

Development Blocks in States

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*21. **Shri S. C. Samanta:**
Shri S. K. Sambandhan:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to improve the working of Development Blocks in the various States after the merger of the former Ministry of Community Development with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the results thereof;

(b) whether the Block machinery has been found satisfactorily useful in implementing Grow More Food programme throughout the country, or otherwise, and if any change is contemplated; and

(c) what economy has been achieved in the Ministry since the merger?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation (Shri Annasahib Shinde: (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The working of the Community Development blocks was closely reviewed, following the merger of the two Ministries. Measures for needed improvements were formulated and, after discussions with various expert and other groups, placed for consideration before the Annual Conference of State Development Commissioners and subsequently before the Conference of State Ministers in charge of Community Development and Panchayati Raj held in October, 1966. The main elements of the approach endorsed by these Conferences include a measure of flexibility in the operational size of the blocks, the staff pattern, and programmes of local relevance; programmes of nationwide importance, like those relating to agriculture and family planning, would, however,

continue to receive priority attention. Similarly, certain special programmes, which lend themselves to effective handling by the Block agency, would be given due emphasis. Fuller involvement of the Panchayati Raj institutions, suitably strengthened specially at the district level, in implementation of programme is also to be secured. The State Governments are seized of these recommendations. It is as yet early to assess results.

(b) The Block machinery has, by and large, discharged its role fairly well, within the resources available, in implementing agricultural production programmes. Some of the lines of further improvement are as indicated in answer to part (a); other measures envisaged aim at raising the levels of skills and knowledge of the extension services and augmenting their strength where called for.

(c) As a result of reorganisation following the merger of the Ministries, reduction in the staff complement and other administrative expenditure of the Departments of Community Development and Cooperation (which constituted the erstwhile Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation) was effected, resulting in savings of about Rs. 6 lakhs during 1966-67.

Shri S. C. Samanta: Is it not a fact that the Programme Evaluation Organisation also recommended the amalgamation of the Community Development and Co-operation Department with the Food and Agriculture Ministry; if so, may I know whether the other recommendations that were made by the Organisation have been taken up by Government and are being followed?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation is one now and the Minister of Food and Agriculture deals with all these subjects. This question concerns the Community Development Blocks. I do not know to which evaluation committee the hon. Member refers. But we are trying to see that the

maximum coordination is carried out in practice between the various departments including the irrigation department. The Minister of Food and Agriculture is in overall charge of all the departments including irrigation.

Shri S. C. Samanta: We were informed that 450 tribal development blocks were to be opened during the Third Five Year Plan. May I know whether that target has been fulfilled and whether there is any difficulty in the sense that the department of social security also will be responsible for those blocks and what coordination there will be between the two departments?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: As far as the tribal development blocks are concerned, the target which was fixed in the beginning of the Third Plan has been practically reached. The Social Security Ministry also looks into this. But as far as the implementation part is concerned, that is carried out with the help of the State Governments.

Shri S. K. Sambandhan: Will the Minister be pleased to state in concrete terms whether the Government are satisfied with the research work done during the previous years and whether they are satisfied that the present arrangement will bring in results and, if so, whether it would be commensurate with the amount spent on these projects?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: The position was reviewed recently. The field officers took part in the deliberations and the policy-approach in regard to community development was also referred to some social scientists and sociologists at a conference in Hyderabad. It was also discussed in the Development Commissioners' Conference and subsequently in the Community Development Ministers' Conference. We are aware of the shortcomings of the functioning of the development blocks and the entire effort now is concentrated on removing the drawbacks as such. But, at the same time, if we

look into the performance, it is not so discouraging.

May I say for the information of the hon. Members that as a result of the functioning of these blocks, a number of things connected with agricultural development have improved. For instance, in the beginning of 1962-63, the improved seed distributed per block was 407 quintals and now the figure is 1,024 quintals; the intake of fertilisers increased from 1,315 to 5,273 quintals and the amount of pesticides, on an average, per block rose to 78 quintals as compared to a very negligible figure. There has been considerable improvement. We are constantly trying to review the position. If there are any specific suggestions of the hon. Member on improving the working of these blocks, he can send them to us and we shall take into consideration all those suggestions.

श्री प्रकाशबीर शारजी : मध्य प्रदेश सरकार ने पीछे विकास खण्डों के सम्बन्ध में जो कुछ क्रान्तिकारी परिवर्तन किये थे, उदाहरण के लिये बी० डी० ओ० की पोस्टे समाप्त करना, उसके क्या परिणाम मध्य प्रदेश में रहे और क्या उसके परिणामों को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस प्रकार के कुछ और क्रान्तिकारी परिवर्तन विकास खण्डों के सम्बन्ध में दूसरे राज्यों में किये जाने पर भी सरकार विचार कर रही है ?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: It is too early to say what would be the results of the steps taken by the Madhya Pradesh Government. This matter was discussed in the Community Development Ministers' Conference and the Ministers from the States came to the conclusion that a coordinator at the block level was necessary, whatever be the name, whether he is called the Block Development Officer or a Development Officer. After all, we must try to understand what is the function of the blocks. There is the extension officer (irrigation), the extension officer

(cooperation), the extension officer (animal husbandry), the extension officer (agriculture) and so on. There should be somebody to coordinate all these activities. That is the purpose of having a block. If in a particular area, the functioning of the block has not been satisfactory, that is due to some other reasons and, according to me, the main reason is that the elected bodies are not put in there to supervise the activities of the blocks. The Conference also came to the conclusion that the real remedy for this was to have elected representatives in charge of all these activities at the block level. Then, there will be some improvement.

श्री विश्वनाथ पाण्डेय : श्रीमन्, जो वक्तव्य आप ने इस प्रश्न के सम्बन्ध में सभा-पटल पर रक्खा है उस के पार्ट 'बी' में लिखा है :

"The Block machinery has, by and large, discharged its role fairly well within the resources available in implementing agricultural production programme"

लेकिन जहा तक मुझे देखने का अवसर मिला है तो वह ऐसा नहीं है बल्कि ऐसा होता है कि जो प्रशासनिक ढांचा है उस की वजह से अन्न उपजाओ आन्दोलन है उस में बाधा पड़ती है तो क्या सरकार विकास खंडों की व्यवस्था में आज देश में अधिक अन्न उपजाओ कार्यक्रम को चलाने में जो सतोषप्रद उन्नति नहीं हुई है उस का खास कारण है प्रशासनिक ढांचा तो क्या उस प्रशासनिक ढांचे को तबदील करने के लिए सरकार कोई ठोस कदम उठाने का विचार कर रही है ?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: This matter is already under the consideration of the Administrative Reforms Commission and I think that we may get some recommendations from the Administrative Reforms Commission to improve the working of these Blocks.

श्री रामसेवक पाण्डेय : मैं जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या मंत्री महोदय को इस बात की जानकारी

है कि विकास खंड में जो फंड जाता है उस का अधिकतर भाग इमारत निर्माण, कर्मचारियों और अधिकारियों के वेतन भत्तों और साथ ही साथ जीपी के रख रखाव आदि पर खर्च हो जाता है बहुत थोड़ा विकास कार्यों के लिए पड़ता है और जो पड़ता है वह भी अशुद्धाचार और व्यर्थ की कागजी रिपोर्टों पर ही खर्च जाता है ? जब यह स्थिति हो तो क्या मंत्री महोदय इस चीज की पूरी जानकारी लेने के लिए देश की जनता या जो और लोग है, जो चुने हुए लोग हैं उन की राय जान कर यह जो प्रबन्धो रुपया खर्च हो रहा है इन विकास खंडों में उस को कम करके इस रुपये को कुछ अच्छे और सुचारु ढंग से इस्तेमाल करने के बारे में विचार कर रही है ?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: I cannot go into the individual cases where there might be lapses. I cannot say that there may not have been any lapses anywhere, but may I submit for the information of the hon. Member—there is likely to be a repetition, but I would say that—wherever elected bodies are there

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister must know that if the answer is a lengthy one, it cuts into the time for supplementaries. The answer must be to the point.

Shri Annasahib Shinde: May I submit that where there are no elected bodies to supervise the functioning of the blocks, there it appears that the functioning is not satisfactory. But may I say that about 33 to 35 per cent of the expenditure is on administration; whether it is on the high side, it is for the hon. Member to consider, but we are all seized of the subject matter and we are trying to see how this administrative expenditure can be brought down. Most of the amounts, by and large, are spent on developmental activities and in many of the States, especially in southern States, may I submit that 80 to 90 per cent of the amount is spent on developmental activities?

Shri E. K. Nayanar: It is not correct.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister has answered the question

Shri E. K. Nayanar: It is not clear
... (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker: The hon Member put the question and it has been answered

श्री रामसेवक वावच : मंत्री महोदय ने कहा कि प्रणामनिक कार्यों पर 35 प्रतिशत खर्च होता है मंत्री महोदय की जानकारी के अनुसार तो वह स्टेटिकम कोट करे लेकिन उमी के साथ कहते हैं कि 80-90 प्रतिशत विकास कार्यों पर खर्च होता है तो अब उनकी कौन सी बात मान ली जाये 35 प्रतिशत या 80 प्रतिशत यह समझ में नहीं आता तो वे क्या इस की मफाई देगे ?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: I am prepared to lay a statement showing the State-wise expenditure

श्री सरजू पाण्डेय : मैं चाहता हू कि मंत्री महोदय साफ इस बात का जवाब दें। कई माननीय सदस्यों ने यह सबाल उठाया है कि ब्लाको पर जो खर्च किया जाता है उस पैसों का अधिक में अधिक भाग बेकार खर्च होता है, जनोपयोगी कामों पर बहुत कम पैसा खर्च होता है तो मैं यह जानना चाहता हू कि क्या सरकार ब्लाको के पुनर्संगठन पर कोई विचार कर रही है जिससे अधिक से अधिक उस का लाभ ग्राम लोगों को हो सके और वह पैसा ज्यादा में ज्यादा सिचाई और दूसरे जनता के उपयोगी कार्यों में खर्च हो सके ?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: The item of expenditure which came very much in criticism was mainly the one relating to amenities. This specific issue was examined and the Community Development Minister came to the conclusion that henceforward we should not emphasize the amenity aspect and that it should be left to the local people. As far as the resources from the Central or State Government are concerned, they should be mainly diverted for developmental activities.

श्री रामसेवक वावच : श्रीमान्, यह विकास खंड नहीं रह गये हैं बल्कि यह विनाश खंड बन गये हैं।

Shri Hem Barua: Our late-lamented Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri suggested that the jeeps would be withdrawn from the community development areas. But instead of being withdrawn, fleets of jeeps were thrown into the election campaign recently. Whatever that might be may I know whether Government propose to withdraw these jeeps from the community development areas since they are misused on many an occasion?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: We have communicated to the State Governments that the jeeps which are attached to the blocks should be withdrawn during the election period. I shall have to find out what the actual position was during the election period. But most of the State Governments have agreed to our suggestion and I think they have implemented the suggestion.

Shri A B Vajpayee: He can answer in respect of the Union Territories.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: I have been rising several times but I have not been called.

Shri Nath Pai: On a point of order. My point of order is a specific one. The Rules of Procedure state that when a question is straight and fair and clear, the answer should be equally affirmative and clear. Shri Hem Barua's question was whether the assurance given to this House by the late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri that the jeeps would be withdrawn in less than two months, an assurance which was given amidst thunderous applause from all sections of the House, had been implemented. This is no answer if it is said 'I shall find out, for it is more than fourteen months since Shastriji passed away. The assurance was given in his lifetime. We want to know whether those jeeps have been withdrawn

We do not want this assurance 'I shall find out'. What has been done all this time?

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order.

Shri Nath Pai: If the reply is not specific, is it not a point of order?

Mr. Speaker: It is true that Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri had said that. After that, he was alive not for just one or two months but for a long period. This question was put in the last Lok Sabha too and answers were given . . .

Shri Nath Pai: You were a Minister then.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order. If the hon. Minister has no information, he will collect it.

Shri Nath Pai: The reply was evasive. That is my charge.

Mr. Speaker: I have requested the hon. Minister to give a specific answer.

Shri Hem Barua: Since I had put the question, may I say that my question was very specific?

Mr. Speaker: I know that it was.

Shri Hem Barua: But the reply was evasive. The hon. Minister only said that it had been suggested to the State Governments, and it would have to be found out from the State Governments whether they had acted on the suggestion of the Central Government or not. Our submission is that this suggestion or this pronouncement was made by the late-lamented Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri on the floor of the House months before or long past. Why is it that Government have not been able to inform the House about the action taken so far?

Mr. Speaker: I have already said that the hon. Minister may collect the information.

Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah: The hon. Minister has stated that the adminis-

trative expenditure on the community development blocks varies from State to State. In that context, may I know whether the VLW who is the king-pin of the whole administrative set-up has been overburdened with paper work rather than real work with the result that he has become more of a liability than of an asset and that is hindering the progress of food production and the implementation of other minor irrigation projects, and if so, whether Government propose to reorient the whole administrative set-up so that it may be more useful to the people in implementing the agricultural production programmes?

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: On a point of order. I find that the hon. Minister without Portfolio is coming in with a folio. Is that in order?

Shri Annasahib Shinde: As far as the suggestion made by the hon. Member is concerned, it is a welcome one.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: Please give me a chance to ask one supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: When a number of Members get up, it is difficult for me to call all of them. I can only pick and choose somebody from this side and somebody from that side. Because a number of Members were interested, I had allowed so many supplementary questions, and we have devoted nearly half an hour to this question.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: In my constituency, the people are starving and they do not get even three meals a week. And I cannot put even one supplementary question here? . . .

Shri Umanath: I have also been observing that he has been standing every now and then on the last question and also on this question . . .

Mr. Speaker: I cannot help it. I have not called anybody more than once. I have called a Member only once.

Shri Umansh: Ever since the question Hour began he has been trying to get a chance to put a supplementary question. He had stood up on the last question and also on this question but he has not been given a chance.

Mr. Speaker: I can say for his information that Shri K. K. Chatterjee and other Members have been standing on the other side. I have not yet given them a chance. So this must be left to my discretion. If one Member is not accommodated when one question is put, he will have his chance on some other question. If a hundred Members want to put supplementaries on one and the same question, it is not simply possible.

Shri Jyotirmoy Basu: Then it is pointless to come and waste time in Delhi.

श्री हुकम चन्द कलुवाय : एक घंटे का प्रश्नचक्रन प्रारंभ है। इस एक घंटे में सवाल पूरे नहीं होते हैं। दो घंटे इसके लिये रखे जायें।

प्रत्यक्ष सहाय्य : क्या करे ? एक घंटा बाहिये एक सवाल के लिये।

Shri Annasahib Shinde: The suggestion implied in the hon. Member's question is a welcome. We are examining it. The policy decision that has been taken is that the VLWs should be deployed for agricultural activities and agricultural production.

Shri Tenneti Viswanatham: The Ministers should be more audible. We have not been able to hear the answers.

Drought Conditions

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*22. **Shri Shri Chand Goel:**

Shri Raghbir Singh Shastri:

Shri S. C. Samanta:

Shri Madhu Limaye:

Shri P. K. Deo:

Shri G. C. Nalk:

Shri K. P. Singh Deo:

Shri A. Dipa:

Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the areas where drought conditions are apprehended to occur, owing

to the failure of rains or the insufficiency of rains in the current year;

(b) the steps taken by the Central Government to check the recurrence of drought conditions;

(c) the details of the irrigation, tubewell, pumping sets schemes introduced by Government or likely to be introduced during the current year in order to meet the shortage of water; and

(d) the other major schemes undertaken by Government or likely to be undertaken during the current year to revolutionise the method and speed of agricultural production?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation (**Shri Annasahib Shinde**): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT

(a) Due to the failure of South-West Monsoon and Post-Monsoon the worst affected areas are Gangetic, West Bengal, Bihar State, Uttar Pradesh East, Rajasthan East, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

(b) In order to avoid recurrence of the drought conditions, the Government of India has requested the State Governments to take the following steps:

(i) Demarcation of the chronically drought affected areas on the following basis:

(a) incidence of rainfall,

(b) Annasari and land revenue suspension data; and

(c) declaration of scarcity in the past;

(ii) Stepping up of the conventional programme for moisture conservation and attaining full coverage.