

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

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Monday, December 9, 1985/Agrahayana 18,
1907 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Loss to cooperatives in fertilizer trade

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*284. SHRI AMARSINH RATHAWA :
SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be
pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the co-
operatives have been losing heavily in
fertiliser trade due to inadequate and low
margin allowed by Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to
revise the margin on fertiliser trade to save
the co-operatives;

(d) if so, when and the details thereof;
and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND COOPERATION (SHRI YOGENDRA
MAKWANA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e). Do not arise.

[Translation]

SHRI AMARSINH RATHAWA : Mr.
Speaker, Sir the Hon. Minister has replied
to part (a) of my question as : 'No, Sir'; to
parts and (b) to (e). as : 'Do not arise'. Our
Government have set up cooperative societies
to help the small farmers. Through these
societies, assistance is provided to them. We
find that sometimes there is famine and
sometimes there are excessive rains and
during such times, the farmers do not have
fertilizers. As a result, they cannot make use
of fertilizers in their land owing to which
the yield is low. Therefore, some arrange-
ments should be made in these cooperative
societies to provide fertilizers to the farmers
at subsidised rates in such areas. Is there
any such proposal under the consideration
of the Government.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA :
Subsidy is already being given on fertilizers.

[English]

F.A.O. report on soil erosion

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*286. SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN
SINHA :
SHRI V. TULSIRAM :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE
be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Food and Agriculture
Organisation in a report has expressed alarm
over the large scale soil erosion and degrada-
tion of land in India;

(b) whether the report also projects the
potential of Indian agriculture to feed
population of two billion; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) to (c). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) In a publication "Protect and Produce—Soil Conservation for Development", Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations expressed serious concern at large scale erosion and soil degradation in India, amongst other countries.

(b) Food and Agriculture Organisation in a report titled "Potential Population Supporting Capacities of Lands in the Developing World" have also analysed the situation in India. The findings reveal that the projected population of 1036.7 million in 2000 AD could be supported at low, intermediate and high level of inputs. However, there is no direct reference to a population figure of 2 billion in the report.

(c) Government have been concerned with the increasing pressure on land due to growing population and developmental activities as well as continuing problem of erosion and soil degradation. Since the first Five Year Plan, a number of projects have been in operation to check soil erosion and land degradation and improve the productivity of country's land base. These programmes get enlarged and diversified over the successive Plan periods, both under State and Central Plans. Government have endorsed the "World Soil Charter" and share the concern for protecting, conserving and improving the country's land stock for higher and sustained production to support its growing population.

SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA : Sir, in part (c) of the Statement, the Government have said that since the First Five Year Plan a number of projects have been in operation to check soil erosion and soil degradation. May I know from the Government firstly, whether they are aware of the extent in area of soil erosion and land degradation, and secondly, whether the outlay for irrigation projects will include also outlay for proper water and soil management ?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, the Government is aware of the soil erosion in the country. At present nearly 175 million hectares of the total geographical area is under soil erosion which comes to nearly 53.3 per cent of the total land mass of the country. The figures vary in different publications of the FAO, but this is the figure estimated by our Survey Division, and according to FAO, it is nearly 147 million hectares—90 million hectares area subjected to water erosion, 50 million hectares area subjected to wind erosion and 7 million hectares area subjected to salinity total of which comes to nearly 147 million hectares.

So far as the other part of the question is concerned, for soil management and water management, the training is given to the farmers under the Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and so far as the inclusion of this component in the irrigation is concerned, it does not arise from this and it is not a subject matter of my Ministry.

SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, from the reply that the Hon. Minister has given, it appears that the FAO has said that about 140 million hectares are subjected to soil erosion and soil degradation. It is a very high percentage. We know that the gross crop area is about 180 million hectares. So, it is almost a higher percentage. The Minister himself has admitted that 53 per cent is subject to soil erosion and soil degradation.

Then, in this case, may I know what special measures are being taken to prevent soil erosion and salinity of soil ? It is a very serious matter and it causes alarm for all of us. If we have to feed a population of say about two billions by the turn of the century, then the productivity on the land has to go up because the land under cultivation cannot be increased. At the most, by increasing the cropping pattern, you can go up to 190 million hectares, according to your own statement. What are the specific measures which are being contemplated to ensure that the conditions of soil improve and there is no erosion and all lands have been brought under cultivation and the productivity of these lands also increase ?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, a number of schemes are undertaken by the

Government to prevent soil erosion. There are a number of schemes which are ongoing and under implementation, at present.

Soil conservation in the catchments of river valley project, is one scheme. Another scheme is, integrated water-shed management in the catchment of flood-prone rivers. Third is, control of shifting cultivation; fourth is, All-India Soil and Land Use Survey Organisation; and fifth is, strengthening and creation of State Soil Survey Organisation.

These are the schemes which are under operation. If you want information about any particular scheme, I can give you the details of it.

SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA : Sir, I am also expressing our concern. Out of 180 million hectares which are under cultivation, at least 140 million hectares have been subject to soil erosion and degradation of land. Though these measures have been appreciable, they have not been effective so far. What further steps the Government contemplate, whether they are going to take any kind of measures, legal measures also placing responsibility on the farmers also to implement soil conservation measures? What other measures do the Government contemplate to prevent soil erosion?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : As I said, we are strengthening all these schemes. So far as legal measures are concerned, we have requested the State Governments to see that these schemes are properly implemented and soil erosion is avoided.

[*Translation*]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am of the view that all this is happening due to indiscriminate felling of trees in the forests. The trees help a lot in slowing down the flow of water. But now the population of the country is increasing and we require proportionate increase in cultivable land. Therefore, what the Government propose to do to check indiscriminate felling of trees? Have the Government any scheme to check this felling of trees and if so, how is it going to be implemented and when?

MR. SPEAKER : And the number of shares is increasing.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Sir, certainly we have a scheme and it is because of this that the Forest conservation Act, 1982 has been enacted under which the felling of trees is prohibited. But it is a fact that trees are being felled. Even the State Governments cannot cut trees without the permission of the Central Government. Only in special cases of linking of electricity lines, construction of roads and irrigation channels, the relaxation is there. But the Government are aware that felling of trees causes soil erosion, and therefore, plantation of more and more trees is essential. This work is being done through social forestry etc., also.

[*English*]

KUMARI D. K. THARA DEVI : Sir, whether the Government is aware that the indiscriminate use of chemical fertiliser is adversely affecting the fertility of the soil and degrading the land. If so, what action is being taken to prevent it.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : No. Because the use of chemical fertiliser even now is less in this country to other advanced countries.

(*Interruptions*)

There is no question of indiscriminate use of fertiliser because they are using very little quantity of fertiliser.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT : The question asked by the Hon. Member is very important.

[*English*]

KUMARI D. K. THARA DEVI : Organic and inorganic chemical proportion is uneven. That is why I am asking this question.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BRAHMA DUTT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the rivers and rivulets originating from the Himalaya are particularly causing

extensive soil erosion in North India. I can say about Dehradun district where trees are being cut in hundreds. There are a few minor schemes and these are being implemented, but are the Government considering any master plan to check felling of trees, to check soil erosion and to conserve land, because there is a great need of forests today ?

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : As I have said earlier, there are a number of schemes. We have 11 of them and if we consider them together, it will become a master plan.

[English]

This is all included in the programme. There are Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme, Soil, Water and Tree Conservation Programme in the Himalayas, and Social Forestry. So, there are eleven schemes and these are the schemes which we are implementing for preventing the soil erosion.

Creation of gene sanctuaries in Sikkim

*287. **DR. T. KALPANA DEVI :**
DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Sikkim has a precious collection of 600 Orchid varieties and about 40 Rhododendron trees and shrubs which are fast disappearing;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to create gene sanctuaries in Sikkim for protecting natural resources; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) Sikkim has a collection of about 450 species of orchids. The area is rich in the Rhododendran species also but

the information on the exact number of species is not available. Some of the orchid and Rhododendron species are facing extinction unless conservation programmes are undertaken immediately.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The gene sanctuary for conservation of orchids has already been established by the Government of Sikkim at Deorali in Gangtok, while that for Rhododendron has been set up at Sinoba (Yunuthang).

DR. T. KALPANA DEVI : Some of the MPs have recently been to Sikkim and visited the orchid sanctuary. While it is a commendable effort, the fact is that Sikkim has very limited resources—both financial and technical. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the Government have studied the present set up both for orchids and Rhododendrons and worked out a plan on the basis of the actual situation for protecting these as a National Resource and if so what are the actual plans for setting up gene sanctuaries for these two species of Himalayas.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : I said that there are various schemes and the Government has set up sanctuaries also/for the development of orchids we are also developing some hybrid varieties of orchids and in regard to indigenous varieties which are facing extinction, we are taking precaution so that they could be preserved.

DR. T. KALPANA DEVI : I want to know whether it is correct that the ICAR has had a plan for gene sanctuaries since the last 15 years but this has largely remained on paper only including the plans for North East region gene sanctuary.

SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA : Gene Banks are the store-houses of germ plasm material of different varieties, species, types of plants collected over a period of time and preserved for future use. These plants are preserved either through their seed plant parts, tissues or pollen. These are vital for the genetic improvement of plants to develop new types and ultimately help increase the production.