

**16.56 hrs.**

**DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193**

Increasing population in the country-contd

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we will take up Item No. 22. The time allotted was two hours. 22 minutes had already been taken. The balance with us is 1 hour and 38 minutes. Shri Prabodh Panda was on his legs when the House was adjourned. He has already spoken for 22 minutes. So, I request him to continue his speech and try to conclude his speech very soon.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE): Sir, so far the National Population Policy is concerned for the year 2000, it is incapable of meeting the inherent demographic requirements of the new economic policy, though, it is observed that the voluntary family planning programme over the last five decades could make some sort of positive achievements.

If I go to the survey, independent surveys have shown that several States have achieved goals set for some aspect of the RCH programme during the Ninth Plan. Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal and Maharashtra have shown substantial decline in birth rates and the latter three States are likely to achieve replacement level of fertility, ahead of the projects. Punjab has achieved couple protection rate and use of spacing methods far ahead of all other States. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have achieved significant reduction in home deliveries. Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have improved immunisation coverage. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have achieved improvement in coverage and quality of ante-natal care.

If I come, specially, to the case of West Bengal, according to official statistics, it stands as the most populated State in India. Though its annual growth rate is 1.8 per cent, 908 persons are living in every square kilometre, which is about three times of the national average. It is interesting to point out that this is a State where CBR, that is, Crude Birth Rate has come down to some extent by

implementing various basic programmes like health programmes, literacy programmes etc. The density of population is becoming alarming not due to CBR but due to purely trans-border influx. This has caused a spiralling population trend, especially, in the border districts with three countries Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan facing the problems.

**17.00 hrs.**

Now, I would like to refer some of the border districts. The population growth in Malda is 2.5 per cent; in Murshidabad, it is 2.4 per cent; in Nadiya, it is 2 per cent; in Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur, it is 2.2 per cent to 2.9 per cent; in North and South 24 Parganas, it is 2.1 per cent to 2.3 per cent; and in Darjeeling, it is 2.4 per cent. These districts are facing the problem of infiltration. I must say that all over the country, the achievement is remarkable. To check the population growth, China has given the slogan of '*One Parent One Child*'. On the other hand, our country has given the slogan of '*Hum Do Hamare Do*'. I am not in favour of a particular slogan.

I believe that socio-economic development, social awareness, upgradation of living standards, health awareness and education - all these are important ingredients to meet the problem of population growth. The family planning and the fertility control are yet to be declared as obligatory, and it should be done in a persuasive manner.

Sir, we are very much familiar with the Malthusian Theory. The British economist Malthus expounded the theory that whether or not a country was over-populated would be judged by its supply of food. Now, our country is not suffering from food crisis. It has now stopped importing food despite its population having touched the mark of 1.8 billion. On the contrary, it exports food grains. So, it cannot be said that ours is an over-populated country. Modern economists have not accepted the Malthusian Theory. On the contrary, they relate the population growth to the national income growth rate. The problem is not the population explosion but it is uneven distribution of the income of wealth. It is imperative that special efforts should be made during the next decade to break the vicious self-perpetuating cycle of poor performance, poor

per capita income, poverty, low literacy and high birth rate, especially in the populous States so that further widening of disparities between the classes and States in terms of per capita income and quality of life can be prevented. These measures are accepted all over to control the population growth and regulate fertility. A study has been conducted by the Experts Committee set up by the National Commission on Minorities. In its Report, it is found that overall, the ideas of fertility regulation and small family size are being well accepted even by the Muslim community in India as has been the case in major Islamic countries like Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Bangladesh, Libya and Malaysia. The analysis revealed that as high as 37 per cent of Muslim women were practising family planning measures. The opposition to family planning measures was not because of religious reasons, but due to the method adopted.

**17.05 hrs.**

(Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav *in the Chair*)

But most of the women who are opposed to family planning measures are not favourably inclined towards sterilisation. So, this aspect has to be taken into consideration.

Sir, I do not want to take the time of the House. Lastly, I would like to quote Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He said:

"I do not consider the rising population trend of India as an impediment in the path of our nation-building. To me, a man is born with immense potential and capability and the task of our nation is to harness that potential for the steady growth of our country."

If we have to seriously address the problem of increasing population in our country, then we should try to implement this particular idea which had been propounded by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I thank you for giving me time to initiate this discussion. The hon. Minister is present here. I hope he will pay proper attention to not only the issue of fertility control, but to all other related issues also so that we can address this problem properly.

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA (KARIMGANJ): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me a chance to participate in this discussion. I share the concern of the hon. Member which he expressed while initiating this discussion.

Sir, the demographers all over the world are worried that we are going to cross the Chinese population within the next three decades. We are already the second populous country in the world and are having the burden of population because we are unable to provide them with jobs and we are unable to utilise their services. When we cross the Chinese population within three decades, one can imagine very well what could be the condition at home.

During the last decade, the population of our country has increased from 250 million to 1,000 million. During this period, the world population has trebled whereas our population increased by almost four times. So, more people are now being added than at any other time in the human history. This is due to the fact that before the starting of the development process, both death rate and birth rate were same, though both were high and that is why the population growth was stable. Now, the birth rate has been reduced and the death rate has also been reduced. But the death rate has reduced at a faster rate than the birth rate. Now, three births are equal to one death and that is why population is increasing. The reason for that is because there is more food production, public health and sanitary facilities are available, medical science has improved and medical facilities are available to all the people now. Moreover, there is awareness created among the people due to expansion of education.

Sir, the rapid population growth in India is the main obstacle to our economic development under the present system of democracy. We find sometimes, the functionaries in public business think that it is everybody's business. That is why it is nobody's business. Otherwise, we could also welcome the population growth as the orthodox people believe that child is the gift of God; so, it is the God who has to feed him, or the child is born not only with one mouth but also with two hands to work. The thing is that we are not in a position to provide work for them because the natural resources, the forest resources, the

mineral resources are diminishing at a very fast rate. Unemployment remains unsolvable at the present rate of growth.

Sir, the economic phenomenon is known very well by all and the unproductive labour force eat up the development potential of the country. So, if we do not restrict our population and if we keep on increasing it at a very fast rate, then that will be a burden on our economy. This will create only an unproductive, uneducated, labour force, which will benefit only the rich people who can get the labour at a cheaper rate and also some politicians who can try to preserve a vote bank out of it.

The population is a human resource and Indian population is treated as quality human resource all over the world. But who are those people? We have exported our resources. Those people are very good managers, engineers and those who could participate in the productive process. They are all exported. These are the human resources, which are appreciated all over the world. But unproductive labour force cannot be treated as a human resource. This is a burden on the State.

Moreover, the pressure on land has been increasing at a very fast rate. In 1960 the per capita availability of agricultural land available to us was 0.21 hectare and in 1999, it is found that it is only 0.10 hectare.

Another point is very dangerous. The water tables are depleting and at twice the rate at which it is replenished. So, if this is the rate, after 40 years, when we cross the Chinese population, what will be our condition? A poor army of unemployed cannot be expected to tolerate its miseries forever and these are the seeds of growth of insurgency and delinquency.

We have to arrest the rate of population growth at a viable rate so that we can control our population and then we can look after the poor. Otherwise, their discontentment could manifest itself in unexpected and unpleasant ways. If we do not control our population and if we allow it to grow at this rate, we will move towards mobocracy.

The family planning in our country was started in 1952. It continued with a slogan, as the mover has pointed out, of '*Hum Do Hamare Do*'. But it suffered a set back when the Emergency was declared and after that we had almost no family planning and even educative and persuasive measures have been abandoned and population is rapidly growing mainly among poor and Agrarian sector. Now, we find that in our country there is almost no family planning. Only after the Cairo Consensus, there was some provision but this could develop only maternity, mother's health, etc. which could not do much for restricting the population.

Another point is that the family planning policy of 2000 also has no definite target.

It has continued without any target. In 2002, our NDA Government also presented a family planning programme. That was also unrealistic. If we have to stabilise our population, we must have family planning policy. In 1961, when we were students, at that time, we had to answer one question as to whether India was over-populated. At that time our population was 44 million only. This debate on over-population has continued. Now, with one billion population mark, we are asking the same question as to whether India is over-populated. In the present-day context, it is a very significant question.

Though our population has increased, yet there has been faster economic development. Paradoxically, we find that our miseries are also increasing. So, for this reason, we do not get any unambiguous reply whether we are over-populated or not. Three hundred million people are living below the poverty line in our country. Their income is less than one dollar, and a huge majority of them are working as porters, rickshaw pullers and casual workers. Their daily income is Rs. 82 or Rs. 100. On the other hand, we have got plantation workers who

are earning only Rs. 40 plus some fringe benefits per day. Even in the organised sector, we have casual workers who get Rs. 900 per month. These people are maintaining a family of average six members. That means, their per capita income is not more than Rs. 10. So, for these people, poverty, hunger and pavement dwelling are the common features. Government plans were there for these people, and I must say the Government did not feed them with empty hand.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI LALIT MOHAN SUKLABAIDYA : Sir, I will take only two minutes more.

It is because, huge amount of budget provision is there. But, development is something which is to be felt and experienced and which cannot be statistically measured. All the people are not feeling, or they do not experience, development because the expenditure incurred on development bears no fruit. Everybody remembers that our hon. late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi did his best for the upliftment of the poor. He was sad that poverty alleviation schemes and infrastructural development schemes, on which our country is spending huge amount of public money, were not yielding results, for 84 paise in a rupee of such huge amounts were siphoned off before reaching the deserving beneficiaries. Our ex-Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee also felt this, but unfortunately could not do anything. So, the initiator of the debate rightly expressed his concern over the rapid increase of population in our country. There is still time. We can overcome all the difficulties which may be associated with the growth of population. If we can eradicate corruption from all levels of the society and deliver

the benefits to the deserving persons for alleviating their poverty. If we can spend for development 84 paise net out of one rupee; we can achieve development; and we can create awareness among the people. That will definitely raise the standard of living and it will definitely put a stop on the rapid rate of growth of population which is to be backed by a targetted population policy with incentives.

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI (BADAGARA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman Sir. I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Shri Prabodh Panda who has raised this important issue before this august House. We are discussing this important issue in this House with a nominal participation of the representatives of the people.

We have now completed 10 years after the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo to which India was a signatory. The said Conference held at Cairo had concluded that coercive population policies based on disincentives should not be adopted. The experience of Kerala is a good example where without these coercive measures, population control could be achieved.

In the year 2000, our Parliament had also unanimously accepted a National Population Policy which had eschewed all coercive methods. But it is after these years that the State Governments belonging to the NDA, BJP and the Congress adopted the most anti-poor and anti-women population policies based on disincentives.

There are cases of denial of ration cards, benefits of Government schemes and denial of jobs to those who have more than two children. For example the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Workers Act denies insurance benefits to the people, to the workers who are having more than two children. In Maharashtra also, there is such an Act denying ground water facilities to the people who are having more than two children. So, such coercive methods are adopted by various State Governments in the name of population control.

What is going on in the name of population control also has to be looked into. In some States, mass sterilisation camps are being held without considering how it affects the health of the women. Over 90 per cent of all the sterilisation operations are conducted on women. These camps are conducted without proper and adequate medical facilities.

The State Governments have no concern for the falling sex ratios and the fact that a two-child norm would only increase sex selective abortions. In a male-dominated society, the preference for son is there. Every bad effect of all the policies is put on the poor women.

The modern technological inventions like the amniocentesis are being utilised for sex determination. On the previous day, our hon. Health Minister also has admitted that there is a considerable reduction in the female sex ratio in our country. Even in rural areas of the country, there are unlicensed centres for conducting pre-natal diagnosis test. Female foeticide has now become a common phenomenon leading to diminishing rate of female sex ratio.

A study commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and reported in the year 2003, had admitted the negative consequences of the imposition of the two-child norm for Panchayats. The study covering Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan found that 75 per cent of those persons disqualified from contesting elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions were from the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class communities.

The study has also found that there is an increase in the number of pre-natal diagnosis test centres followed by selective abortions. It also found increasing incidents of desertion, divorce and cases of donation of children in adoption.

Women, especially from the marginalised groups, suffered the consequences of the policies, from the causes beyond their control.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : The total fertility rate has declined in the last six years in States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Sir, the need for

safe and healthy contraceptives remains unmet and is also an important issue that needs to be addressed. The liberalisation policy has led to the use of Indians as guinea pigs for clinical trials conducted by the pharmaceutical companies.

This will have a far-reaching impact on the health of the women in our country.

Sir, all the population control and family planning measures are women oriented. In the name of contraceptives, some banned medicines are used in our country. After the Quinacrine, doctors are experimenting with erythromycin. The Drug Controller appears to have no role. Harmful contraceptives and drugs like RV-486 Net-en, Depo-Provera are all available in the Indian market in the name of choice. Sir, dangerously many Government hospitals are also encouraging women to use these drugs and contraceptives without considering the fact that whether it adversely affects their health.. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

. (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : I am concluding, Sir.

Sir, the two child norm punishes the poor for their poverty. Typically, it is in the poor families, especially in the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes who have more children.

The mortality rate of children below 5 years among these communities is also much higher than the national average of 62. Sir, it is 119 for Scheduled Castes and 126 for Scheduled Tribes compared to 82 for others. The infant mortality rate is similarly higher at 83 for Scheduled Castes and 84 for Scheduled Tribes.. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI ANIL BASU : She is the only woman who is speaking on this issue, and she is speaking about the male domination. .. (*Interruptions*)

**सभापति महोदय** : अनिल बसु जी, आपकी पार्टी से चार मैम्बर्स को इसी विषय पर और बोलना है। इसलिए प्लीज़ समाप्त करिये।

SHRIMATI P. SATHEEDEVI : I am concluding, Sir. The Population Control Policies also directly assault a constitutional right of the citizen to stand for elections. Shockingly, the Supreme Court in a most objectionable judgement upheld the two-child norm debarring the candidates who have more than two children. This was based on the Haryana Government's decision.

Now, Sir, it is necessary to reiterate the spirit of the National Policy so far as eschewing coercive disincentives based on target given policy is concerned, Parliament has to ensure that we do not adopt anti-poor population policies that have marred the country's population policies during the emergency.

There should be safe and healthy contraceptives and the right to make one's own decisions about the size of one's family. Sir, with proper campaigns and promotional methods, the population can be controlled.

I urge upon the Minister to consider these factors while looking into the population control methods.

**श्री रामजीलाल सुमन** : सभापति जी, हाफ एन ऑवर का टाइम हो गया है।

**सभापति महोदय** : आप एक मिनट बोल लीजिए, उसके बाद हम हाफ एन ऑवर लेंगे।

...(व्यवधान)

**सभापति महोदय** : आप बोलिये न, अभी एक मिनट समय है।

**श्री रामजीलाल सुमन** : सभापति जी, जनसंख्या में निरन्तर वृद्धि सम्पूर्ण विश्व के लिए एक ज्वलन्त समस्या है। यह वृद्धि इतनी ज्यादा हो गई है कि इस स्थिति को विस्फोटक कहा जा सकता है। यदि जनसंख्या वृद्धि का यही क्रम चलता रहा तो जीवन के लिए जो उपलब्ध आवश्यक सामान हैं, वे सभी समाप्त हो जाएंगे, मानव नरभक्षी बन जायेगा। इस सम्बन्ध में प्रो. कारसोण्डर्स के अनुसार जनसंख्या में प्रतिवर्ष 10 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हो रही है।

MR. CHAIRMAN : You will continue next time. Please take your seat.

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