

(Interruptions)

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: Sir, the Minister of Water Resources has come. We request him to react...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have no objection if the Minister responds to this. But you said that you wanted a discussion and the Government has also said that they are ready for a discussion. I will fix up the time for it.

SHRI H .D. DEVEGOWDA: We are demanding a discussion only for the purpose of highlighting the problem which is prevailing today. It is for the Government to do justice if they want. Even after hearing us, after the discussion if the Government does not want to solve the matter, then we are at liberty to take the issue to the people and we will adopt our own method...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): The Government has agreed for a discussion on this. A serious situation is developing in Karnataka. It will be better if the matter is discussed today so that the Government's reply will be helpful to create a very harmonious position...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: Please have a discussion today itself...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Do not force things like this. This is not correct.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not correct. Please understand that Question Hour is a Private Members' time. Now many Members want to ask questions. But you are consuming that time. Now you wanted a discussion. I asked the Government or waited until the Government responded. When the Government said yes, I had said that I would fix up the discussion. What more do you want now?

(Interruptions)

SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: The Karnataka Members do not obstruct any proceedings in the House. We are very disciplined Members....

MR. SPEAKER: You wanted a discussion. I am giving you the discussion. Why do you stand now?

(Interruptions)

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: Have a discussion today itself!

MR. SPEAKER: I have no problem if the Government is ready to have a discussion today itself. I have no objection.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You do not have any quarrel with the Speaker.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARA-MANGALAM: We are ready for a discussion. But if they want the Prime Minister to reply to it, then I will have to find out.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chinese Prime Minister is here. He is having discussions with him. So he is busy.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARA-MANGALAM: That is why I said that I will find out from the Prime Minister. Otherwise the Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources is ready for a discussion.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: We are ready for a discussion today itself.

11.18 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Committee on Agricultural Policies and Programmes

*304. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any decision on the recommendations of the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee on Agricultural Policies and Programmes;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (c). The Committee has made a large number of recommendations on various aspects of agriculture concerning different departments/Ministries of the Government of India. The views of all concerned departments are being obtained so that a well-considered decision on the report of the Committee could be taken.

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: The answer provided by the hon. Minister is a little bit disappointing. Not only as a Member of Parliament but also as a farmer I am very much disappointed that this report had been submitted one-and-a-half years back and no action so far. Now three Governments have changed. The Committee was appointed on 6.2.90 with Chairman and 11 members. Mr. V.S. Rao was also one of the members. The report was also very earnestly submitted on 26.7.90. Now the Eighth Plan is under preparation. In the past one and-a-half years the recommendations are being referred to various Departments. It is not known when the answers would be obtained. The annual per capita foodgrains availability is dwindling and stagnating at almost 170 kgs. The annual per capita income is also decreased to the extent of Rs. 420. The present target of the foodgrain growth rate at 4.7 per cent and want to double the foodgrains production to 350 million tonnes within next 15 years.

In this background, I would like to know whether the Government is committed to accept these recommendations, incorporate them in the Eighth Plan and evolve a national agricultural policy. If so, what is the time frame that has been fixed for considering

these recommendations, incorporating them in the Eighth Plan and evolving a national agricultural policy?

The national industrial policy was evolved in 1948 but no agricultural policy so far.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question? You are now going from agricultural policy to industrial policy.

PROF. VENKATESHWARLU UMMAREDDY: My question is whether the Government is committed to accept these recommendations of the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee, whether they are going to be incorporated in the Eighth Plan and whether the national agricultural policy is going to be framed and, if so, by what time.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no delay I think. It is a question of a procedure and as such there is no absence of any policy also because if there had been no agricultural thrust or policy in that respect, we could not have marched to the level where we are today. Naturally we say that it is we who put up that Committee—not we but the previous Government - and it was for two specific purposes: (1) to review the policy and programmes for promotion of agricultural development in the country, specially with a view to generating export surpluses; and (2) to examine the feasibility or desirability of declaring agriculture as an industry or, in the alternative, treating agriculture on par with the industry for the purpose of granting suitable facilities and concessions. This policy was formulated or prepared by the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee and submitted to Government in September, 1990. There was a Draft Policy Resolution presented to the Cabinet but that was not discussed and not adopted. Then it was referred to the various State Governments and the Ministries for their recommendations and their viewpoints. I have not got all the recommendations from

the States as well as from the Ministries so far. I want to make it also feasible to accomplish this task at the earliest but it takes time. My Ministry has been reminding them off and on. We have just recently put another urgent appeal to them to please give their opinion on all the matters referred to them.

There are still, I think, some Ministries which have not even replied to this. There are about nine Ministries which have to give their opinions so far. In the changed circumstances, when there has been an industrial policy, liberalisation of something, there has to be some new outlook on that. But, in the mean time, it does not mean that we are stagnating. The agricultural thrust is going on. As you see, I have been repeating on the floor of the House time and again that we are going to implement what the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee had also said about the creation of surplus, about the export orientation, about remunerative prices to the farmers, about how to incorporate that type of a thing whether it is going to be the industrial base or treating it as an industry or not. All these things have to be treated in a proper perspective. I want to get all these facts, discuss them and bring them as early as possible before this House after presenting it to the Cabinet. That is my idea.

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATE-SHWARLU: Sir, the hon. Minister has said that as one of the Terms of Reference is to treat agriculture on par with industry and in this process the farmers are interested in having a remunerative price, I would like to get the answer from the hon. Minister on whether the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee has made a recommendation to include the

managerial costs and also the risk factors to be the factors while computing the costs and returns in agricultural products to fix up remunerative prices and, if so, what are details.

SHRIBALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think I gave all these factors in my previous reply. But I can assure the hon. Member that we have gone ahead and further than the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee, as far as the remunerative prices are concerned and we are doing much more than what was recommended by them.

I will give you the full criteria of this. I may say that everything in the managerial inputs, of the land itself, its structure, farming implements and depletion have been taken into account and nothing has been left to chance.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KESHARBAI SONAJI (Kshirsagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, when was Bhanu Pratap Committee was formed and what were its recommendations.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: It must be a long report, I suppose.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KESHARBAI SONAJI KSHIRSAGAR: You can give main recommendations.

SHRIBALRAM JAKHAR: I can give the names of the Members of the Committee:

1.	Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh	Chairman
2.	Shri Kumbha Ram Arya	Member
3.	Shri Hardev Singh-Sanga	Member
4.	Shri M.G. Devasahayam	Member
5.	Shri V. Sobhanadreeswara Rao	Member

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6.	Shri Suraj Bhan ex-M.P.		Member	
7.	Prof. V.M. Rao, Institute for Social & Economic Change, Bangalore		Member	
8.	Dr. G.R. Saini		Member	
9.	Shri D.C. Misra		Member-Secretary	

The following two Members have been co-opted to the Committee with the approval of the Government.

1.	Col. Mahinder Singh, Delhi	Member
2.	Dr. D.N. Borthakur	Member

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Agriculture Minister has stated that Government gives due priority to it and it is under its consideration. He has also stated that since the new industrial policy and the new economic policy have been announced as such a decision would be taken after taking all these things into consideration.

Sir, the farmers of this country have a strong feeling that they get less priority as compared to the industrial sector. They are not wrong in saying so, as the Government has formulated both industrial and economic policies but is yet to formulate the agricultural policy. The Eighth Five Year Plan will soon be formulated. If the comprehensive agricultural policy is not formulated and discussed prior to the finalisation of the Eighth Five Year Plan, the farmers are not likely to get justice. Keeping the facts in view that the Eighth Five Year Plan is being finalised and report has not yet been received from some Ministries as well as from some States whether he will convene a meeting of Ministries and the Chief Ministers of various states of Agricultural Ministers of the States with the Planning Commission with a view to form national agricultural policy before the finalisation of the Eighth Five Year Plan as this is the matter of urgent public importance and is of concerned with the formulation of

a National policy. This is what I want to know.

SHRIBALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am fully aware and totally agree with the views expressed by the hon. Member and I am as much interested in expediting this matter as the hon. Member is. However, at the same time I would like to inform you that although the policy has not been approved, yet I am proceeding in this same direction to which it want us to go. I also want to ensure that the farmer should not only get two square meals a day but his economic condition is also improved. For this it is necessary to adopt a new outlook and formulate a new policy so that he may save some money and become financially sound. Keeping all these things in view, I want to formulate this policy. I am also interested in linking this policy with the economic and trade policies and to take the benefit. This is the reason behind the delay in bringing the agricultural policy. I have recently written to them in this connection and now again I shall try to invite them so that it is done at the earliest. We shall analyse this and start a new process.

[English]

SHRI S.B. SIDNAL: Sir, Agriculture was already neglected all these days. Shri Rajiv Gandhi said that it will be treated on par with industry. With this background, I want

to know whether the Government is going to treat agriculture on par with industry instead of just telling that something is going to happen in the future because they have already gone for an industrial policy.

Since it is only on agricultural country, there is no agricultural policy and the Minister is not telling when he is going to do, how he is going to do. Is it going to be a month or year or something, it has to be categorically stated.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I think it is a wrong presumption to say that we have got no agricultural policy. We have something, I think you were also a Member. In 1980-89 when Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, we had brought a Resolution and it categorically stated certain things. If you like, I can just quote from them, it is quite a long list. Under each aspect we want to give a thrust to agriculture, we do not want to leave it lagging behind the Industrial policy because the infrastructure of the economy of this country is simply based on agriculture and every progressive country must give priority first and foremost to agriculture. That should be the base and that is the real base for agriculture because if you export something on industrial front, it might be a small fraction, but what we produce, sell and export in agriculture, is simply full profit to us. *(Interruptions)*

[*Translation*]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to point out that the questions raised by the hon. Member Shri Chandrajeet Yadav have not been replied satisfactorily by the hon. Minister. The minister had said that the agricultural policy is treated at par with the industrial policy and it is implemented like the industrial policy. In this context I would like to point out that the recommendations made by the Bhanu Pratap committee were not taken seriously. It is now time to take them seriously. There are two cash crops grown in this country. One is jute. Last year the price of jute was Rs. 800-900 per quintal but now the price of

jute in the current year has fallen to Rs. 250 per quintal. About three crore farmers are engaged in jute production. Secondly, you may observe that sugarcane is sold at the rate of Rs. 18 to Rs.22 per quintal. Under the industrial policy the price of a commodity is fixed as per concrete policy keeping in view the many factors. But our agriculture policy is not like this.

MR. SPEAKER: Please don't give suggestions but ask question.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: I would like to submit that the agriculture policy should be implemented with the same resolutions and zeal with which industrial policy is implemented. In the present circumstances some of the commodities are being sold at the prices lower than those fixed by Government. I want to know the action proposed to be taken by you in this regard. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I would like to inform the hon. Member that when he was in power he too failed to give a final shape to it. It was received by the previous Government in September but they failed to finalise it upto November-December. Now I would like to take some time, I am taking into account every aspect for the betterment of agricultural sector. *(Interruptions)*

Every work even if it is to be done in a hurry, takes time. I do not want to do a thing which might be boomeranging, I do not want to do a thing which is counter productive, I want to follow a productive policy, I want it for the betterment of the farmers, I want it for the betterment of this country and I am going to take into account every conceivable recommendation and advice by which it can be brought into effect.

[*Translation*]

You have only referred to the price of jute but did not say anything regarding the prices of other agricultural items which are

being sold at higher prices. Earlier these products never got such good prices. Take for instance paddy or cotton. Regarding the rest, I shall try and do my level best.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: I asked you about jute and sugarcane. What are you doing about these crops? The farmers are facing great hardships. I have been to those areas and as such I had made this request.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Meghe.

SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been raising this issue for a long time that the farmers get less price of their products as compared to their cost of production. They do not get remunerative prices. I am aware of the fact that Jakhar Sahab is taking a lot of interest in it and we have lot of hopes from him. Under the agricultural policy, do you propose to give remunerative prices to the farmers keeping in view their cost of production. It is true that whether a farmer produces sugarcane or cotton he invests more money and labours hard as compared to the price he gets. Owing to this the economic condition of our farmers is not good. The objective of our agricultural policy is to give higher prices to the farmers as compared to their cost of production. Do you propose to take action in this regard and this is what I want to ask from the agriculture Minister.

SHRIBALRAM JAKHAR: I would like to give him an assurance. Please see the prices which we announced last time. However, I want to tell Meghe Sahab that if the Megh, (clouds) are kind to us there will be no problem. When the Megh (cloud) are not kind to us, then it is a cause of worry.

SHRI RAM NAIK: The hon. Minister has said that if the clouds are kind, it will be good. This is the manifesto of the Congress party. In this it is stated that:

[*English*]

"A comprehensive policy will be developed for management and

command area development. The Congress Government will assist in construction of one million wells for irrigation every year."

MR. SPEAKER: This pertains to irrigation and not related to agricultural policy. Let us distinguish between the two. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK: He has stated that the policy is being formulated and my question is related to it. Will you tell the House a specific time by which you propose to announce the agriculture policy.

MR. SPEAKER: The agricultural policy is already there. It is being improved upon.

[*English*]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not doubt the sincerity of the Minister for Agriculture. But the fact of the matter is that this is a very critical period where decisions are going to be taken for the next five years. You are well aware that our agricultural sector had suffered in the past for want of necessary capital. In view of the fact that capital in the form of investment or credit being not made available to the farmers all these years, will the Government take necessary steps to immediately allocate at least one-third of the credit that is made available through the commercial banks and cooperative banks to the agricultural sector?

Then, the Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee had made a specific recommendation for creating some zones where some crops can be grown for export purposes and also for setting up of a financial corporation to encourage export of agricultural products. So, will the Government take an immediate decision regarding this even below the Eighth Plan is formulated so that the results will emanate from the Eighth Plan and improve the agricultural situation in the entire country?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, the hon. Member knows very well that I have stated on the floor of this House so many times that my thrust is for diversification of agriculture, to produce more agricultural products for the farmers and export them. For that I have to have some infrastructure. We have to have facilities for grading, packaging, forwarding, marketing, processing and transport. So, I am trying to do it in the best possible manner. I can give you all the thrusts which we are going to make, but it is quite a long list and it will take the time of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, a National Agriculture Commission was constituted in the country for the first time in 1971 after independence, which, in 1975, made 3443 recommendations in 39 volumes in regard to the resources of agriculture production. The hon. Minister may please give the details about the number of recommendations out of them, accepted by the Government so far. Besides, a report of 1400 pages was also submitted by it. He has never gone through the report and he is going to formulate the agriculture policy. He should give the number of its recommendations accepted by the Government.

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: You were very nice, when you were on our side. (Interruptions)

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: You had misled him. If he has taken a right step at right time, what is wrong in it? I know that Shri Nathu Ram was the Chairman of the Commission. When he was its Chairman, I was a farmer I have been following the path shown by him since then.

SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA: Please implement its report.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I have taken charge only 5 months back. I will do what

could not be done during 15-20 years. I have been following the path shown by you and I will continue to do so in future also. I will work according to your advice. You should not worry. It is good that you left them.

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before asking any thing, I would like to point out to Dr. Saheb that this is the most important question of this session, which is related to the lives of crores of people. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If you talk like this, I will take action against you. If you have to maintain the dignity of the House, you should not talk like this.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have raised any hand many times but you did not give me chance to speak. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: This is too much. I am not talking. The Members are talking.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA: We also want to express something. Therefore, we may also be given opportunity to speak. (Interruptions)

[English]

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: Hon. Speaker may please pay attention to the Members who are neglected. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA: I am not

blaming you. But we also have right to speak.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: If you are passing remarks, sitting like that, it is not in consonance with the dignity of the House. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not speaking. The Members are speaking. Please sit down. I do not appreciate. I am not talking. You are talking.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Jakhhar Saheb has a great zeal and passion for doing something for the farmers. All over the world, especially in India the terms of trade have gone against farmers interest. So, I would like to know from him whether he will take care of the wishes and aspirations of farmers while formulating the agriculture policy.

Secondly, Shri Starad Yadav raised an important question in regard to Jute. In this context, I would like to say that jute is produced in large quantity in Orissa, particularly in the my constituency Kendrapara. But its prices have come down to Rs. 250 from Rs. 800. I would like to request again that being the hon. Minister of Agriculture he should take care the farmer's interests. Would the Government of India pressurise the J.C.I. to procure the jute from the farmers at the last year's prices so that the farmers are benefited.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Rabi Ray is very much correct in saying that the difficulties of the jute-growers must be removed. In this regard, I would contact the Minister of Textiles.

SHRI SRIKANT JENA: You have not fixed even its support price.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: That will also be done.

[English]

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA: My question No. 323 is regarding this policy also. I want to know from the hon. Minister categorically what was the recommendation of Bhanu Pratap Singh Committee on production of betal leaves in our State. Orissa is a major producing State of Betal leaves where the annual turn over is more than rupees one thousand crores.

I would like to know what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken for the development of betal leaves and for its export and other things.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I will give him the exact recommendations. His question is listed as 19th in the list today. But I can assure him that we take a keen interest in the development of *betal* leaves because they are quite good exporter now. Rs. 180 crores worth of *betal* leaves are exported. There is quite a possibility of using it in future in tooth paste and other things. Yesterday, I have got this information that this *betal* leaves can be used for anti-blotic and something like that. It is going to be very productive and remunerative for the farmers. I have asked my scientists also to give thrust to its production because it is affected by some disease which causes a lot of harm to the leaves. To generate more production and to give more thrust to the *betal* leave growing, we will do something. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We are going to discuss the economic situation in the country and while discussing the economic situation the Members would be entitled to discuss the agricultural policy and agricultural prices also. We have given more than Half-an-hour to this question. So I am going to next question.

Losses in DMS

*305. SHRI CHETAN P.S.
CHAUHAN:
SHRIMATI MAHENDRA
KUMARI :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: