

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

*Thursday, May 7, 1987/Vaisakha 17,
1909 (Saka)*

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven
of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Only one day is left.

MR. SPEAKER : What happened?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : One day.

MR. SPEAKER : One day is left.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Sir, what will happen after that?

MR. SPEAKER : All would be well, we will meet again.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : It does not seem so, what would happen?

MR. SPEAKER : Hope sustains life. All would be well.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Ground Water Recession in Maharashtra

* 943. SHRI YASHWANTRAO GADAKH PATIL : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been made about the lowering of the ground water level in the drought stricken areas of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Based on the data from Hydrograph network stations, the ground water table has shown a general decline ranging from 0.08 m. to 4.53 m., between May, 1984 and May, 1986, in the drought prone areas of Maharashtra.

[*Translation*]

SHRI YASHWANTRAO GADAKH PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to the figures given by the hon. Minister, the general decline in the ground water table has been between 0.08 m. to 4.53 m. from 1984 to 1986. In Maharashtra out of 30 districts, 26 districts comprising 18,263 villages are facing severe drought. It has affected 2 crore people and 1 crore cattle. The water level is going down every day, fields and villages are being devastated and there is acute shortage of drinking water.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether Government has formulated any plan to combat this serious situation on a permanent basis and whether a decision has been taken to implement it and if so, the details thereof?

[*English*]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: It is true that many districts of Maharashtra are reeling under successive droughts; and that is the

reason why the ground water level is further going down, because there is not enough water from the precipitation, to re-charge the ground water. When the extraction of ground water is much more than the re-charge, naturally the ground water level goes down. This is more so in the drought-prone areas, not only in Maharashtra, but everywhere. For this, we have some Centrally-sponsored schemes, for the development of ground water. These schemes are meant to develop the ground water. Central assistance is provided on a 50-50 basis for the development of ground water. It is for the Government of Maharashtra to take benefit of this, and develop ground water, which will be beneficial at least to those drought-prone areas where the ground water level has gone down.

[*Translation*]

SHRI YASHWANTRAO GADAKH PATIL: My second question is that the Government of Maharashtra has been granted central assistance amounting to Rs. 36 crores only against their demand of Rs. 500 crores to combat the drought situation. May I know the number of irrigation schemes of Maharashtra Government which are pending in your Department and the time by which these schemes will be approved and whether financial assistance will be provided at the earliest to the State Government?

[*English*]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND : Sir, as I had earlier said that all the irrigation projects including major, medium and minor, are planned, formulated, funded and implemented in the State itself by the State Government. While they do send the major and medium irrigation projects for scrutiny with regard to techno-economic viability, they do not send the minor projects for clearance of anything else.

Since we have not received any minor irrigation scheme from Maharashtra for any Central assistance, as I said.....

PROF. N.G. RANGA: Medium scheme.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: This pertains to the ground water. Schemes relating to ground water are necessarily minor irrigation schemes because minor irrigation schemes are either surface water or ground water and 80 per cent of minor irrigation schemes relate to ground water.

DR. K.G. ADIYODI: Sir, the study reports regarding ground water surveys are not dependable. Throughout the country we are ploughing money like anything and the results are very meagre. Will the Government take special steps to find out whether there is dependable ground water in the country. Kerala is facing serious drought problem...

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Adiyodi, will you please repeat the question?

DR. K.G. ADIYODI: Sir, the Study Reports regarding the ground water survey are not dependable. We are ploughing in money like anything, but the results are very meagre. Will the Government take any step to study the drought prone areas to see whether there are any dependable underground water resources?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the Central Ground Water Board is established for the purpose of ascertaining the underground water resources. This is surveyed. About the surveys for assessing availability of the ground water in India, it is hoped, by the end of the Seventh Plan, the entire country would be covered.

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Sir, indiscriminate digging of tubewells is one of the reasons for the ground water table going down. What steps the Government has taken to see and to regulate the digging of tubewells and also what steps are being taken to conserve the rain water so that it can sink into sub-soil and thus the level of the ground water table is raised?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, though, we have not been able to lay any direct restrictions for the exploitation of the ground water directly in the States, we have made some attempts in the form of sending to the States a model Bill whereby they can regulate the development of the ground water, so that such exploitation by the rich farmers, by sinking deep borewells and thereby putting the poor farmers at a loss could be checked. This regulation of ground water is more essential when there is not enough precipitation in the area and the farmers have to resort to ground water. This model Bill has been sent to various States, but only Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have introduced these laws. But the implementation of the provisions of these laws has not been made even in these States.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Is it not a fact that the central team that visited drought area in Maharashtra was given all the details regarding the difficulty of drinking water as a result of water level going down? Was it not brought to the notice of the Ministry in this very House during debate on drought that there are machines which, if fitted in the drought areas, before digging the wells, can indicate at what depth the water is likely to be found out; and if such machines are available, then this problem can be solved? Since our Chief Minister said that these machines are not available to Maharashtra, will they be made available and will the necessary assistance be given? Is it not a fact that the Maharashtra Chief Minister pointed out to you about the assistance of Rs. 496 crores which he demanded, but you have given only Rs. 36 crores? Particularly in view of the difficulties about water, will you use your good offices with the Finance Ministry to see that this assistance of Rs. 36 crores is increased substantially?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I entirely share the concern of the hon. member for the people of drought prone area of Maharashtra, especially the area from where he comes. His area is very near to my area. It is a fact that without the necessary equipment to find the ground water level, it will be very difficult

to exploit the ground water and develop ground water. I do not know whether your Chief Minister has sent any proposal because we have not received any communication from the Chief Minister regarding non-availability of such equipment; if that is the case, I inform the House that I will look into it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: What about the assistance?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Are you asking for ground water development? You are asking for the relief of the drought hit people.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: For that also, we have spent a lot. Why don't you say something about it? He has very carefully avoided reference to assistance.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I do not want to avoid anything. We are now speaking about ground water development and ground water level of Maharashtra. He is asking about drought relief.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: For digging up of the wells which have to be done very deep, for that we need your assistance and for that we need money.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: We have provided central assistance which is available on 50 : 50 basis. If Maharashtra provides such money, we will also provide.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: You all may please listen, that clapping is possible only when both the hands are used. If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us. If trees are not there rainfall will also not be there and if rainfall is not there, seepage will also not be there. When there is no ground water, what can we draw out? Hence, the Government and the people should make a collective effort to solve this problem. In the absence of trees, there can be no solution.

[English]

Then we have to take care of the natural phenomenon. We have to take care of the nature. So, this has to be a collective effort from all sides of the House, people and the government. Then only we will be able to solve this problem in the time to come.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: That is why central assistance is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a natural phenomenon.

Railway Lines in Andhra Pradesh

*945. **SHRI V. TULSIRAM:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of districts in Andhra Pradesh where there is no railway line;

(b) the number and names of districts in Andhra Pradesh where new railway lines were laid during the last two five year plans for the development of the State;

(c) the length in kilometres of the railway track so laid in each district; and

(d) the length of both broad and metre gauge lines to be laid by the end of the Seventh Plan?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Nil.

(a) and (c). Rail lines have been laid in the following districts during the 5th and 6th Five Year Plans;

S. No.	Name of Districts	Length of rail line laid (Kms.)
1.	Nalgonda	110
2.	Khammam	49
3.	Anantapur	91

(d) During the VIIth Plan, 26 Kms. of BG line has been commissioned for traffic in 1986-87. Another 45 Kms. of BG line is planned for commissioning in 1987-88. Work is in progress on another 29 kms. of BG line and 100 kms. of MG line, fully or partly in Andhra Pradesh. Commissioning of these lines will depend on availability of resources for new lines in the coming years.

[Translation]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is very handsome and I think, he will also do his work handsomely. However, he evades work very beautifully. His replies are very beautifully worded but what is required is that the work should also be nicely done.

In the last line of his reply, the hon. Minister has stated that the commissioning of those lines will depend on the availability of funds. Are funds not available only for Andhra Pradesh? I send notices of so many questions, but it is my misfortune that they do not get priority in the ballot and only written replies are given. To each of my questions, your reply is that funds are not available. When I ask whether there is any scheme or whether something is going to be done, the reply is always in the negative. What have you done for Andhra Pradesh? 40 years have passed since we became independent and out of these 40 years, Andhra was under your rule for 35 years. The people of this State are so innocent that they had been supporting you for so long yet you did nothing for them. Now as Telugu Desam party is in power in that State for the last 4 years, you are not doing anything. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we need your help. We want justice and nothing else. After attaining independence, only one line from Bibinagar to Narrikurri has been sanctioned and even that has not been completed for want to funds.

MR. SPEAKER: Please ask your question.

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very important question and the hon. Minister has given a reply very cleverly.