

LOK SABHA

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Thursday, November 17, 1988 / Kartika
26, 1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Gram Panchayat Loans Under IRDP

*103. SHRI SATISH CHANDRA SINHA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the complaints of discrimination in the matter of granting Gram Panchayat loans under the Integrated Rural Development Programme; and

(b) if so, what remedial measures are being taken by Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) and (b), Under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) identified families with annual household income below Rs. 4,800 in rural areas are to be assisted with a

package of loan -cum-subsidy in order to enable them to take up self employment ventures. The list of identified families is to be placed for approval before the Gram Sabha.

IRDP is implemented through the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) and the funds are released to the DRDAs by the Central and the State Governments.

Whenever any complaints of any type are brought to the notice of the Central Government they are referred to the concerned State Government for taking corrective action.

The Programme does not envisage loans to Gram Panchayats.

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA : Sir, I would like to point out that in West Bengal no IRDP loans have been sanctioned without the permission or recommendation of the Gram Panchayat. In fact, this condition is being utilised by the dominating partner of the Left Front Government, CPM to increase their influence in the rural areas. They are not sanctioning loans to the Congress supporters in rural areas. In fact, they are going and telling the people that so long as they remain Congress supporters, the Panchayat will never sanction any IRDP loan. I would request the hon. Minister through you, what is the remedy under such situation in the rural areas, in West Bengal, for poor people who are mostly Congress supporters. What is the way out? How will the poor persons who are eligible for getting the loans, who are living below the poverty line get the loans without the recommendation of the Gram Panchayat which is controlled by

CPM people? What is the remedy?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: The deserving beneficiaries should be given loans and they should be given the benefit. Now, Sir, the hon. Member has written to me and also some of the hon. Members from West Bengal have raised the issue in the House also. After the receipt of the complaint given by the hon. Member, we have written to the State Government, bringing to their notice about the discrimination that has been meted out to some of the beneficiaries as alleged by the hon. Member. So far, we have not received any reply... (*Interruptions*) But, the hon. Member knows the fact that the implementation is done by the State Government. We are directly giving the amount to the DRDs from the Central Side. The subsidy is given directly to the State Government-DRDs. But so far as, the implementation is concerned, it is the state Governments to implement. It is a State subject. This is a federal system. We cannot directly interfere. Only, we can write to the State Governments and even after that if they do not properly implement the programme, then at the most, if it is proved that discrimination is done and it is not properly used, the assistance could be stopped.

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA : The answer is most unsatisfactory. This is a Central Programme supposed to be helping those people who are living below the poverty-line. The hon. Minister has expressed his helplessness in this case citing the example that this is a federal system. I know there are thousands of cases in West Bengal where poor people are being denied this help from the Central Scheme. So I would like to know, through you, Sir, from the hon. Minister one thing a way-out must be found out in order to help those poor people who are being denied of the recommendations of the Gram Panchayats for which they are not being given this loan. The hon. Minister can give certain amount of independence to the bank authorities or to the DRDs who can promptly sanction the loan even without the recommendation of the Gram Panchayats. They can do so. I would like to know whether

the hon. Minister would take recourse to such a position.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : He has given you assurance that the assistance would be stopped. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: As I stated earlier, the poor people are the sufferers if such things are being done. But, at the same time, I can tell the hon. Member that it is not at all possible from this end to rectify it. We can bring it to the notice of the State Government for rectification. If they do not do it, ultimately the State Government is the sufferer at the time of the elections.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Integrated Rural Development Programme is one of the poverty alleviation programmes Envisaged by the late Indira -ji throughout the country. This programme is meant to bring the people, who are living below the poverty - line above the poverty - line, to improve their standard of living. It is true that this IRDP schemes are being used for political purposes. Why not the Central Government give guidelines to all the States to identify the beneficiaries and maintain the seniority -list in the Panchayat level? Otherwise, if I am there as a Panchayat Union Chairman or President, definitely I will use it for my political end. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether such guidelines would be issued to all the States to maintain the seniority -list of beneficiaries or the needy persons those who are going to get this IRDP benefit. Further, the hon. Minister has said that he has given block grants to all the States and it is for the States to use. But I find some of the States are not using it with a little intelligence. They are simply distributing this fund equally to all the panchayat Unions. That is not correct. They should identify which Panchayat Union needs more and which Panchayat Union needs less. So, like-wise he has to identify and see which block is going to get the maximum benefit to see that the beneficiaries are going to get the benefit. I would like to get clarification on these two points.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : So far as the first part of the question is concerned, the hon. Member has given a very good suggestion and it is noted by us.

So far as second part of the question is concerned, the Hon. Member has suggested that allocation should be done as per the needs of the block level. The instruction has been issued to that effect. In fact, it has been done accordingly.

Now, so far as 1988-89 is concerned, the criterion for allocation of the funds under IRDP is that 25 per cent is given on block basis and 75 per cent is given on poverty basis. This is the criterion. This is as per the needs of the block.

SHRI P.M.SAYEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the procedure regarding the identification of the beneficiary is that the village level agency identifies it and then if they find the scheme to be feasible, then they will refer it to the banks. I know personally, in my own area, that the banks have the ultimate say to decide whether the scheme is economically viable or not. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether it is the position that the final say in the matter rests at the bank's discretion or at the village selection committee? Which one has the ultimate say? That is one thing which has not yet been decided.

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): Hon. Speaker, Sir, reports have been received about the two states one of which is West Bengal and the other Andhra Pradesh where the procedure of selection is not being properly followed ... (*Interruptions*)

Please try to listen to me.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Who has given that report?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : It is what the general public says. Accompany me, I will show you. I had been to Andhra Pradesh.

There the people complained to me in this regard. Andhra Pradesh Government has renamed the N.R.E.P. as Telugu Desham Rural Development Programme and God knows, what other names they have given to such programmes. They divert all the funds for that purpose.

Special attention is paid to identify the people living below the poverty line. You know that Panchayats have the Harijans as their members and Lady panch are also there. Generally, it is seen that they do not summon all the members of the Panchayat. They call it 'Sarvajanik Sabha'. It means that their partymen may assemble anywhere and call it 'Sarvajanik Sabha'. Such is the situation in West Bengal that they try to spend the entire Government money according to their own party programmes and they have constituted sub-committees for the purpose. After Constituting the sub-committee, they decide the number of persons to be selected on party basis. They try to manipulate the things in such a manner...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISHRA : This is not true. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : It is not a fact. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : He has to prove it here. You prove it here. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Please be kind enough to listen to me. I am telling the facts only. That is why we have taken the decision that if any State Government diverts the allocated funds to some other purposes, further allocations will not be made and efforts will be made to recover the money allocated earlier. Such directions have already been issued by the Government of India and they have also been directed to pay special attention to the poor people and

the people living below the poverty line at the time of selection and money should reach them... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

PROF. N.G. RANGA : Are we to carry on this sort of a debate ? You are keeping mum. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : There is block above Panchayat and the banks are above these blocks which get financial assistance from the banks. (*Interruptions*) What is your problem?

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : It is a fact that the Government has issued directions from time to time for the implementation of I.R.D.P. but it is also true that some States are not following the directions given to them to make lists of beneficiaries. Consequently, the party, which talks always about the welfare of the poor people, is working in such a manner that the poor people are not getting the requisite amount of assistance. Will the hon. Minister for Agriculture make such provisions that a central team may visit the State to monitor the situation to find out whether intended benefits are reaching the proper people according to the guidelines? This is also a fact that they have opened 40,000 branches of the banks in some or the other village but the banks located in the interior blocks, hilly areas, desert and cyclonic areas are not advancing loans to the people living in the remote areas. As our colleagues have said that...

MR. SPEAKER : Please ask your question.

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA : I am putting the question. Will you make arrangements at the panchayat level to ensure that the assistance reaches the people below the poverty line? Secondly, the Centre should keep a monitor in those States which are not

implementing it.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Hon. Speaker, Sir, we will definitely monitor if we get any such complaints; we will verify it. If the State Government does not spend the allocated amount for the purpose for which it was given to them, they will not be given any assistance in future. First, they shall have to spend that money by making necessary adjustments. There are 24 million families whose annual income is less than Rs 4,800. It is our target to provide assistance to 20 million families by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan to raise their standard of living. In some States do not work properly, we shall definitely take action against them.

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : The hon. Minister has just told, in his reply to a very pertinent question of Mr. Saif, wherein he wanted to know the name of the authority responsible for the final identification, and if that power rested with any agency at the village level or with the banks which sanction the amount finally. He has just said that the banks have asserted that whosoever makes the final selection, but the power of final sanction shall rest with them. The hon. Minister also, instead of giving a categorical answer in this respect, has just made only a mention of it...

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : It seems reverse to you?

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: Yes, Sir, its your**. what reply you have given, you see politics in everything... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER. '.....' is unparliamentary. It will not form part of the record.

[*Translation*]

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI: I said that the reply was just the reverse.

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR) : You are saying it that the reply is just the reverse.

[English]

You are a senior Member, you should not have used these words.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Did you tell all these things to Shri Buta Singh yesterday when he used such words?

SHRI .M.L. FOTEDAR: You should have told these things to Mr. V.P.Singh ...(*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI C. MADHAV REDDI : My question is if any enquiry has been made or any such report has been received that the selections are not being made properly by Andhra Pradesh Government and West Bengal Government or identification is not being made according to the rules. Is there any such report? Will you kindly place it on the Table?

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : Mr. Speaker, he has said two things. One in the beginning when he said that my reply was not correct and along with that I have said that it is my ** I will just clarify it that it is my ** or not but it is ** of that man whom they call their leader ** Mr. Speaker, its selection is duly made by the Gram Sabha.

MR. SPEAKER: I did not allow it to go on record, and similarly all that what you said here, was not allowed to go on record.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: It is your discretion, to expunge it or not ...(*Interruptions*) ... He is otherwise a veteran member, it does not look nice to say anything about him. Also he has been our old colleague. I want to say only this much that its selection is duly made by the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha duly recommends it and sends to the higher ups and then the banks advance the money. But as he has said if there is any compliant with

us, I had just visited Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal ... (*Interruptions*)... please be kind enough to listen to me. I am coming to that very point. People, there have complained people from both the states, whosoever, met me, told it—that money allocated by the Central Government is not properly utilised by the State Government(*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. TULSIRAM: Who were the people who had met him.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : The visitors may include anyone of you too. It does not look nice for me to mention their names. If I mention their names here, how they will tell anything in future. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY : Please go to the villages and talk to them...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Andhra Pradesh have even changed the name of the scheme . I do not know what sort of name they have given to it, they call it something like Telugu Desham Gramin Vikasam. I cannot just pronounce it properly. (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will look to it properly and will make every efforts to ensure that the money allocated to them reaches the poor people.

[Translation]

*104. SHRI MADAN PANDEY†:
SHRI H.N. NAJE GOWDA:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in regard to modernisation of the Steel Plants under the Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) the time by which the modernisation of each plant is likely to be completed and the estimated expenditure thereon; and

(c) the estimated increase in production

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.