

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 17, 1994/
Phalguna 26, 1915 (Saka)

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

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

National Population Policy

*281. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:
Will the Minister of HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have
finalised the draft of the National Popu-
lation Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by which it is
likely to be finalised?

[English]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE (SHRI PABAN SINGH
GHATOWAR: (a) to (c). A Draft National

Population Policy is being formulated by
an Export Group whose report is awaited.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Mr.
Speaker, Sir, unchecked population growth
is negating all the development works.
This question was regarding this burning
issue but the hon. Minister of Health and
Family Welfare has given a very casual
reply. The hon. Minister has not been
able to indicate any specific period re-
quired for finalising this draft. He should
have told us about the time likely to taken
for that because the issue is connected
with the development of the country.
Unfortunately, it seems that, all the po-
litical parties, especially the major parties,
are indifferent towards this serious prob-
lem, simply because they do not want to
lose their vote banks or due to the bitter
experiences of the excesses committed
during the Emergency in the name of
family welfare. Therefore, I would like to
submit that due to bitter experiences of
the past the Government is unable to
effectively implement the population con-
trol programmes. I would like to know
whether the Government will consider to
set up an autonomous Population Control
Commission which is free of political
interference caste and religious con-
siderations and is able to function indepen-
dently.

[English]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR:
Sir, our party has always taken the
population problem as the national prob-
lem. Congress has never tried to
play politics in this policy, Sir. Members
very well know as to who is playing

politics in this matter. This matter was discussed in the National Development Council meeting also. A committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Karunakaran, the Chief Minister of Kerala and the members of the committee were the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, present Chief Minister of Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. That committee and given their report on 14th November, 1992 and that report was endorsed in the National Development Council meeting on 18th September, 1992. After that, the Government has also constituted a committee under the renowned scientist, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan. The Government is very much working seriously about the population policy of our country.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going to have a commission?

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he did not say anything about setting up of a Commission.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Sir, I am happy that the House is so much concerned about the dangerous problem of population.

MR. SPEAKER: That is the real problem faced by the country.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: As a matter of fact, about ten years ago, in 1983, when the National Health Policy was formulated and approved in Parliament, a reference was made about the formulation of population policy. The experience in the last ten years has

shown that we must have a separate National Population Policy. For that matter, as my colleague has said earlier, the National Development Council itself went into the aspect and they had formed a committee. That committee went into various aspects of the population problem and they have given a report with their recommendations. Now, we have appointed a committee for drafting this population policy and we are going to depend upon the recommendations of this committee and then take a view on the matter.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question has not been replied to. However, I would like to submit that the whole responsibility of family planning has been put on women. All this has led to increased victimisation of women. Maternity Benefit Act is proposed to be amended for depriving women of maternity benefits and other facilities in case of third child. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any survey has been conducted because just 3.7 per cent women have been covered in urban areas and in organised sector. I would like to know whether continuation of this policy will serve the purpose of controlling the population? Secondly, I would like to submit that in the rural areas a programme with American assistance is being implemented for working women...
(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question? It cannot go on this way. I have received letters from 105 Members.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether

contraceptive drugs, like Norplant-I, Norplant-II and Depo Provera rejected by the developed countries are going to be allowed in India and whether it won't mean injustice to women? Family planning is a collective responsibility. Therefore, bring forward such a policy which may make women and men both equally responsible. Sympathetic attitude should be adopted towards women and men and both should be made equally responsible. A uniform policy should be brought forward for both men and women for effectively controlling population.

[English]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, unfortunately, there are very few methods applied on men as a majority of them are related to women. There are studies all over the world about new methods to be applied on men also.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you realise, Mr. Minister, that your reply is inclined in favour of men.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, that is a scientific finding and they also know about it. About NORPLOT and other things which the hon. Member has mentioned, those things are not included in our national family welfare programme.

SHRI ANKUSHRAO RAOSAHEB TOPE: Most of the voluntary measures adopted by the Government to lower the birth rate have not achieved the desired results. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister, through you Sir, about the steps proposed to be taken to make family planning compulsory for those who are in the organised sector and to give specific and higher incentives for those who are in the unorganised sector so as to prevent explosion of population bomb.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, it is a fact that we have definitely not achieved the desired goal in respect of our family welfare programme. That is why, the Government has already discussed the matter in the NDC and has appointed a specialized committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Swaminathan for drafting a National Policy on Population. After getting the report of the Committee, the Government will act on their recommendations.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The hon. Member has asked about family planning being made compulsory. It is not going to be made compulsory. It is going to be purely voluntary.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: In the reply, it has been stated that the Report of the Swaminathan Committee is still being awaited. However, as far as our information goes, there is a World Meet on Population in Cairo in this summer and India is to take a positive stand regarding population policy at that meet. Unless the report of the committee is discussed at the national level and unless the report is circulated among the Members of Parliament so as to take their opinions on the recommendations of the Committee, how can the Government present their findings or resolutions regarding the National Population Policy at the Cairo Meet?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: It is true that within the next few months, there is going to be a World Meet at Cairo to discuss the population problem and India is going to participate in it. A few months ago, a Conference of the Non-Aligned countries was held in Bali, Indonesia, to discuss about the preparatory aspects of the proposed Population Meet at Cairo. We have definite views on this aspect. We are for regulating and con-

trolling the growth of population. But we are also of the view that the controlling measures should be purely voluntary...

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: The Government has not interacted with Parliament.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I am coming to that. Please be a little patient. The suggestion is that the report which is going to be submitted by the Committee that we have appointed, may be made available to Members of Parliament and that it should be discussed so that the Government and the country as a whole can have a view on this matter. I can only say that this is a suggestion for action.

MR. SPEAKER: This is a very important question. Probably, the House wants that it should be taken into confidence by the Government.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I promise that the House will be taken into confidence. We need the support of all sections of the House on this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: That is correct. Now, your answer is full.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: In view of the fact that population growth is one of the stumbling blocks in the matter of reaching the fruits of development to the poorest of the poor of our country and in view of the present encouraging results from Tamil Nadu, close on the heels of Kerala and Goa, will the Government take concrete measures to have definite coordination between the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Health for taking effective measures to control population growth? I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a sincere

effort is made to analyse and to learn from the experience of Tamil Nadu in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: That is why, they have gone to the NDC.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, population control is a measure which cannot be attempted only by the Health Ministry. It has to be an integrated approach by all the developmental Ministries such as the Education Ministry, Welfare Ministry, Health Ministry and all the aspects relating to overall development should be considered in toto. It is a basic fact that poverty breeds population. It is not only economic underdevelopment which is responsible for population growth. There are other social factors which contributed to this problem. It is particularly true in our country which is vertically divided on caste and religion. So, social integration is also a basic question. An integrated approach has to be made not only to improve the economic conditions of the poor but also to improve all the related social aspects. What is required is an integrated economic and social approach.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR: Our target with regard to birth rate is to bring it down to 21 per thousand by 2000 AD from the present rate of 29.3 per thousand. At the same time infant mortality rate is targeted to be brought down to 70 per thousand, which at present is 80 per thousand.

My point is that the techniques involved in the family planning, that is, tubectomy and vasectomy, are evasive techniques. I would like to know whether the Government will promote the research for the non-evasive techniques of the family planning in the coming National Population Policy.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, research has been done and is being done with regard to finding out new contraceptives. We do not want to introduce any new contraceptive unless it is proved beneficial to the health of the women and is acceptable to the people.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I still remember the hon. Prime Minister saying that he will call a meeting of all parties on this population problem. That meeting I think has not been called. Family planning is the programme of the State Governments. I would like to know how much money has been spent by the State Governments and how much money has not been reimbursed to the State Governments. I still remember that in Uttar Pradesh, this problem is the most dangerous. There the State Government had spent a lot of money on family planning but the amount has not been reimbursed by the Central Government. Secondly, I would like to know how many States are there which have not been reimbursed by the Central Government under this programme.

MR. SPEAKER: This question is on national policy. I do not know whether the Minister would have the information. You can send it to the hon. Member in writing.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJOY KUMAR YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that the policies aimed at checking population are creating imbalance in male and female population in many states i.e. female population is declining in comparison to male population. In Hindu families sons have always been preferred to daughters and it is quite possible that in the days to come the situation may become more grave. I would like to know whether the Government has thought

upon the measures to be taken to maintain balance in sex ratio and to check population growth?

[English]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, it is true that there have been variations between States and States about the population ratio. It is also true that this variation exists in a single particular State from region to region. As the hon. Member has himself said, there are variations because we are a male-dominated society. In India, we have families which have a preference for sons. There are various other reasons also why male population is increasing. Some people in the rural areas feel that they should have a son so that they have more working hands to maintain the family. Income is the basic cause for this. So, there are various aspects in this regard. But it is a good suggestion and I think that the Committee and the Parliament will take it into consideration when this matter is discussed.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the constant increase in the population I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any thought has been given to fix a particular year as 'Zero Growth Year' as was done by China?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Have you fixed any time limit within which zero growth can be achieved?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I can only say that we are not China.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I agree with the views of

the hon. Minister that among various Departments, like Human Resource and Welfare, there should be a close interaction. However, the Department of Health is active in the areas where population explosion has not been witnessed whereas it should have been active in those areas where in fact the population explosion is taking place. Programmes are telecast in such areas as fall in the former category. This way the entire money is going down the drains... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: He is coming to the rate at which the population is increasing. Please do not comment like this.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI: I would like to know whether programmes are being formulated for the benefit of illiterate poor living in Jhuggi-Jhonpris in rural areas for the checking population growth?

[*English*]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: It is a good suggestion.

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether the Government is thinking of making a law to increase the marriageable age in this country. Many countries have raised the marriageable age from 25 years to 30 years. This I think is the main device to control population growth.

MR. SPEAKER: That will depend on the policy which they are formulating.

[*Translation*]

DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there cannot

be two opinions that family planning is a major issue before the country. The Government has of course formulated policies in this regard and through health services is implementing them. I would like to know in brief whether all out efforts will be made to check population growth. Keeping in view the ethical norms.

MR. SPEAKER: It will be there in the policy.

SHRI MOHAN RAWLE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. Minister that politics would not be allowed to creep in this area. The Government's policy should be implemented irrespective of caste and religious factors and those not responding to it should be denied all incentives to ensure the success of the policy. I would like to know whether some concrete steps will be taken in this regard?

[*English*]

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The hon. Member has raised a question about the incentive or disincentive in the matter of family planning. This is one of the subjects which is being considered by this Committee. We will give due consideration to it.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the people of India no more pin their hopes on this Government in the matter of population control... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones on others.

[*Translation*]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, no concrete policy is expected from

a Government whose head has got no faith in family planning. Probably only due to this the hon. Prime Minister does not look serious when such an important issue is being discussed in the House. Sir, a Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha which provided that the political parties while distributing tickets or making important appointments will see to it that the candidate has faith in family planning and does not have more than 2 children. I would like to know from the Government whether it is serious in this regard and whether the provisions will be implemented from retrospective offset?

[*English*]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is very serious in tackling the population problem. This Committee was formed under his Chairmanship in the NDC. The Committee consists of all the Chief Ministers of this country.

About the Constitution 79th (Amendment) Bill which was introduced in Rajya Sabha, it was referred to the Select Committee and now it is before the Standing Committee.

[*Translation*]

Water Resources

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*282. SHRI BHEEM SINGH
PATEL:
SHRI RABI RAY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to chart a comprehensive master plan for the integrated development of water resources in drought prone areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the existing practice of harnessing water resources through major and micro dams is not working properly due to the cost factor; and

(d) if so, the alternative cost effective methods being considered by the Government as irrigation sources?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P.K. THUNGON): (a) and (b). The State Governments have been advised to establish multi-disciplinary units for preparation of master plans for water resources development at sub-basin level in drought prone areas. They have also been requested to set up a Committee in their respective States for drawing up guidelines for integrated water development.

(c) Irrigation projects, including major and micro dams, are taken up only after ascertaining their techno-economic viability.

(d) Other methods of surface water as well as ground water development are also taken up as complementary to and not as alternatives to dams.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHEEM SINGH PATEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question was regarding formulation of a master plan for the integrated development of water resources in drought prone areas. In the reply, it is stated that the State Governments have been advised to establish multi-disciplinary units for preparation of master plans for water resources' development. They have also been advised to set up such committees in their respec-