

11.08 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Linking of Southern Rivers

*1. DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Water Commission had prepared any Action Plan for linking of southern peninsular rivers in 1991 ;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the likely cost thereof and the time factor required for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement*Linking of Southern Rivers*

(a) No such plan was prepared in 1991. However, the Ministry of Water Resources (erstwhile Ministry of Irrigation) and the Central Water Commission prepared a National Perspective for Water Resources Development in the year 1980 consisting of two components viz. Himalayan and Peninsular Rivers Development Components.

(b) The Peninsular Rivers Development Component of the National Perspective comprises 17 links under following four major parts :

- (i) Inter-linking of Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery rivers and building storages at potential sites in these basins.
- (ii) Inter-linking of west flowing rivers, north of Bombay and south of Tapi.
- (iii) Inter-linking of Ken-Chambal.
- (iv) Diversion of west flowing rivers to water deficit areas in the east.

(c) The tentative cost of the proposed Peninsular Rivers Development Component at 1995-96 price level is Rs. 1,10,000 crores. The time required for implementation will depend upon various factors like agreements to be reached among the concerned State Governments, availability of funds etc. after completion of feasibility studies of the proposed links.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am the opening bowler of this Session. Cricket is a foreign game, so, I should say *Gilli Danda*.

[Translation]

AN HON'BLE MEMBER : The language spoken by you is a foreign language.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Yes, it has to be a foreign language. When all those close to you fly to USA for heart bypass surgery, the language spoken has to be a foreign language.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, Sir the answer as laid on the Table of the House shows the warped priorities of this Government. What it says is that the Central Water Commission prepared a national perspective of water resources, and yet, no follow-up action has been taken. I would like to ask my first question that in view of the fact that this linking of southern rivers provides a permanent long-term solution to deficit rivers like Cauvery, when did the feasibility studies on the proposed link start?

Has it been commenced? If it has been commenced, when does the Government expect it to be completed?

SHRI SOMPAL : This Perspective Plan has two components. One is the Himalayan component and the other is the Peninsular component.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : I only asked for Southern rivers. My question is about the Southern rivers. I do not want to know about the Himalayan rivers.

SHRI SOMPAL : I am replying to the Peninsular rivers only. In the case of Peninsular rivers, prefeasibility reports of 17 links have already been completed.

Feasibility reports of the following three links completed:

1. Ken-Betwa link
2. Par-Tapi-Narmada link
3. Pamba-Achankovil-Valppar link.

Field surveys for the following eight links are in progress for preparation of feasibility reports :

1. Godavari (Polavaram) - Krishna (Vijayawada) link
2. Godavari (Inchampalli) - Krishna (Pulichintala). link
3. Krishna (Almati) - Pennar link
4. Krishna (Nagarajunasagar) - Pennar (Somasila) link
5. Damanganga - Pinjal link
6. Mahanadi (Manibhadra) - Godavari (Dowlaiswaram) link
7. Parbati - Kailsindh - Chambal link
8. Krishna (Srisailem) - Pennar link

This is my answer.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether the Government has any estimate of the extent of employment generation and the effect it will have in agriculture once the Southern Water River Grid is completed. I want to know whether any such estimate has been made and whether this matter has been studied at all.

SHRI SOMPAL : The additional irrigation of 25 million hectares from surface water, and 100 lakh hectares, that is, ten million hectares from ground water will be provided. The employment generation studies have not been carried out. The same can be carried out. Once the agricultural production improves, employment generation is an automatic result of this project.

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Mohan Singh.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Instead of building a temple, you build this.....(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMPAL : Since you are proposing this, we will build both.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Minister has mentioned about the Himalayan Component and Peninsula component. I would like to know as to what is the Himalayan Component, the feasibility report thereof, the anticipated cost thereof and the steps being taken by the Government in this regard.

SHRI SOMPAL : The estimated cost of the Himalayan Component at 1995-96 price level is two lakh twenty crore rupees. It is proposed to construct link canals to connect five rivers -- Manas - Sankos Teesta Ganga, Sharda - Yamuna Link, Ghagra-Yamuna link, Yamuna Rajasthan link and Ganga Damodar - Swarnarekha link. The feasibility study is being carried out in this regard, for it is not going to result simply in diverting the flow of water from one place to another. A study is being conducted to find its impact on the environment and the places where the natural course is likely to be obstructed from the point of view of flood control measures. The study has not been completed so far.

[English]

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : Therefore, you will not do it.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Mr. Speaker Sir, the National Water Development Agency has made an extensive pre-study pertaining to the West-flowing rivers, namely, Pamba-Achakovil-Kallar. The studies have identified that these rivers can be linked to Vaippar river so that about 22 tmc of water can be saved which are flowing wastefully into the Arabian Sea. With this Tirunelveli, Madurai, Sivaganga and 'VIRUDHU NAGAR' Districts and about one-and-a-half lakh acres of land can be irrigated. In such a case, the Kerala Government is not at all in the mood of accepting this scheme.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put the question.

SHRI T. R. BAALU : Sir, the agency has also identified the NATIAR river of Karnataka that can be linked to Cauvery River. I want to know whether the Kerala Government as well as the Karnataka Government can be brought on to one table so that things can be settled peacefully by the Central Government. I want to know the reaction of the Government.

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker Sir, this is one of the difficulties which we come across when we are planning inter-linking of rivers. The States, which are known as riparian States and are likely to reap benefits from the rivers which are common properties, must agree. There is an arrangement laid down in the Constitution and the Government is working on effecting an agreement wherever it is required.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Is the hon. Minister going to bring in any enactment by Parliament to settle the issues between the States?

MR. SPEAKER : No, not like this.

SHRI SOMPAL : Sir, the consultations are on and if the Parliament thinks like that, it can be thought of

[Translation]

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say to the hon'ble Minister that this plan for connecting the rivers of northern and Southern India is commendable, however, the water level is falling to such an extent that water re-charging is not taking place due to which the fertility of land is being affected. Blocks are being classified as grey and dark areas and a ban is being imposed on boring. As a consequence thereof, we will see that after twenty years, the areas in Badaun, Bareilly and other districts of Uttar Pradesh having no canals will reach a state where there will be no production of foodgrains and people of these areas will be on the verge of starvation. I would like to ask the Hon'ble Minister as to whether he has received any proposal for construction of a canal from Narora village to Dataganj area and if so, what action is being taken by the Government on that proposal? whether the Government agrees in principle that a plan would be drawn up to construct canals in such areas where there are no canals?

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question put by the hon'ble Member is not related to the original question.....(Interruptions) However, I share his concern that the level of underground water is falling drastically. There are many reasons behind it. The Planning Commission has formulated a 25 year, nationwide scheme employing the rain water conservation technique to address this problem. Under this scheme, a solution has been suggested to tackle this problem by collecting and conserving rain water both on the surface and under-ground. This 25 year scheme has been submitted by the Planning Commission and its implementation will commence in this very year.

[English]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, will the hon. Minister be pleased to state whether the linking of rivers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu is feasible? What is the Action Plan? So far as I know, this coastal areas of Kerala will be drained if the rivers are allowed to flow eastwards. Is there any suggestion in the Action Plan regarding Pamba and Achankovil rivers in Kerala or have any directions been issued in this regard?

SHRI SOMPAL : Sir, in the National Plan for inter-linking the rivers particularly in the southern peninsula, one of the components is about the West-flowing rivers and their water being transferred to the eastern portion. There are some rivers in Kerala, but on this again we have to consult the States and unless there is an agreement between the States, we cannot take any action. The Centre will take the responsibility to initiate the discussion and if there is an agreement we are thinking of transferring some water of some rivers to eastern portion.

AN HON. MEMBER : Coastal areas should not be drained. There is a plenty of water in the coastal areas....(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMPAL: There is no question of draining in any coastal areas.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR SAHU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon'ble Minister whether a central water policy has been announced? If such a policy has been announced then how is the grid irrigation system proposed to be incorporated therein? Indravati, Mahanadi Godavari rivers link Andhra Pradesh with Chhatisgarh region of Central India. I would like to know from the hon'ble Minister whether the Central Government has any proposal to link the two regions?

[English]

SHRI SOMPAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the National Water Policy was announced in 1987 and it lays down the broad framework of utilisation of water, which falls by way of rainfall on the whole subcontinent.

Regarding his specific question, I do not have the information at hand but I can find it out and supply the same to the hon. Member.

Suicide by Farmers

*2. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN :
SHRI MUKUL WASNIK :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken note of the reported suicides committed by the farmers in various parts of the country:

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether any official enquiry has been conducted to look into the causes of alleged suicides ;

(d) if so, the findings thereof and steps being taken including import of quality seeds to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future;

(e) the details of the compensation sought/package awarded/released to compensate affected farmers, State-wise; and

(f) the steps taken to ensure speedy disbursement of aid/loans to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (f) According to the reports received from the State Governments, there have been cases of suicides committed by the farmers as a result of damage to crops due to natural calamities in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Maharashtra. 236 farmers in Andhra Pradesh, 29 in Karnataka and 51 in Maharashtra are reported to have committed suicide.

2. State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab have conducted enquiries to look into the causes of alleged suicides. Government of Andhra Pradesh has sanctioned ex-gratia to 142 out of 236 reported deaths, 61 cases were not considered and cases of 33 are under re-enquiry. Government of Karnataka has confirmed 13 deaths due to suicides as a result of damage to crops. Government of Maharashtra has confirmed 12 cases of suicides having direct linkage & 7 cases have some linkage with crop loss. Government of Punjab has also inquired into the media reports regarding some suicides in the district of Sangrur. However, according to the State Government these incidents were not connected with crop damage.

3. It is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Government to make available certified/quality seed to the farmers in time. However, Government of India assess the seed requirement and availability position, State-wise prior to each sowing season. As per the information furnished by the State Governments, overall position of seeds in the country is satisfactory, Government of Andhra Pradesh has drawn up a seed supply plan for each district in order to supply quality seeds to the farmers. The Government of Maharashtra is taking action to procure good quality seeds through State's Seeds Corporation.

4. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has announced the following package of relief for the affected farming families: