

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, May 7, 1992/ Vaisakha 17,
1914 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL (SHRI K. C. LENKA): Mr. Speaker Sir, before you call Q.No. 902, I have to make a submission. For your kind information, my colleague Shri Mullapally Ramachandran's wife is seriously ill and he could not come to the House. I got the papers only now and I will try to answer the questions to the best of my ability.

MR. SPEAKER: When did you receive the papers? Just an hour back, I suppose!

Q. No. 902, Shri Chandrakar please.

[English]

Soil Testing Laboratories

*902. SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of soil testing laboratories in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government propose to set up such a laboratory in each block of State;

(c) of so, the details thereof; and

(d) the average cost of setting up such a laboratory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) A statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) In view of (b) above, the question does not arise.

(d) The average cost of setting up a Soil Testing laboratory (excluding cost of land and building) with a capacity for 10,000 soil samples per annum, would be approximately Rs. 5.00 lakhs.

STATEMENT

Number of Soil Testing Laboratories - State-wise

S.No	State	Number of soil testing Laboratories in the country
1.	Andhra Pradesh	31
2.	Karnataka	23
3.	Kerala	19

<i>S.No</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Number of soil testing Laboratories in the country</i>
4.	Tamil Nadu	34
5.	Pondicherry	02
6.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	03
7.	Gujarat	25
8.	Madhya Pradesh	29
9.	Maharashtra	22
10.	Rajasthan	12
11.	Goa	02
12.	Haryana	30
13.	Punjab	49
14.	Uttar Pradesh	71
15.	Himachal Pradesh	12
16.	Jammu & Kashmir	08
17.	Delhi	01
18.	Bihar	44
19.	Orissa	11
20.	West Bengal	13
21.	Assam	13
22.	Tripura	02
23.	Manipur	02
24.	Meghalaya	01
25.	Nagaland	01
26.	Arunachal Pradesh	01
27.	Sikkim	01
28.	Mizoram	01
Total		463

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to augment the agricultural production, it is necessary to have a soil testing lab in every development block to test the fertility of the soil but these have not been provided so far. It has been stated in the reply that in all the States in the country there are only 463 soil testing laboratories, Madhya Pradesh, which is area wise the biggest State in the country is having 29 laboratories only. I do not have any grudge against any state but even then I want to submit that Kerala which is even smaller than Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh is having as many as 19 such laboratories. There are 30 laboratories in Haryana, 49 in Punjab, But in Madhya Pradesh there are only 29 labs. The land in Madhya Pradesh is very fertile and the water resources are enough, even then why the number of labs is less there? I would like to ask the Government as to whether it will try to make provision in the Eighth Five Year Plan to provide one soil testing lab in each block even if its cost is 5 lakh rupees. If Rs. 5 lakh is invested in a block then on the other hand the expenditure of crores of rupees on fertilisers, will be saved. So, the hon. Minister Sir, are you prepared to make such a provision in the Eighth Year Plan?

[English]

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, at present there are 463 testing laboratories in the country, out of which 100 laboratories are mobile. The present capacity utilisation is about 75 per cent. We have not been able to utilise the full capacity of the existing laboratories. The hon. Member's proposal is good and if we can have one laboratory in each block, it will certainly augment the production. But one laboratory costs about Rs. 5 lakh. One laboratory will be able to give 10,000 samples a year. Due to the resource constraints Government has decided to first gear up the existing laboratories for full capacity utilisation. Then the Government may think of creating new laboratories. So far as Madhya Pradesh is concerned, under the Eighth Five Year Plan, this year we have

given Rs. 5 crore for strengthening the existing laboratories in the country and also to set up some more mobile laboratories. I will consider the case of Madhya Pradesh, keeping their requirement in view.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just now stated Rs. 5 crores have been given to Madhya Pradesh this year under The Eighth Five Year Plan, I may point out through you that there are 400 blocks in the State. Will the Central Government ask the Madhya Pradesh Government to set up a soil testing lab in each block? Similarly, will the Central Government make efforts to set up a soil testing laboratory in each block of every State in the country. We want an assurance that the soil testing laboratory will be set up in each block of the country.

[English]

SHRI K.C. LENKA: As I told you, at present, there is no proposal under the consideration of the Government to create one Soil Testing Laboratory in each block.

But so far as the State Governments are concerned, we will certainly ask the State Governments to increase their Soil Testing Centres. In the Eighth Five Year Plan, due to constraint of funds, we do not have any proposal to have one such laboratory in each block.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, one of the main reasons for not utilising the full capacity is that some farmers who are progressive and who are enlightens and who want to know about the soil conditions, they are able to get the details and whereas, a very large number of farmers still cannot think of this facility.

So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether the Union Government will suggest to the State Governments steps regarding this. Of course, as you said, setting up of a Soil Testing Laboratory in each block will cost a

lot. But, already, there are staff of the Agriculture department who are there.

Will the Union Government suggest to the State Governments - because they are the implementing agencies at the State level - to make it part and parcel of the duties of the staff who are working in the Agriculture Department, to collect the samples from every village, from all the four sides, and get them tested and make available the information at the Gram Panchayat Office? If it is done, the nature of soil - the fertilizers that are required -and the micro-nutrients that are deficient, can be improved. It will improve the production also. Will you kindly take necessary steps to see that, at least, for increasing the production you double the number of these mobile soil testing laboratories? If it is done, at least, two districts may be covered with one mobile soil testing laboratory. It will be of great help. Will the hon. Minister consider this and do the needful?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, this is true that one of the reasons for not utilising it to full capacity is due to lack of inflow of soil to the laboratories. There is no infrastructure in our country. At present, the interested farmers themselves come to the laboratories for soil testing. There is no agency to collect the soil from the farmers for testing it in the laboratory. During the Eighth Five Year Plan and particularly this year, the Government of India is going to introduce, a Central scheme for a balanced and integrated use of fertilizers, to see that the inflow of soil from the farmers is increased; and also, the percentage of capacity utilisation could be increased so that we can cover more number of farmers in the rural areas.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister in his statement has stated that there are 71 central laboratories in Uttar Pradesh. I know that out of those 71 laboratories in Uttar Pradesh, only a few are big laboratories working on a large scale and the people there are continuously feeling that there

must be a large laboratory at least on the commissioner level. The Uttar Pradesh Government had discussed in 1986 in the legislative assembly the need to increase the number of laboratories. No proper publicity has been made in the most backward districts of Northern Uttar Pradesh like Gazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Ballia and Sonbhadra, that the soil is tested in these laboratories. The farmers do not have any knowledge of such facility. Are you planning, to set up a big laboratory there at the commissioner level and publicise its existence among the farmers there? Do you pose to make such arrangements in the eighth Five Year Plan for the benefit of small farmers and set up big laboratory at a commissioner level?

[English]

SHRI K.C. LENKA: So far as Uttar Pradesh is concerned, the capacity utilisation of the laboratories registered today in Uttar Pradesh is higher than the national average. But the proposal is very good for the backward districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

But in the Eighth Five Year Plan, we are going to have a scheme to train the farmers and to propagate this scheme among the farmers saying that soil testing is the primo necessity for growing crops and increasing production.

SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: In many areas of this country, agricultural operations are still primitive; this is because the agriculture research has been directed to a particular area that is plains and the plateaus; whereas the coastal areas have been totally neglected like in konkan areas many irrigation projects have failed because of laterite soil. Lakhs of rupees have been spent but of no avail. That is why due attention must be given to the coastal areas. Is there any plan, that priority will be given in the Eighth Five Year Plan to the coastal areas?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: This system helps agriculture very much because this system identifies the deficiency of plant nutrients in the soil. So, we are giving priority to know the

status of micro-nutrients in the soil; and accordingly, we advise the farmers about the use of fertilisers; and also we are looking after to examine the ground water and suggesting the farmers its use for irrigation purpose.

In coastal districts also laboratories which have been established, are primarily looking after this matter - saline water and other nutrients that is status of the nutrients inside the soil; and they giving the findings of it to the farmers; and accordingly the farmers are utilising the fertilisers judiciously in the soil for the increase of the production.

Drilling of Oil Wells

+
* 903 SHRI ATAL BIHARI
VAJPAYEE:
SHRI SHANKERSINGH
VAGHELA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the oil wells where drilling is going on at present and the cost of drilling per meter in each case;

(b) whether any study has been made to reduce the drilling cost; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR): (a) At present 136 wells are under drilling. The cost of drilling per meter in each well varies depending on location, depth, geology etc.

(b) and (c). Studies to improve drilling efficiency have been carried out. Implementation of various recommendations in this regards has resulted in improvement of rig productivity.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday the Hon. Finance Minister had confirmed that petroleum products worth 15 thousand crore rupee are being imported every year. The functioning of the Oil Natural Gas Commission has not only attracted public criticism but the Hon. Finance Minister himself has commented on the working of the Commission.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know as to not how many wells are lying idle. If the Hon. Minister does not have information in this regard he can evade reply by saying that he requires notice but the Hon. Minister is an intelligent person and can well visualise that when we are asking the number of wells working, then the questions as to how many wells are lying idle and since when these have been lying idle are likely to be asked. Is it true that the wells are being neglected? Is it also a fact that the Commission is not doing its duty properly? Why, the production of oil is not registering the stipulated increase?

[English]

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: In the methodology of operations of the Corporation there will always be certain idle wells and certain wells which are under rectification. Altogether, there are about one thousand wells which are either idle or which are under rectification. It is the constant endeavour of the ONGC to keep the number of idle wells low, improve the production from the existing wells in order to improve the production in the short term.

As regards part (a) of the question, it is true that there is a gap between the demand and the indigenous production of crude and petroleum products, imposing on us a crushing burden of imports. It is the endeavor of this Ministry through short medium and long term measures to see that this gap is contained and reduced. We have launched major development schemes in the Bombay