

LOK SABHA

Thursday, August 20, 1970/Śravana 29,
1892 (Saka)

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

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Development of Fishing Industry

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*511. SHRI INDERJIT GUPTA :
SHRI C. JANARDHANAN :
DR. RANEN SEN
SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is a fact that fishing activity is mostly concentrated on the West Coast particularly in and around Cochin, while East Coast, which is equally rich in fishery wealth, remains almost untapped ;

(b) if so, the reasons for the neglect of the east coast in this respect ; and

(c) the steps taken to develop the fishing industry ?

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 Sabha.

Statement

(a) It is a fact that fishing activity is more concentrated on the West Coast particularly in and around Cochin. This development is based on the abundance of prawns as well as shoaling fishes in this area. The East Coast also has considerable resources, but the results of fishing as well as studies in productivity indicate that the East Coast is not as rich in fish resources as the West Coast.

(b) No distinction has been made by the Central Government between East and West Coast States in the pattern of assistance for fishery development programmes. The occurrence of abundant and readily harvestable resources on the West Coast led to greater developmental activity on this coast both in the public and private sectors.

(c) The steps to develop the fishing industry consist mainly of (i) construction of fishing harbours, (ii) introduction of mechanised coastal fishing boats and deep sea fishing vessels, and (iii) development of inland fisheries.

The provision in the Fourth Plan for coastal fisheries development through mechanised fishing is comparable on both the coasts. Subsidy for purchase of deep sea fishing vessels under a Central Scheme is applicable to both the Coasts. Fishing harbours for coastal fishing are being provided under a Centrally-sponsored Scheme at suitable sites around the Indian Coast line. The Central Government is also providing deep sea fishing harbours and intensifying survey operations on both coasts.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I find in this statement the hon. Minister has stated that the reason for fishing activity being more concentrated on the West Coast than on the East Coast is that the results of fishing as well as studies in productivity indicate that the East Coast is not as rich in fish resources as the West Coast. I would like to ask him how this statement of his is consistent with the statement which has been made on the 10th of June by the Senior Minister Shri Jagjiwan Ram, in which he has stated that the Union Government has taken up the question of the survey of the Bay of Bengal to locate the deep fishing areas because he said in his statement that a survey, which has already taken place, has indicated that the East Coast is not rich as the West Coast. Then, there has been another survey by US (AID), the results of which have already appeared, in which they say that although fishing activity is mostly concentrated on the West Coast, the East Coast is equally rich and its fishery wealth remains almost untapped.

So, in the case of the survey which has taken place they say that it is equally rich and according to the senior Minister of the Union Government the survey is yet to take place. In the statement which is laid on the Table it is stated that as a result of the survey they find that the East Coast is not so rich as the West Coast. May I know what is the position? The contradiction in stand should be cleared up.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : I do not think there is any contradiction between the statement of Shri Jagjiwan Ram and the statement which has been laid down on the Table. I would like the hon. Member to try to understand what I am submitting now, because there is no conflict between the two. We would like to exploit the fish resources of both the east and the west coast. But the facts of the situation have to be understood. Some survey was carried out by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in 1955 about the fish catch at that time. Even at that time, though the number of fishermen on both east and west coast were the same, about 1,15,000 out of the total catch of 6 lakhs tonnes, more than 4 lakhs tonnes was from the West Coast and the rest from the East Coast. The reason for this is that the continental shelf on the West Coast is shallow for a longer distance than the continental shelf on the East Coast, which is shallow for a very short distance. Then, in the Western Coast there is abundant supply of prawns because of which there has been faster development of fishery in the Kerala coast. Even in the matter of fish catch the International Indian Ocean Expedition carried out a survey and it was found out that the per-hour catch on the East Coast was about 48 kilograms while it was 123 kilograms in the Arabian Sea. So the difference was very much there. But now with the development of technology for utilising bigger vessels for going into deep seas, I think even the East Coast could undertake economical fishery projects. So, there is no conflict between the two statements. In fact, I myself made a statement a week earlier on the floor of this House that we are having a deep sea fishing station at Calcutta itself in order to have a survey of the Bay of Bengal. Survey is a continuous process. Surveys are going on on the West Coast and the East Coast,

particularly to investigate the possibilities of deep sea fishing.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Even if on a future date, about which I am doubtful, this deep sea fishing materialises on the East Coast, it would not solve the problem, so far as the local people are concerned. The increased fish catch would be exported, as Kerala knows only too well. So, what I would like to know from him is, in view of the urgency of finding some quick short-term solution to the acute crisis of shortage of fish supplies in West Bengal, where fish is selling in Calcutta at Rs. 12 to 15 per kilograms, far beyond the reach of the ordinary consumer, have they thought of any short-term scheme by which this shortage can be alleviated. In view of the fact that previously large supplies used to come daily to the Calcutta market from East Pakistan, which were of the order of 150 to 200 tonnes per day, is the Government considering, or has it ever thought, of making a concrete proposal—it does not matter what its outcome is—of exchanging coal for fish? Because, reports show that East Pakistan is suffering from acute shortage of coal and we are suffering from excess coal supplies which we cannot get rid of. So, in exchange for coal we would be prepared to take from them fish so that at least in respect of these two items balancing trade could be started. I know that there are no restrictions from our side but Pakistan is not willing; all the same, we should make a move because that is the only way to bring down the price of fish. I do not think deep sea fishing is going to reduce the price of fish because then there would be profiteering.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a suggestion.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : As far as this particular suggestion of the hon. Member is concerned, whether we can get fish in exchange for coal, we can examine the proposition. But, as I have explained on an earlier occasion, as far as we are concerned, we have no objection to having trade with Pakistan.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : What are you going to do to bring down the prices?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : Prices can be brought down only by increasing

production. As I explained on the last occasion, for the Sunderban scheme Rs. 50 lakhs has been sanctioned. Our pattern of assistance for all the States, whether on the East or the West, is the same. There has not been any discrimination in the case of either Eastern or Western States. But there are same difficulties at the State level. For instance, when the Nahkara harbour scheme was sanctioned...

Mr. SPEAKER : Why not you say that it is a suggestion for action ? Why give long replies ?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I had also asked whether they have any short-term plans for bringing down the prices.

Mr. SPEAKER : He has elaborately dealt with the policy matters.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR : While wishing well for the east coast, specially West Bengal, I should like to concentrate on the west coast. Already our immense resources on the west coast are established ; there is no doubt about it. I should like to ask the Minister as to what has happened to the tall promises, repeatedly made by the Government, for the development of the fishing industry, specially deep sea fishing in the west coast and what has happened to the master plan submitted by the Kerala Government to the Planning Commission and the Central Government for the Fourth Five-Year Plan. Is it a fact that they have put it in the waste paper basket and there is practically no provision in the Fourth Five-Year Plan for a real development of deep sea fishing in the west coast where the Government claims that there are immense resources ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : It will not be correct to say that there is no plan for the development of deep sea fishing on the west coast. The hon. Member would be interested to know that we are trying to develop Cochin as one of the very important centres of deep sea fishing in addition to Bombay. The harbour project for that has been practically investigated and sanctioned. There is a plan to put in 300 big trawlers for deep sea fishing during the Fourth Five-Year Plan. He will be very happy to know

that we are also in a position to manufacture indigenous trawlers.

SHRI VASUDEVAN NAIR : What about the master plan submitted to the Planning Commission ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : The master plan was examined by us and we have sent our comments to the Kerala Government. Both Shri Jagjiwan Ram and I wrote to Shri Naha who was the Minister in charge of fisheries in Kerala at that time explaining our approach. Our comments had been passed on to him. This was a plan for 20 years and we operate on the basis of five-year plans. But we would very much like to help and are trying to help the Kerala Government in the development of fisheries.

श्री मु.अ.बा. : क्या मंत्री महोदय को मालूम है कि काफ़ी तादाद में मछलियां ईस्ट पाकिस्तान से बेस्ट बंगाल में स्मगल होकर आती हैं ? यदि हां तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वजह है कि हिन्दुस्तान को बेस्ट कोस्ट पर मछलियां निकालने में दिक्कत होती है जबकि ईस्ट पाकिस्तान काफ़ी मछलियां निकाल कर हिन्दुस्तान में स्मगल कर रहा है ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : I do not know whether the hon. Member is aware of the fact that Calcutta population prefers inland fish to marine fish.

श्री मु.अ.बा. : मेरा सवाल स्पष्ट है। क्या मंत्री महोदय की जानकारी में यह है कि ईस्ट पाकिस्तान से बेस्ट बंगाल में मछलियां स्मगल होकर आती हैं यदि हां तो क्या वजह है कि आप बेस्ट कोस्ट पर मछलियां निकालने में कामयाब नहीं हुए हैं जबकि ईस्ट पाकिस्तान वाले उसी कोस्ट पर मछलियां निकाल कर बेस्ट बंगाल में स्मगल कर रहे हैं ?

खाद्य तथा कृषि मंत्री (श्री फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद) : मुझे अफसोस है कि आनरेबल मੈम्बर को इसके बारे में खबर नहीं है। जहां तक ईस्ट पाकिस्तान का सवाल है वहां घरेलू मछलियां पकड़ी जाती हैं और घरेलू मछलियां

पकड़ कर वह खुद भी इस्तेमाल करता है और वेस्ट बंगाल में भी भेज देता है। यहां सवाल सी फिश का है। सी फिश ईस्ट बंगाल के पास नहीं है।

SHRI LOBO PRABHU : I am not concerned with catching the Minister on contradictions ; I am concerned with catching fish on both the coasts. I would like to know from the Minister why he is making the fishermen pay nearly 150 per cent more on his engines for his mechanised boats compared with foreign engines. Secondly, I would like to know from the Minister, since he has professed such anxiety for developing fishing, why when we had an offer four years ago of Czechoslovak collaboration for the Malpe Port, nothing has happened.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : As far as the first part of the question is concerned, about the difference in price of indigenous engines and foreign engines, I think, the difference exists in many articles.....

SHRI LOBO PRABHU : The poor fisherman cannot subsidise the industry.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : We would like to encourage the indigenous industry. That is our approach. I have gone into the price structure and, I find, the difference is only marginal and not substantial to the tune of 150 per cent. As regards Malpe, we are in a position to undertake the development of such harbours and the Government of India has planned to help such harbours. There is a substantial provision in the Fourth Plan.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR : In view of the fact that the people engaged in the export of fish by their own efforts earn about Rs. 50 crores foreign exchange, in view of the fact that there is a sand-dune, nearly 99 miles away from western coast which is very rich in fish and, in view of the fact that the Government in the last four years have been offering to the people in the trade trawlers and diesel engines which never materialise, will the hon. Minister be pleased to tell us when Lanmar engines from Japan costing Rs. 29,000 each are available, why they insist on these people buying

Dutch engines costing Rs. 48,000 each which is not fit for shrimp trawling and that is the most important export of our fish earning valuable foreign exchange ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : As far as smaller engines are concerned, we are producing these engines in our own country and our policy is not to import. As far as bigger trawlers are concerned, as I have already explained, the Mazagon Docks and others are in a position to manufacture these trawlers. We would like to have more and more orders because their capacity still remains unutilised. For example, last year, to give an encouragement, import of 30 trawlers was permitted but the parties were very slow in coming forward for it.

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR : Why do you want these to be imported when Lanmar engines costing only 50 per cent of that are available ? That is a very important question. He must answer that. We are losing hundred per cent more of foreign exchange. These Lanmar engines cost only half of the cost of Dutch engines which are not fit for shrimp trawling.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : The position is that under the export incentive schemes, some engines are to be imported. The Government has not taken a decision whether Lanmar engines are to be imported or Dutch engines are to be imported.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : I would like to know whether the Pre-Investment Survey Team has made an investigation and recommended the Paradip port as a fishing harbour and whether the Paradip authorities have already spent Rs. 50,000 for the project report and the model study at Poona for this fishing harbour and, if so, what are the steps taken by the Government to see that fishing harbour is constructed during the Fourth Plan.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : The detailed investigation of the Paradip port is to take place very shortly. The Government propose to undertake an investigation of the Paradip port in the near future.

SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO : It has already been investigated by the Pre-Investment Survey Team.

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : We are not aware of it.

Effect of Rain of July 1970 on Rabi and Kharif Crops in North India

*513. **SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL :** Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the effect of the failure of rains in July, 1970 in Northern India on the Rabi and Kharif crops of the area ; and

(b) how far that will affect our food targets for the current year ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE) : (a) and (b). While during July 1970 rainfall was deficient in several parts of Northern India, generally good rains have been received during August. It is difficult to indicate precisely the effect of rainfall in an individual month on crop production.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL : Sir, I would like to know whether you have become any wiser by this reply of the hon. Minister, or any Member of this House has become any wiser. This morning, I was reading the statement of the Revenue Minister of Bihar that at least in three divisions, if there are no rains for another week or 10 days, 90 per cent of crops in those divisions will be just lost.

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask your question.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL : I am asking the question. Sir, are the Ministers expected to do some home-work or are they simply to divulge some information collected by a third-rate Secretary in their Departments to the House ? Sir, this is a very serious situation which is facing some of the States. But look at the cursory manner in which this reply has been furnished.

I would like to know whether it is a fact that in certain parts of the country there is apprehension that the crop would not survive and there is no proper atmosphere for sowing the Rabi crop. What is the estimate

of the Government with regard to those areas where rain has failed even in the month of August and may I know whether Government has made any assessment regarding those areas where crops are facing devastation ?

SHRI ANNASAHIB SHINDE : May I seek your protection, Sir ? I would request you earnestly to refer to the reply which I have given and then judge the statement which has been made by the hon. Member here.

I always appreciate the concern of the hon Members to elicit information and I never conceal anything. I am very fair to my colleagues in this House. I am sorry the hon. Member is making such a statement.

Only last week my senior colleague, the Minister of Food & Agriculture made a statement on the failure of rain and drought situation in various parts of the country. (*Interruptions*) He also made a statement that though last year was a very good year in our country, this year appears to be a little better than the last year uptill now. Of course, it is too early to make a final judgment. Our country is so vast that there will always be some pockets where rainfall may be deficient, for instance, in some parts of Mysore and Bihar. That was also pointed out by the hon. Minister in his statement. But, subsequent to that, during the last 10 days there has been good rain all over the country and the position has improved and even parts of Mysore and some parts of Bihar have received good rains.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA : Sir, I repudiate this. There are no good rains in Mysore.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL : I can understand the complacency on the other side. Perhaps they are relying on the fact...

MR. SPEAKER : Why not put a direct question ?

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL : They are relying on the fact that Indira Deviji has been able to propitiate God Indira who has given them enough of rains and, therefore, they have a sense of complacency.

I would like to know whether there are