

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Vasant Kumar Pandit.

Cultivation of "Kesari" Dal

*757. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints from Vindhya Pradesh region of Madhya Pradesh, parts of U.P. and Bihar that agricultural labourers are being paid their wages in the form of poisonous pulse namely "Kesari Dal";

(b) whether the Department has surveyed and identified villages in Madhya Pradesh and in other states which are affected by Kesari Dal distribution and cultivation;

(c) what steps are being taken to ensure implementation of ban on cultivation and distribution of Kesari Dal by the concerned State Governments; and

(d) what steps are taken to prevent adulteration of other "dals" by Kesari Dal?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) Some general reports in this regard have been brought to the notice of the Government.

(b) According to the report of the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad under the Indian Council of Medical Research, the following districts/areas had been identified to have had outbreaks of Lathyrism caused by eating large amount of 'Kesari dal'—

Bihar:—

Patna, Monghyr, Darbhanga.
Madhya Pradesh:—

Saugor, Bhopal, Hoshangabad, Narsinghpur, Jabalpur, Damoh, Bilaspur, Khandwa, Raipur, Chindwara, Seoni, Rewa, Satna, Panna, Tikamgarh.

Orissa:

Orissa.

Punjab:

Norowal.

U.P.:—

Allahabad, Mirzapur, Lucknow, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Lakhimpur, Bahraich, Hardoi, Rampur, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Ballia, Sitapur, Unnao, Badaun, and Basti.

West Bengal:—

Murshidabad.

(c) and (d). Under Rule 44-A of Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, 1955 it has been provided that no person in any State shall sell or offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession for the purpose of sale, under any description or for use as an ingredient in the preparation of any article of food intended for sale 'Kesari Dal' and its products in any form. Notifications giving effect to the aforesaid prohibition are required to be issued by the State Governments. All the States except Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal have prohibited the use of Kesari Dal for human consumption.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Hon. Speaker Sir, the casual manner in which this reply has been given on this very important topic is very disturbing. 'Kesari Dal' known in scientific terminology as *lathyrus sativus* contains lethal poisonous substance. For the last so many years this has been produced in M.P., Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal. From the reply you will see that almost 50 to 60 per cent of the districts are producing this *Dalns* in M.P. and Bihar. The Government has not given many other facts such as the reports of the ICMR and National Institute of Nutrition. All that has been stated here is that under Rule 44A of the Prevention of Food adulteration Rules it has been notified. I have asked two specific questions. Whether this dal is

being given to bonded and contractual labour; if so, what steps does Government contemplate to stop distribution of this dal among these persons? After knowing its fatal and poisonous effects, is the Government going to ban its cultivation or monitor cultivation had distribution of this dal? Merely banning its "sale or its exhibition for sale and using it in articles to be sold", will not solve the problem. I am surprised that in one Department of the Government, this dal is being cultivated and produced while in another Department, its sale has been banned.

In 1955, this question was raised by me in Maharashtra Assembly when there were some cases of lathyrism. And it was banned. It was also banned in Karnataka. But the main producing centres are still producing this dal. Will the hon. Minister enlighten this House that if it is poisonous and unfit for human consumption, then for what purpose is this dal being used?

MR. SPEAKER: Ask simple and straight question whether the Government is going to ban it or not.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: The reply has been given that the Health Department has issued directions.

MR. SPEAKER: Then ask the straight question. Why are you making the question so long?

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: May I know whether the Government has ascertained even after this question was tabled that this dal is being given to contractual labour and bonded labour particularly in the States where bonded labour is there? If this dal is poisonous for human consumption, is the Government thinking of banning this dal which is not possible because the lobby of rich farmers is operating? Madhya Pradesh issued the notification banning produc-

tion of this dal but within weeks, it had to withdraw that. Are you going to ban cultivation or monitor the distribution of this dal?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: The Government's stand with regard to the use and sale of this dal has already been stated by me. There States have not banned its sale. If the sale has not been banned, the use also cannot be banned. They are West Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Whether it is used by bonded labour or by producers themselves and other consumers, it is just the same thing. Anybody can use it if it has not been prohibited by the State Government. This is a crop which is generally cultivated by small farmers in drought prone areas and also in areas where rainfall is very high. This is a crop which can be raised in mixed cultivation with rice and also with wheat. It is highly drought resistant and it can also grow in high moisture conditions. That is why, people still have not given up the cultivation of this dal. But there are some new varieties of this dal that are being cultivated. They do not have so much of neuro-toxic content as local varieties, which have been proved to be very harmful for health, that is about 0.5 per cent and new varieties have less than 0.2 per cent or something. That is not supposed to be very harmful. But in parts where it is used, people boil it, throw away the water and then it is cooked and taken.

PROF. MAHU DANDAVATE: 0.5 per cent persons die?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Nobody dies. But it has got its ill effects. We are trying to propagate new varieties of the dal and also educating the people to cultivate masoor. But, traditionally, people have been cultivating it and they do not easily give it up; they cannot be persuaded to give it up all at once. But now there is a general feeling that this dal is harmful and people know it is har-

ful. There has been a long debate in Parliament, and in the press also, that the *kesari dal* should not be grown. We are trying to see that we give it to all the media engaged in the public like Press, Radio, T.V. under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

SHRI SONOTSH MOHAN DEV: Are you talking of Kishori or Kesari, our Minister?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: That Minister is Kesra.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not Kishori, at least.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: It is a male Minister.

Under these circumstances we are trying to see what can be done. It depends upon the States to see that this *dal* is not produced. They can prohibit its cultivation and sale, if they like. The advice of the Government of India has already been given, on the basis of the report from the Health Ministry.

DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Is it a fact that during the last ten years the production of *kesari dal* has increased in the country? Is it also a fact that the Government is not only trying to introduce new varieties, but also experimenting with high yielding varieties of *kesari dal*? If so, what will be done with regard to the monitoring of the distribution and movement of this *dal* by the Centre, instead of passing on the buck to the States?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I have told the position as it stands and also the law. I do not think the production of this *dal* has increased substantially. I am not sure; it might have become static at some level. But, as I stated earlier, with the extension of the irrigation facilities, with the newly developed varieties of seeds and various credits being supplied to the farmers, with the education that is being imparted by the extension officers, we hope that its cultivation will reduce. At present the total production of *kesari dal* is about 0.5 million to 1

million tonnes and this is not much for a particular variety of *dal*.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I am asking this question without prejudice to my Calling Attention Notice on the same subject, which you have admitted.

MR. SPEAKER: That has been a casualty of this question.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: To parts (a) and (b) of the question, the hon. Minister has referred to the general reports in this particular regard, which have been brought to the notice of the Government. He has referred in particular to the Report of the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad. I would like to know from him whether he has already studied a report, prepared by the Gandhi Peace Foundation, the title of which is *Langde Gaon Ki Khani*, Mr. Speaker: *Gaay*?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: *Gaon*. If you do not understand *gaon*, who will understand it?

In that particular report, prepared by the Gandhi Peace Foundation, it has been specifically mentioned that they have conducted a sample survey in certain areas in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh, and they have specifically stated that the bonded labour has been using this particular *kesari dal* and that they are given this in lieu of wages that are supposed to be paid to the bonded labour. Is it true that this malpractice has been going on?

SHRI M. RAM GOPAL REDDY: There is no bonded labour.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: You know it very well.

I want to know whether his attention has been drawn to that particular report, prepared by the Gandhi Peace Foundation, where it is mentioned that due to the dangerous characteristic of the *kesari dal*, no matter what is the percentage of the poisonous element, if it is swallowed, in

that case, they suffer from lathyrism and their legs get paralysed. If their legs get paralysed, in that case, the agricultural labour would lose the capacity to do agricultural work. Therefore, if the State Governments, of their own, are not prepared to ban *kesari dal*, will the Central Government issue guidelines, as in the case of cement? Will the Central Government advise the various States that the cultivation of this poisonous *kesari dal* should be stopped? And if the State Governments are not taking due notice of this particular poisonous character, I do not know whether they themselves are paralysed as a result of swallowing *kesari dal* and if they have not done that, in that case you must warn them that the Centre will not tolerate cultivation of this poisonous *dal* which will ultimately spoil the labour relations. I want a categorical answer.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We have taken note of the suggestions of the hon. Member and his sentiments in this regard.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The first part is not a suggestion. I will repeat my question again. It is a sharp question. Don't give a blunt answer.

My first question was whether it has been brought to his notice about the Gandhi Peace Foundation's Report, *Langdi Gaon Ki Kahani*, which has been released by one Chief Minister in Delhi. I would like to know whether your attention has been drawn to that Report, whether you have studied it and whether you are going to act on the recommendations of that Report.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir, I have not studied that particular Report, but I have seen several other stories on the subject and I agree with the Hon. Member that this particular *dal* has harmful effects on human beings when they consume it.

MR. SPEAKER: Then you should stop this.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We want to stop it. (Interruptions).

जो इन्होंने बताया है, मैं उनको भी पढ़ लूंगा ।

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Sir, the question we are discussing is important because of the fact that it involves the poorer sections of our society. Not only the news has appeared in recent past but this has been going on and this is a very dangerous *dal*, as you know. In our State it is known as *Kesari*.

MR. SPEAKER: Did you have some chance of tasting it, Professor?

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I have not tasted it.

(Interruptions).

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, if he had tasted it, he would have been more militant.

MR. SPEAKER: I would not have allowed him!

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Will the hon. Minister agree that by your vigorous planning and all that you have been able to keep at least 70 per cent of the people illiterate and whatever we discuss in Parliament and whatever appears in the newspapers, these things do not reach the village people, the illiterate people, who generally suffer from it. So, will the Government start educating the masses—because this is important, even the law will not be able to help it—about the dangerous consequences of taking this particular type of pulse and if so, in what way you want to do this propaganda and all that in those regions where these are produced and consumed?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Whatever is being discussed in this House will also educate the people about it, but taking note of the suggestion of the hon. Member I would request him, through you, Sir, to persuade his West Bengal Government to ban it at least like other States have banned it, before he gives any suggestions to us.

(Interruptions).

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, generally

this is not consumed there, but even then since you have said I shall...

MR. SPEAKER: Pursue.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: ...pursue it now and also I hope to do it after the elections when we come into power. But you also fulfil the part of your promise about the propaganda which should be carried on.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: After the elections in Bengal there is no hope of your coming.

(Interruptions).

श्री राम स्वरूप राम : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जो यह केसारी दाल है, एक दाल खिसारी हमारे बिहार में पैदा होती है। वह भी एक जहरीला पदार्थ है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : राम स्वरूप जी, मंत्री जी से बैठ कर सलाह कर लेना। कहीं वे यह दाल बैन करते करते कोई दूसरी दाल बैन न कर दें।

श्री राम स्वरूप राम : अध्यक्ष महोदय, यह केसारी दाल बिहार के कई जिलों में बोया जाता है और खाया जाता है। यह जहरीला पदार्थ है। इस दाल को छोटे-छोटे किसान बोते हैं और समाज का बहुत निचला तबका, उपेक्षित तबका इसका उपभोग करता है, हरिजन-आदिवासी इसका उपभोग करते हैं, इसको खाने से लोग अपंग हो जाते हैं। यह एक तरह से अपंग बनाने का कारखाना खुल गया है। सारे देश में इस पर रोक लगाई जानी चाहिये।

मेरा पहला सवाल यह है कि यह बहुत गंभीर मामला है, यह अपंग बनाने के कारखाने के रूप में पूरे देश में काम कर रहा है। इस विषय की गंभीरता को देखते हुये क्या इसकी उपज पर प्रति-बन्ध लगाने का विचार है या नहीं?

दूसरा मेरा प्रश्न यह है कि क्या सरकार एक समिति बनायेगी जो इस मामले की पूरी जांच करे कि इस दाल को खाने से कितने व्यक्ति अपंग हुये हैं?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अब तो दाल की खिचड़ी पक रही है।

राव वीरेन्द्र सिंह : अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप जानते हैं कि किसानों के ऊपर कोई कानूनी पाबन्दी लगाना कि वे एक खास दाल को नहीं खायेंगे, बहुत मुश्किल काम है। जितना गंभीर यह विषय है, उतनी ही गंभीर यह बात है कि कौन सा कानून पाबन्दी लगाने के लिये लगाया जाये। वे अपने स्वयं के उपयोग के लिये उगाते हैं, कैसे पाबन्दी लगाई जा सकती है हां, प्रचार माध्यमों से एजुकेट करने की बात है तो उसके लिये प्रयत्न जारी हैं। कितने लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है, इसके लिये समिति बनाने की जरूरत मेरे ख्याल से नहीं है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : रोकने की जरूरत है इसको।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : अध्यक्ष महोदय, खेसारी की दाल का जहां तक मामला है, मैंने खेसारी की दाल 10 साल तक खायी है। वालेश्वर जी यहां पर बैठे हैं, इन्होंने भी बचपन में खायी होगी। हम लोगों को अभी तक मालूम नहीं है। आपने कहा है कि हम लोगों को मालूम करवा रहे हैं। हम लोगों को अभी एक साल से मालूम हुआ है कि यह जहरीला पदार्थ है। इसलिये मंत्री महोदय का जवाब गलत है, इसको मैं प्रूफ करूंगा।

तारिक अनवर जी के यहां यह दास होती है, उनके जिले का नाम नहीं है,

केदार पाण्डे जी के यहां होती है, इनके जिले पश्चिम चंपारण का जिक्र नहीं है, समस्तीपुर जिले के मंत्री बैठे हैं, उस जिले का भी नाम नहीं है, भूतपूर्व मुख्य मंत्री जो यहां बैठे हैं, उनके जिले का भी नाम नहीं है, कई मन्त्रियों के जिले का जिक्र इसमें नहीं है।

श्री मधु दण्डवते : अब पता लग गया कि सब पेरालाइज्ड क्यों हो गये हैं।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : इस तरह से यह रिपोर्ट गलत है। खेसारी दाल मजदूरों को ही दिया जाता है, ऐसी बात नहीं है, छोटे किसानों को भी मालूम नहीं है। इसलिये लिटरेचर के माध्यम से या रेडियो के माध्यम से खूब कसकर प्रचार करवाया जाये कि यह जहरीला पदार्थ है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह सुझाव बहुत अच्छा है।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : इसका खूब जमकर प्रचार करवायें, दूसरा मेरा सवाल यह है कि इतने दिनों से खेसारी दाल का उपयोग हो रहा है, क्या सरकार यह पता लगायेगी कि और इस तरह के कौन-कौन से अनाज जहरीले हैं और लोग उनको खा रहे हैं। क्या सरकार इसके बारे में एक व्यापक सर्वेक्षण करवायेगी ?

राव बीरेन्द्र सिंह : मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ कि जो सजेशन आनरेबल मेम्बर ने दिया है इसका सारा मीडिया प्रैस का इनफॉर्मेशन एण्ड ब्राड-कास्टिंग मिनिस्ट्री का रेडियो और टैलीविजन सब प्रचार करेंगे। बार-बार मैंने कहा है कि मूख्तलिफ किस्म की दालें होती हैं और सारी दालें इतनी जहरीली नहीं होती जिससे नुकसान हो। हो सकता है पासवान जी जहां से आते हैं वहां की दाल ज्यादा जहरीली होती हो।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : मैंने सवाल पूछा था कि सर्वेक्षण करायेंगे और पता लगायेंगे कि दूसरे जो अनाज हैं उनमें कौन-कौन से

अनाज जहरीले हैं ? इसका जबाब नहीं आया है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अगला सवाल।

Buffer stock of foodgrains

*759. SHRI HARIHAR SOREN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) what were the buffer stock position of foodgrain maintained in different States in the year 1980-81 and 1981-82;

(b) whether Government have a proposal to raise the buffer stock of foodgrains in 1982-83; and

(c) if so, the State-wise target set in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a) Buffer stocks of foodgrains are maintained on all-India basis and, subject to constraint like available storage capacity, movement feasibility etc., these are kept at various centres in the country for meeting requirements of distribution. Position in regard to total stocks of foodgrains with the Central and State Governments in various States, as on 1-4-1980 and 1-4-1981, is indicated in the Statement Nos. I & II laid on the Table of the House.

(b) As per decision taken in 1973, a buffer stock of 12 million tonnes of foodgrains is required to be maintained over and above the operational stocks ranging between 3.5 to 3.8 million tonnes on 1st April and 8.2 to 8.8 million tonnes on 1st July of the year. The present level of stocks being below this level, efforts are being made to build up the stocks by maximising procurement as well as regulated release of foodgrains for their judicious utilization. The Government have also constituted a Technical Group in April, 1981 for working out the national buffer policy for foodgrains for the Sixth Plan period.