

LOK SABHA

*Wednesday, September 9, 1981/Bhadra
18, 1903 (Saka)*

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

SHRI NIREN GHOSH (Dum Dum): What has happened to the Privilege Motion ?

MR. SPEAKER ; Order, please order. Q. 347-A.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Bonded Labour

*347-A. SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY :
SHRI RAM SWARUP
RAM :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Study Teams of the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission had observed that no sincere efforts had been made in the States to free the bonded labour;

(b) whether the Gandhi Peace Foundation estimated the number of bonded labour in the country at 26.17 lakhs; and

(c) if the answer to (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, steps being taken to wipe out bonded labour in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA) : (a) The Study Teams from the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission visited some of the bonded labour villages. They found that the process of identification and release was incomplete in the five districts visited. The observations of the Teams are, however, tentative. The final picture will emerge when the report of the Teams is completed.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Central Government is providing matching financial assistance to the State Governments for the speedy rehabilitation of bonded labour. The Chief Ministers have been requested in June, 1981 and also in July, 1981, to order more extensive surveys and to ensure that all bonded labourers are identified, freed and rehabilitated. They have also been requested to devise schemes which will ensure rehabilitation of the freed labour on a more durable basis so that they do not revert to bondage.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY : I am glad that the Government have realised the need to wipe out the system of bonded labour in this country as one of the important items under the Twenty Point Programme. Bonded labour is a kind of slavery in this country. Unfortunately, some sections of the people not only allow it to continue, but they try to maintain it at the cost of the country. So far six questions have been asked on bonded labour in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, but the:

Government have developed grounds to reply to them in such a way that it comes to not properly answering it.

Coming to the answer, it has been stated that the State Governments has been repeatedly requested time and again to conduct extensive surveys to identify the magnitude of bonded labour and also rehabilitate them. But unfortunately, the surveys reveal that the State Government have so far identified the number of bonded labour at 1.21 lakhs. The National Sample Survey Organisation has put it at 3.41 lakhs. Gandhi Peace Foundation clearly identifies it at more than 26 lakhs. This clearly shows the manner in which the state Governments are working on this scheme. Then, coming to the provision of matching the financial assistance, the assistance was given to various states. I am sorry that really some states have not made use of it. There is a state to which Rs. 28 lakhs have been allotted and the whole amount was deposited in a Co-operative Bank.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you making a question or a speech ?

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY : This is the way the State Governments are responding.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put the question. This is not the way.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY : There are serious lapses. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether this lapse in implementing the abolition of this bonded labour system has been realised and if they have realised, how are they going to implement the whole scheme of abolition of bonded labour ?

MR. SPEAKER : I am going to disallow it. You have taken five minutes in putting the question.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY : If they have realised the lapses which have been stated clearly, how are they going to implement ?

MR. SPEAKER : That is the only question.

SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA : So far as the implementation of the Act is concerned, the Hon. Member should know that it is the State Government who have to give the necessary powers to the District Magistrates for its implementation. The Act's also provide for setting up a vigilance committee in each District to advise the District Magistrate regarding implementation of the Act.

SHRI KUSUMA KRISHNA MURTHY : The whole scheme of bonded labour is covered by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. The current information reveals that 4,496 cases have been registered under this Act but so far about 657 cases have been disposed of. The reason they give is that it is for want of evidence and all that. There is a similar kind of disability with regard to the Civil Rights Protection Act.

In view of that, I would like to know from the Government whether they have realised any difficulty in making this Act most comprehensive and, if so, whether they would like to have any basic changes in the Act in order to enable the implementing authorities to identify and rehabilitate this bonded labour.

SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA : Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour is a continuous process. As far as the implementation is concerned, a Committee of Ministers has been formed and a meeting is going to be held on the 14th of this month to see how to make this Act more forceful and comprehensive.

श्री रामस्वरूप राम : अध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने जो जवाब दिया है, उससे ऐसा लगता है कि ज्यों-ज्यों दवा की, मर्ज बढ़ता ही गया। इस प्रथा को समाप्त करने के लिए सन् 1975 से हमने काफी प्रोग्रेसिव कदम उठाए हैं और कुछ महकमों में हमें सफलता भी मिली है, लेकिन कमीशन की रिपोर्ट में बताया गया है कि सारे देश में कुछ जिलों को छोड़कर 105180 वाउचर्ड लेबर की पहचान की गई, जिनमें से 104749 को मुक्त किया गया है और 31844 का पुनर्वास किया गया है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप मवाल पूछिए। आपका प्रश्न क्या है ?

श्री रामस्वरूप राम : प्रश्न ही पूछ रहा हूँ। इन मजदूरों को पुनर्वासित करने का कार्यक्रम बहुत धीमी गति से चल रहा है। यहाँ तक कि आज भी बिहार के छोटा नागपुर से मजदूरों को लाकर पंजाब और हरियाणा में उनमें बंधुआ मजदूरों के रूप में काम लिया जा रहा है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : सवाल तो करिए।

श्री रामस्वरूप राम : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि जिन बंधुआ मजदूरों को ग्राइडिंग-टी-फाई किया गया है, मुक्ति दिलाई गई है, उनकी पुनर्वासित करने के लिए प्रत्येक मजदूर पर कितनी राशि सरकार खर्च करने जा रही है ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह पहले ही पूछ लेते आप।

उद्योग और श्रम मंत्री (श्री नारायण दत्त तिवारी) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, माननीय सदस्य ने भूतपूर्व बंधुआ मजदूरों के पुनर्वास के संबंध में जो चिन्ता व्यक्त की है, उसके बारे में मैं उनकी जागरूकी देना चाहता हूँ

कि सरकार ने इस कार्य के लिए छठी पंच-वर्षीय योजना के लिए 25 करोड़ रुपए का प्रावधान किया है और इस वर्ष की योजना के लिए 3 करोड़ रुपए का प्रावधान किया गया है और राज्यों को भी स्पष्टतः लिख दिया गया है कि इनको पुनर्वासित करने के लिए योजनाओं के तहत ठोस कार्यवाही करें।

इस बारे में अभी सुयोग्य मंत्राली जी ने बताया ...।

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : मंत्राली जी ?

श्री नारायण दत्त तिवारी : व्याकरण की दृष्टि से इस शब्द में संभवतः कोई दोष नहीं है, लेकिन यदि इस शब्द का प्रयोग संसद में नहीं होता तो मैं मंत्री शब्द का ही प्रयोग करूँगा। मैं विनम्रतापूर्वक आपने की सुधार लेता हूँ। विदुषी मंत्री हैं उन्होंने जो अभी उल्लेख किया है उसमें स्पष्ट कहा है कि मंत्रियों की समिति इस सम्बन्ध में सारे श्रम मंत्रियों को बुलाकर के फिर विचार करने को कह रही है।

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : जिस कार्यक्रम मूल्यांकन संगठन दल की चर्चा की गई है इस प्रश्न में, इस दल ने क्या बिहार में जा कर वहाँ बंधुआ मजदूरों को पहचानने का प्रयास किया है, अगर किया है तो उस सूचे के सिलसिले में वह अध्ययन दल किस नतीजे पर पहुँचा है और उसके बारे में सरकार की प्रतिक्रिया क्या है ?

श्री नारायण दत्त तिवारी : जैसा कि मूल उत्तर में स्पष्ट किया गया है जो टीमें राज्यों में गई हैं उन्होंने यह कहा है कि अभी कार्य अधूरा है। नालदा, बिहार में जो टीम गई थी उस ने भी यही बात कही

है। जैसे हमारी सुयोग्य मंत्री जी ने बताया है मुख्य मंत्रियों को इस सम्बन्ध में लिखा गया है और स्पष्ट रूप से कहा गया है कि दुबारा सर्वे करने की आवश्यकता ही तो वह भी किया जाना चाहिये। मैं केवल एक पैरा इस पत्र से पढ़ देना चाहता हूँ।

"We all agree on the basic national commitment of total abolition of this system. It is envisaged that the so-called masters of bonded labour will not voluntarily disclose existence of such labour or free them. To meet such a situation, certain specific paras have been included in the Bonded Labour System Act, 1976, to enable the Administration to enforce its policy. Recourse to punishment under these provisions should not cause us, any hesitation. I would, therefore, request you kindly to have another thorough and determined probe made into this entire aspect, take urgent steps to rehabilitate the bonded labour wherever identified and, if necessary, impose punishment on the defaulters under the law".

SHRI JAGDISH TYLER : Sir, we still have bonded labour in our country. There are divergent estimates about the extent of the bonded labour in our country, different agencies have given different figures like the State Government which estimates it at 1.81 lakhs. The Gandhi Peace Foundation estimate is 26.27 lakhs and that of the National Sample Survey is 3.45 lakhs and so on. Now as part of the 25-Point Programme, a Scheme to identify, release and rehabilitate bonded labour has been launched in 1975. What action has been taken by the Government to speed up the implementation of this Programme ?

Some of the State Governments do not appear to be pursuing this Programme. Not only the rehabilitation schemes under this Programme are half-hearted but the pro-

cess of implementation is also incomplete. Is this problem of bonded labour due basically to poverty and its exploitation by certain anti-social elements for quick gains and, if so, what Government proposes to do to eliminate bonded labour ?

SHRIMATI RAM DULARI SINHA : I have already stated that it is a continuing process and Hon. Members should know that the identified bonded labour by the State Governments is 1,26,219 and not as he has mentioned and out of that 1,07,012 are rehabilitated. Only 11,207 are yet to be rehabilitated. The process is going on for their rehabilitation.

Prohibition to CSD (I) Run Canteens for Local Purchase

*348. **SHRI R. L. P. VERMA ; SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI :** Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that CSD (I) Bombay forbids its unit run canteens to make local purchases of reputable and better quality items, like safety matches;

(b) if so, whether Government propose advising the authorities in the matter to reshape the policies and leave it to the local authorities whether to resort to local purchases or not without compromising quality;

(c) whether civilians working in the Defence Headquarters are not permitted to avail of canteen facilities though being the part of the defence organisation; and

(d) if so, are they proposed to be permitted so as to help them to tide over the crisis of soaring prices ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL): (a) Unit-run Canteens are required to obtain