying "Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure". I would like the Railways to give a cup of tea and a meal at the appropriate time, and make the passengers feel more comfortable. May I request the Hon. Minister to start catering facilities in this longest running train?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The Himsagar Express, no doubt, is the train running for the longest distance in the country and the Member's suggestion is a good one; it will certainly be noted.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : The Railway Reforms Committee have submitted 21 recommendations and out of them there are 10 recommendations in regard to passenger

amenities. The Hon. Minister has stated that it is a continuous process, that is, the implementation of the suggestions and recommendations is a continuous process. I like to know from the Hon. Minister what are the specific suggestions that have been implemented so far, say No. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 0 so on. Of course, it is really a continuous process but the number of suggestions, they may be two, they may be three or they may be four, out of the ten suggestions regarding passenger amenities. What are those recommendations that have been implemented so far? I want a categorical answer from the Railway Minister.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : The suggestions that have been implemented are fairly numerous. But I would say that the main suggestions which have been implemented pertain to providing additional staff at reservation counters, special facilities at booking offices, computerisation etc. Computerisation is being started with the Northern Railway as the first project to be taken in hand and I hope that next year we will have computerisation at New Delhi Railway Station, Nizamuddin Railway Station and Old Delhi Railway Station also. There are a number of other such recommendations that have been implemented. I can go through the entire list, but I would suggest that I can communicate these in writing to the Hon. Member.

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN PANDEY : Will the Hon. Minister be pleased to state the reasons why in spite of the recommendation made by the Railway Reforms Committee long back to provide such facilities pantry car is not being attached to the Jayanti Janata Express which has been running between Barauni and New Delhi and what steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : We are badly feeling the absence of the pantry car. Pantry car is first attached to the long distance trains as in the case of Himsagar Express to which an Hon. Member has just referred. More and more pantry cars are attached on the basis of priority, but sufficient number of pantry cars are not available at present.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : I want to know from the Hon. Minister the facilities being considered by Government for being provided to the middle and low income group passengers in view of the recommendations of this Committee ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the main recommendation of the Railway Reforms Committee was on the lines of pilot projects like the Yatri Niwas which we have just taken up at the New Delhi Railway Station. This is for the middle and low income group passengers and we endeavour to...

[English]

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Is Government taking any steps to see that drinking water is provided during summer ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Special attention is being given to provide drinking water on the railway platforms and in the trains. (*Interruptions*) In the matter of drinking water not only have we asked to give special attention at the railway stations and on trains with vestibules, but we have said that even the first class AC or first class passengers, a particular category which Madam probably patronises the most; that is why, she is very keen about it, they either carry their own thermos or the facilities are good enough. But where priority must be given is to the second class passengers. Therefore, we have said that on vestibule trains there should be covered buckets or jerry cans with water and an attendant with water facilities.

Completion of Irrigation projects in Maharashtra and Bihar

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*880. **SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT:**
DR. G. S. RAJHANS :

Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that some of the Irrigation Projects in States of Maharashtra and Bihar are far behind their schedule;

(b) whether the Governments of both the States have requested the Centre to provide adequate funds for completion of such irrigation projects; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and reaction of Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) (a) to (c). Some of the projects in Maharashtra and Bihar are behind schedule. Central assistance is given in the form of block loans and block grants and is not tied to any particular scheme or sector of development. The States have to plan, fund and implement their own projects and make adequate provision therefor within their over-all plan allocations.

[Translation]

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : 22 big and 42 medium projects of Maharashtra are pending for years. The reason is that there is no coordination between the 15 departments of the central Government connected with it. When the State Government sends a proposal to the Central Water Commission, queries are received there from 15 Central Government departments. These queries are not raised at a time. One department wakes up after six months and there is still another who takes action a year later. Thus, the queries regarding the project take many years, leading to a rise in the cost of the project and consequently a revised project estimate needs to be submitted. Like this, this cycle goes on.

The second reason is paucity of funds. Your Forest Act also comes in the way of these projects. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether efforts would be made to complete these projects soon by bringing about coordination between these 15 departments of the Central Government? Secondly, what is the amount of allocation, sought by the Government of Maharashtra and what is the amount sanctioned by the centre ?

[English]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : The Hon. Member's main grievance seems to be that the projects submitted by the Maharashtra Government for clearance are delayed because, according to him, the various Departments of the Government have no coordination with the Department of Irrigation. I have explained in this House on more than one occasion the reasons for delay. They are: