

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Monday, August 28, 1978/Bhadra 6,
1900 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Object of Introducing prohibition

469. SHRI G. NARASIMHA REDDY: Will the Minister of EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the main object of introducing prohibition of liquor by legislation;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that earlier in some States this was introduced and due to its failure it was withdrawn; and

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that such legislation will take away the right of some people for relaxation by taking drinks etc. after hard work?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE (DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER): (a) The object of prohibition of liquor is improvement of public health and securing betterment in the social and economic condition of the people as enunciated in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

(b) Some States have amended or withdrawn their enactments in the
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past. However, Tamil Nadu reintroduced prohibition. Prohibition being a state subject, they are competent to decide the pace as well as changes.

(c) Government are aware that such legislation will put restriction on taking drinks but the object of the measure, which is in pursuance with the Directive principle of State Policy, is to improve health and alleviate the social and economic distress caused by intoxicating drinks.

SHRI G. NARASIMHA REDDY: I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that smoking is more injurious to health and if so, whether the Government is considering prohibition of smoking also and including the 'ban on smoking' in the Constitution as one of the Directive Principles. If this is not possible, then why not delete prohibition also from the Directive Principles?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: Sir, it is a debatable question which is worse. That is the position. However, if the hon. Member brings a Bill for amendment of the Constitution, certainly this House will consider this.

SHRI G. NARASIMHA REDDY: He has not answered my first question. I wanted to know whether smoking is more injurious, if not equally injurious, to health.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He has already answered, he said it is debatable as to which is more and which is less.

SHRI G. NARASIMHA REDDY: This is a social problem which cannot be solved by legislation, as it has al-

ready been proved and the best way of solving it is by all party cooperation and propagating it. In view of this I would like to know whether the Government would stop banning prohibition through legislation. If the Government is serious in achieving this objective by legislation, then, I would like to know whether the Government is prepared to introduce this as one of the disqualifications to hold any elected posts....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question cannot be that long. You cannot make a speech.

SHRI G. NARASIMHA REDDY: It is not a speech. I would like to know whether the Government is prepared to issue necessary orders, to start with, asking all the Ministers of the Central Government and the State Governments to stop drinking or quit the posts.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: The Government believes that legislation and education should go together. We are quite aware of the fact that mere legislation would not be sufficient. Therefore, ample emphasis is also being put on the education part of it. As regards putting a ban on the Ministers taking to drinks, already we have made a request to the Ministers not to drink.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: This policy of prohibition had been tried in several countries and failed everywhere. In India itself, in the erstwhile Bombay State when the Prime Minister was the Chief Minister, it was tried and it has miserably failed. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI K. S. CHAVDA: He is misleading the House. This is unfair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Chavda, it is very unfortunate that you should enter the controversy. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Chavda, I know about prohibition more than you. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Come to the question.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: In Goa, there are more bars than tea shops.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Put your question.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: There are no health hazards whatsoever from liquor in Goa and there have been no deaths while there are so many deaths in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Will the Government put this very serious policy or very great implication to an opinion poll or referendum?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: The hon. Member has stated many things and has drawn many conclusions which are not borne out by facts. In the first place, the Maharashtra Government has not scrapped prohibition. According to the officially stated policy, they have rationalised the policy of prohibition. Mr. Naik gave a declaration, how it can be rationalised. Then again, we cannot have a comparison, that as prohibition has failed in some of the countries outside India, it is bound to fail here also, because in some countries in the West, perhaps eighty per cent of the people take to drink, whereas in our country only twenty per cent of the people take to drink. So, it is not true to say that this will fail. It has not failed in Gujarat and it has not failed in Tamil Nadu and both these States are progressing industrially, educationally and in other respects.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: He has not answered my question. Will the Minister submit this matter to referendum? My question has not been answered.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Barrow.

SHRI A. E. T. BARROW: Will the Minister tell us what subsidy is being given to the States and whether the subsidy is not only for implementing prohibition but also for stopping illicit distillation and what amount of money has been earmarked by the Government for educational purposes and what programmes do they have in the educational field for this purpose?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: The hon. Member has clubbed many questions.

AN HON. MEMBER: *rose.*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry, if you keep on standing I will never call you. You have been standing from the very start of the question hour. That is not the way to attract the attention of the Chair. You must only catch the eye, but not by standing.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: So far as the compensation is concerned, the Central Government has assured the States that it will bear fifty per cent of the loss on account of excise duty resulting from introduction of prohibition. Other schemes are also being formulated for utilising alcohol for other purposes like industrial purposes by mixing it up with petroleum. Schemes are also being drawn up by the States for purposes of providing jobs to people who go out of employment.

SHRI A. E. T. BARROW: How Much will be the loss of revenue? He has not answered that.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: I have already prefaced my answer saying that several questions have been clubbed in a single question. If these questions are put separately, I shall try to answer. For the loss of excise revenue, amount is not calculable now because prohibition is not being introduced all at once: it will be introduced in a phased programme of four years. Therefore, the total

amount which will have to be paid will have to be calculated in stages.

SHRI YASHWANT BOROLE: I would like to know from the Minister whether there is any programme which is being chalked out or phased out in order that there will be complete prohibition within four years.

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: Last year, Ministers from different States assembled at a meeting of the Central Prohibition Council and decided that prohibition will be introduced through a phased programme in four years, and it is for the State Governments to draw up their programmes. Accordingly, many States have drawn up programmes.

As far as the Central Government is concerned, we have issued guidelines. In some States, certain districts are being made dry while in other States certain dry days per week are being introduced. In this way, they are chalking out their own programmes.

SHRI L. K. DOLEY: On principle, I do not object to this Government introducing the policy of prohibition. But the point is that there are a large number of people, particularly people from whom this material is a vital part of their food. Moreover, most of the tribals are in need of this material for many of their religious ceremonies as this is part of their culture. I would like to ask the Government as to how this section of the population of the nation can be forced to follow the policy of prohibition unless alternative measures like some other substitute to form part of their food and to serve the purpose of their culture, are provided for. Therefore, we are opposed to this policy....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But what is your question? It is not a question of your opposing it.

SHRI L. K. DOLEY: I would like to know what is the alternative.

**DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUN-
DER:** Government is aware of the need for special provisions for tribals, and the following are the main guidelines which have been decided upon. In tribal areas where prohibition is enforced, no precipitate action will be taken. The contract system of liquor vending in tribal areas should be given up. Where prohibition is not in force, the tribal people should be allowed to prepare their beverage for individual and social purposes, but not for commercial purposes.

In this way, various guidelines have been provided for, especially for the tribal areas.

श्री हुकम चन्द कच्छबाय : मंत्री जी ने अपने प्रश्न के उत्तर में बताया है कि किन राज्यों में सुमाव दिये हैं। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसे कितने राज्य हैं जिन्होंने अब तक अपने विचार नहीं भजे हैं। आपने यह भी कहा है कि राज्य सरकारें कितना खर्च करेंगीं बतायेंगे। उसके पहले आपने भी कोई नीति निर्धारित की है, पसा निर्धारित किया है कि केन्द्र इतनी सहायता इन राज्यों को देगा। जो सहायता देगा वह किस अनुपात से देगा, जिन जिन राज्यों ने पैसा मांगा है उतना देगा या केन्द्र अपनी आवश्यकता के आधार पर देगा ?

डा० प्रताप चन्द्र चन्द्र : मान्यवर, केन्द्रीय सरकार ने यह तय किया है कि राज्य सरकार की जो क्षति होगी उसका 50 फीसदी अनुपात से देंगे। इसके लिये यह तो अभी हम नहीं कह सकते कि कितनी क्षति होगी। जब प्रोहिबिशन लागू करेंगे उसके बाद में तय हो सकता है।

दूसरी बात यह है कि जो हमारे पास एक फेहरिस्त है वह काफी बड़ी है, किन्तु राज्यों ने प्रोहिबिशन पूरा लागू किया है और कौन

राज्य धीरे धीरे लागू कर रहे हैं अगर सबस्य चाहें तो मैं वह फेहरिस्त दिखला सकता हूँ क्योंकि पढ़ कर बताने में काफी दमल सवेगा।

DR. SAROJINI MAHISHI: May I know whether the Government have any information as to how many licences have been issued for setting up new distilleries and breweries in the different States and whether the Government will ever think of going in for a technical audit of the total production of alcohol so as to avoid misuse in the name of medicine and also industrial purposes?

**DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUN-
DER:** I require notice for this question.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: No country has succeeded in bringing legislation for curbing social evils like drinking. We have seen and experienced....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: But where is the question?

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: A number of people are dying as a consequence of the manufacture of....

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Lakkappa, please come to the question.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Due to adulteration and other things, liquor tragedies occur. I would like to say that instead of bringing such legislation, it is better to see to it that the manufacturers introduce a lower percentage of alcohol content and produce it without any adulteration. The percentage of alcohol should be 3 per cent or 4 per cent instead of 10 per cent. Thereby, you can diminish the evil of drinking, but, at the same time, you should control the manufacture. Will you bring up such legislation?

DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER: The Hon. Member is not right in saying that liquor deaths occur only in dry States or in dry areas. There are lots of liquor deaths in Cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay where there is no prohibition. Therefore, his whole premise is wrong. Mere reduction of alcohol content will not bring about the desired effect because, if a huge quantity of these drinks is taken, the same deleterious effect will be there as when a small quantity with a heavy dose of alcohol is taken..

Damage of wheat at Gandhidham

*470. **SHRI K. A. RAJAN:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 1.4 lakh tonnes of wheat stored in open for the last three years in Gandhidham town has become unfit for human consumption;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the life of CAP storage can hardly be extended beyond one season; and

(d) if so, what is the reason for not disposing the stock after its life time?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) and (b). A quantity of 5.23 lakh tonnes of wheat was stored under C.A.P. (Cover and Plinth) at Gandhidham during the year 1976, out of which only a quantity of about 22,200 tonnes was rendered unfit for human consumption. At present, only a quantity of 1.63 lakh tonnes is in storage.

(c) and (d). Life of CAP storage depends on the climate, the site, the condition of covers and dunnage as also the adequacy of prophylactic and curative treatment to the stocks. While it may be desirable normally not to extend the CAP storage be-

yond a year, it is possible to store for longer periods under favourable climatic and weather conditions and with proper care. Because of paucity of covered accommodation in the country and poor off-take, the stocks at Gandhidham could not be disposed of within a year.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Out of the wheat stored in Gandhidham under C.A.P., it is reported that 1.4 lakh tonnes of wheat has become useless and is rotting, and it is reported that the local authority has given notice that the goods may be removed from there as they are contaminating the city; the port authorities have also given notice to this effect. I would like to know from the Minister what is the duration of CAP storage in normal cases and, in this particular case, if at all it has gone beyond one year, whether the FCI will remove the wheat without much more loss being incurred.

SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA: The information of the hon. Member is not correct. There has not been such a great loss as is contemplated by the hon. Member. About the normal life of the CAP storage, as I have mentioned, we keep it normally for one year. But it is hardly at any place that we remove foodgrains in one year; it goes on for more than one year. Sometimes it is for two years; sometimes it is for more than 2½ years. The foodgrains that have been lying at Gandhidham are for 2½ years; and the condition of foodgrains, excepting this damage due to rains or floods, the total content of the foodgrains was good.

SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Now the Minister has mentioned that sometimes it is for two years; sometimes it is for more than 2½ years and all that. Then it is reported that they will take care to see that it is removed, in this case, particularly after 2½ years. Will the hon. Minister see that such foodgrain is not lost by