

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 12, 1986/ Phalguna 21,
1907 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*English*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE
(Rajapur) : Can Mr. Chavan be taken away
without permission, Sir ?

MR. SPEAKER : Even if it is of his
own accord, can you stop him ?

— — Now Questions. Prof. Dandavate.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Upper Age Limit for Civil Service Examinations

*244. PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to
state :

(a) whether Government have been
receiving large number of representations for
retaining the age limit of 28 years for the
Civil Service Examinations ;

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(b) if so, whether Government have
given these representations a serious consider-
ation particularly in view of the fact that
often students lose their study-years owing
to various factors beyond their control such
as strikes etc ; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose
to give a fresh look to the whole matter
harmonising the interest of the youth as well
as achievement of the goal of high standards
in services ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC
GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI
P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c) The
Government has been receiving representa-
tions for retaining the upper age limit for
appearing in the Civil Service Examinations
at 28. The Govt. has carefully and seriously
examined the matter taking into account the
interest of the youth as well as the need of
public service. The Government's objective
is to recruit, under strict competitive condi-
tions, young men and women fresh from
graduation and train and mould them to suit
the behavioural and skills requirements of
the Civil Services. Normally, candidates for
the Civil Service Examinations would acquire
minimum educational qualification by the
time they attain the age of about 21 years
which leaves them about 4 to 5 years time to
appear for the examination under an upper
age limit of 26 years. Therefore, even if
some students lose some time on account of
reasons beyond their control, still they have
adequate time to appear for the examination
with in an upper age limit of 26 years.
Therefore, Govt. has considered it appropriate
to restore the upper age limit of 26 years
with effect from the Civil Services Examina-
tion, 1987.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Will the hon. Minister tell us whether it is a fact that till 1971 for civil service examinations the age limit was 24 years and then in the year 1972 it was increased to 26 years? Is it a fact that after that there was a considerable demand among the educationists, among the students, students' organisations and teachers' bodies, and after consulting a number of scholars, experts, and university authorities, in 1979 this age limit was extended to 28 years? Against this background what are the special reasons (beyond what you have mentioned in the answer) that compelled you to increase the limit?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : It is correct that until the year 1971 the upper age limit was 24 years. It is also correct that in 1972 it was raised to 26 years. But the remainder of the question of the hon. Member (as far as I am able to see from the record) is not based on correct presumptions. Every expert body, every authority, which was asked to give an opinion in the matter, every committee which went into it, has repeatedly advised that the upper age limit should be maintained at 26 and some have even gone to the extent of saying that it should be restored to the old upper age limit of 24. It is no doubt correct that a decision was taken in late 1978 to increase the age limit to 28 year. But, from the record, I am in a position to state that that decision was taken against the advice of those who were asked to give their opinion; and those who were asked to give their opinion reiterated that the age limit must be 26 years. But for reasons which are not easily discernable a decision was taken in September-October, 1978 to increase the age limit to 28 years. The hon. Member knows very well who took that decision.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Before I put the second question, on the spill-over of the first question, I want to seek a clarification. Then I will put the second question. As far as consulting the opinion of various experts and various bodies is concerned, is it not a fact that the National Students' Union set up a 5-member committee and that committee submitted a unanimous recommendation to the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, that

it should be 28 years? Further, is it not a fact that Jamia Milia, Patna University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University had already recommended and students' bodies and teachers' bodies have already recommended, that it should be 28 years? So, you may first clarify this point before I go to the second supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER : They are talking about the experts.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : They also had experts in their committee. Just because the National Students Union is connected with the Congress, don't suppose they are no experts.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Some students belonging to the National Students Union did make a request that we should keep the upper age limit of 28 years. But after a delegation of that body met me and I explained to them the entire background and showed to them how recruitment to the Government suffers and will continue to suffer if we have an upper age limit of 28 years, the impression that I gained was that they were satisfied with the explanation given by me, and they agreed before me that the upper age limit of 28 might be kept only for this year's examination and it could be restored to 26 from the Civil Services Examination, 1987. The NSUI has taken a very reasonable position and I am grateful to NSUI for appreciating the decision of the Government. (*Interruptions.*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Not very good, Say very bad. I have taken permission to ask second supplementary. It was spill over of the first.

Is it not a fact that all those experts and scholars who had pleaded for keeping 28 years as the age limit had argued that so long as the disparity between urban region on the one side and rural and backward region on the other side remains, because the urban areas are subject to the influence of mass media, they have number of good educational atmosphere and other things whereas in the backward areas and rural areas, these facilities are lacking, it should be 28 years. Is it not a fact that not particularly elitists of the urban areas but rural

areas population, their representatives, educations, from those areas insisted that so long as this disparity continues, at least till that period, the upper age limit should be 28 years and consistent with the approach in the Budget, will you take cognizance of this particular disparity between rural and urban and try to stick to the upper age limit of 28.

MR. SPEAKER : Why don't you remove this difference in terms of education. There should be one set of education to all.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : If that happens, we would be very happy. I do not know when it is going to happen. If examinations are also removed, this 28 year limit is not necessary.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, I do not know of any expert body which has recommended that age limit should be 28 years based upon the so-called rural-urban divide. I know that a large number of expert bodies have examined all aspects including the so-called rural-urban divide.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Have you consulted rural experts ?

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Why does he say, so-called rural-urban divide ?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : The Kotbari Committee, Union Public Service Commission, the Director of S.V.P. National Police Academy, National Trading Conference on Training of Civil Servants and various others have taken into account all the aspects and advised that it should be restored to 26 years. Why I say so-called rural-urban divide is, we do not agree with the assumption that rural families can afford to educate their children for a longer period of time. On the contrary, the advice we have received is, rural families are anxious that after examination, their boys and girls, their sons and daughters, should take the competitive examination at a very early date and that the luxury of extended education is really a luxury which is available only to the urban areas and not to the rural areas. If we increase the age limit to 28, we believe, it will be a distinct advantage to the urban areas rather than rural areas.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I think, you are not going back further to 24 years.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Is it not a fact that most of the so-called experts from their childhood come from urban areas and from upper caste and highly educated families ? Is it not a fact that Indiraji herself recognised the fact that the so-called lower caste and rural folk and artisans and other people are not able to send their children early to the schools as the urban people do ? They are not able to provide special training for their children. That is the reason why for a very long time, they have been asking about the upper age limit.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I appreciate the sentiments of hon. Member but the facts are otherwise. Today, the minimum educational qualification is only graduation and if you work out the number of years which a student will take to acquire this minimum educational qualification, you will find that he will acquire the graduate degree when he reaches about 21 or 22 years of age. We are allowing three chances. Every candidate, we believe, can avail of these three chances in succession, before one reaches the age of 26 years.

The age is only one factor which we have to take into account, the age span of education. There are a number of other factors. For example, we have to have a certain amount of homogeneity in the recruitment. We have to be able to catch them young to mould them for the specific requirements of the civil service. We have to get the full benefit of service from them, the full term of service in Government before they are entitled to full pensionary benefits. We have to inculcate in them habits and methods of working which will suit the civil service. I do not think that we can look at it merely from the point of view of some rural families not being able to send their children to schools. (*Interruptions*) The point is every student can complete his graduation before he reaches the age of 22 years and, therefore, three chances will be available within the upper age limit of 26 years.

(*Interruptions*).

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : He had appeared for civil examination !

SHRI UTTAM RATHOD : I know one or two instances where the boys of the rural area could not take the examination though they had topped the list in their university examinations. What can you say about such cases ? They were late in joining the schools and so, they could not complete their graduation before the age that is prescribed by the Government. So, they could not appear in the IAS and IPS.

What do you say about such classes, especially when they are people from backward classes who are neither SC nor ST ?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : It is really the same question and I have said that it only takes 15 years of education to get a degree.

MR. SPEAKER : The question should have been put otherwise. The question should have been as to how the rural people who are getting education from the rural schools which have not the facilities that are available in the urban areas, stand up to the competition with those getting education in advanced schools.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I entirely agree. If the hon. House agrees with me, 15 years is the time that is required to acquire a graduate degree. The question is not really the upper age limit but to provide special coaching facilities in rural and backward areas.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : Who is doing it ?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : We have to provide special coaching facilities in rural areas, to enable these boys and girls to compete in these examinations. When we took this decision, we have also simultaneously taken a decision to establish coaching centres in backward areas to enable graduates in the rural areas to compete in this examination. If you examine closely, you will find that it has nothing to do with the upper age limit. The upper age limit only provides for three chances which is provided for.

Tree Plantation

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*247. **SHRI DHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK :**

SHRI SUBHASH YADAV :

Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to chalk out a special plan for planting trees in each State ;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the plan ; and

(c) the funds allocated for this purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI) : (a) Yes, Sir. An Action Plan has been chalked out.

(b) A statement is given below.

(c) **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS :**

(i) The funds available from major central sources for 1986-87 are :

| Programme | Rs. (crores) |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Social Forestry | 36 |
| 2. National Rural Employment Programme and rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme-earmarking for Social Forestry. | 219 |

(ii) Other allocations are partially available from Desert Development, Drought Prone Areas, Soil Conservation, Dryland Farming and other Programmes.

(iii) Besides, the States are expected to provide approximately Rs. 150 crores for the afforestation programme.