

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, September 12, 1996/ Bhadra 21, 1918 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (CALCUTTA SOUTH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious matter. It is about providing 33 per cent reservation to women in the Assemblies and the Lok Sabha ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : What is serious ?

...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, Shri Rajiv Gandhi was the initiator of this reservation for women in Panchayats and Municipalities. We have got it. ...(Interruptions) Now it is for reservation in the legislatures. The Bill has been pending since long. My request to you, Sir, is that as tomorrow is the last day of the current Session, it should be passed without discussion. There is consensus in the House on this matter ...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI KRISHNA BOSE (JADAVPUR) : Sir, I raised this issue of providing reservation to women in the Lok Sabha. I was supported by all the women Members. At that time Shri Srikant Jena promised that this Bill would be introduced and passed in this Session ...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, this Bill should be passed without discussion so that the women will get a priority to work from the grassroot level to decision-making levels. This is my humble request to you ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (UDAIPUR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I, through you, would like to urge upon all the hon. Members of the House that we should not refer the Bill providing 30 per cent reservation to women to the Select Committee. In this regard, we met the hon. Prime Minister in the morning and he advised us for lobbying. Therefore, I request the hon. Members that the Bill should be passed in the current session itself without discussion. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I know it. It is for the Government and the House to decide. I have no difficulty.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, the Government is ready.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (DUMDUM) : Sir, there is an unanimity among them.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (HOWRAH) : Sir, The Government should take a decision and give this to the women ...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, where is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs ? You please call him. ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIYA (JUNAGARH) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this regard, I request all the Members to support the Bill, if presented and pass it without discussion ...(Interruptions)

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir there is a consensus in the House.

MR. SPEAKER : I understand it.

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, when there is a consensus on the Bill and they all are welcoming it, what is the objection in passing it. I demand that it should not be referred to the Select Committee. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, you have not understood a simple point. Where there is unanimity they are also insistent. Their conduct indicates that they are going to be more wasteful than the present Lok Sabha. ...(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA) : Sir, we are all opposed to this Bill going to the Subject Committee. It must be passed here.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, this Bill should be passed without discussion. It will be a good gesture to show to the country and particularly to the women.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it should be passed today itself without discussion. The corruption in the country is increasing so much ...(Interruptions)

[English]

I can say that women are above corruption. That much I can tell you. The Government should assert itself. Sir, you give a direction to them. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Well, I fully understand your sentiments. A delegation has just met me. The members of the delegation told me that they have met the hon. Prime Minister and that the Prime Minister has assured them. That is what they told me, I have no personal knowledge. You were very much there. You said that he has decided to convene a meeting of all political parties. So, let us wait for the outcome of the meeting of the political parties. The Bill will come.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The Government will do it. Let us proceed with the Question Hour. Let me call Shri Annasahib Patil to put his question.

...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, all parties are united.

MR. SPEAKER : Some formalities have to be gone through. The Prime Minister is calling a meeting of all parties. This is a very good achievement of yours. I must congratulate you.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (SILCHAR) : Sir, the only danger is that they may ask for the Speakership also ...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, you will appreciate that the North-Eastern region is male dominated. There is no women representative from there. ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

PROF. RITA VERMA (DHANBAD) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in this regard, a decision should be taken today and at once. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (BARASAT) : Sir, there is an unanimity. There is no need of discussing this matter in a separate all-party meeting because all the parties are here. We are all committed to it. Therefore, Sir, please do not take it otherwise. It will be just taking and wasting our time. Therefore, I feel if you permit, the Bill may be introduced and passed ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. The Leader of the House will speak now.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the Government is concerned, we have clearly stated in our Common Minimum Programme that 30 per cent reservation would be provided to women not only in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies but in Government services also. ...(Interruptions) Please listen first. ...(Interruptions)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (KOTA) : They do the drama of making announcement ...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Sir, you know that our Government is not a Government of a single party. It is a United Front Government which is being supported by the Congress and the CPI(M) from outside. As I said, our intention is clear and we want to get it passed as soon as possible ...(Interruptions)

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Everybody is here. There should be no discussion. ...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Listen to him. Let him complete.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Please listen. I shall request the hon. Speaker ...(Interruptions) The hon. Prime Minister has stated today itself ...(Interruptions) Please convene a meeting of the leaders of the parties ...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : What is the necessity of convening a meeting in this regard ?

[English]

All the leaders are here in the House.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a party besides Parliamentary Party ...(Interruptions) The hon. Member speak here but we have to keep in mind the Party's stand also. ...(Interruptions). The Government has no objection. Therefore, you decide by calling a meeting of all leaders and the Government is ready to pass that.

PROF. RITA VERMA : Sir, get it passed today itself. ...(Interruptions)

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, nobody objected to it. ...(Interruptions). Why should it be discussed inside the Chamber ?

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : All the leaders are here. We should immediately pass the Bill ...(Interruptions)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : The meeting should be called today itself ...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I request the suspension of the Question Hour. Let this Bill be introduced and passed ...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : We want justice ...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (ALLAHABAD) : All the parties are ready for it. ...(Interruptions) The Bhartiya Janta Party has passed a resolution to this effect in its National Council ...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I happened to meet the Prime Minister in the lobby. He said that he was also willing and if the leaders want to sit together.

he also can sit. It can be passed today or tomorrow ...*(Interruptions)*. I suggest that as there is a demand, let it be passed. Sir, you allow the suspension of Question Hour and let it be moved and passed ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Our leader has agreed, Sir ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Sir, if all the party leaders are agreed on this point, I will go and talk to the Prime Minister. I will come back in 10 to 15 minutes and let you know about it.

MR. SPEAKER : All right. He will go, consult the Prime Minister and come back.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Kumari Mamata Banerjee, it is enough. I think this much is enough.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Even before this Bill is introduced, they have already occupied my seat.

MR. SPEAKER : Before the Bill is introduced, you are occupying the seat.

Question number 561.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

Foodgrains Stock at FCI Godowns

*561. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of wheat and rice available in the godowns of Food Corporation of India at the end of June 1995;

(b) the quantity of wheat and rice exported by the FCI during the year 1995;

(c) whether the financial needs of FCI are likely to be fulfilled by the export of wheat and rice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (d) A Statement is being placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) The quantity of wheat and rice available in the Central Pool held by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State Agencies as on 30th June, 1995, was approximately as under :

(In million tonnes)

	FCI	State Agencies	Total
Wheat	8.7	10.5	19.2
Rice	15.1	1.3	16.4
Total	23.8	11.8	35.6

(b) FCI did not export wheat and rice directly except 2000 tonnes of rice exported to Nepal on Government Account. Wheat and rice sold during 1995 by the FCI for export purposes to exporters including Public Sector Undertakings was about 0.34 lakh tonnes and 14.01 lakh tonnes respectively.

(c) and (d) The sale of rice and wheat by the FCI for the purposes of export was made at rates higher than the Central Issue Prices for PDS as well as for the domestic open sale, but below the economic cost. The FCI was authorised to sell for export with a view to reduce the surplus stocks in Central Pool and for making available storage space for fresh procurement of rice and wheat. The estimated savings in the amount of subsidy payable to the FCI because of these export sales is of the order of Rs. 72 crores during 1995-96.

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the reply it has been mentioned that 35.6 million tonnes of wheat and rice have been stored in the Central Pool, while the production figure for 1994-95 says that 68 million tonnes of wheat was produced and 82 million tonnes of rice was produced. That means, 150 million tonnes of foodgrains were produced in 1994-95 and the figure for 1996-97 would certainly be much more. In view of the shortage of storage facilities, there is a lot of damage and wastage of foodgrains. You might have heard of a multi-crore scam in storage of foodgrains in Punjab and Haryana and also in procurement, transportation and many other things.

Sir, it is very strange that in my constituency, the city of Amalner, which is about 60 kms. from Jalgaon, is getting the foodgrains from Manmad which is about 135 kms. away and not from Jalgaon. These are the ways of the Food Corporation of India to transact its functions.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put the question now.

SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : There are various shortfalls. On the basis of experience of the last five years, may I know from the hon. Minister whether a critical review of the performance of the Food Corporation of India was undertaken by any competent authority to realistically assess the achievements of the Food Corporation of India and identify the failures with reference to the challenging tasks assigned to the organisation in the wake of globalisation. If so, what specific steps have been initiated to improve the working efficiency, to reduce the administrative costs, to streamline administrative procedures, to effect transparency in operation and various vigilance procedures and to specifically reduce the losses in the warehouses ?

MR. SPEAKER : It is a very long question. Please give a short reply.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : The answer may be short.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes.