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Title : Need to ensure utilisation of ground water resource for drinking and irrigation purposes only in the drought prone areas of the country .

**SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI):** Sir, Multi National soft drink giant like Coca-Cola have got exclusive exploitative rights to tap the ground water potential in several parts of the country. Rare ground water resources like aquifers and river-beds even in drought prone areas are ruthlessly fleeced of invaluable water resources. At a time when basic water needs are not met, these MNCs commercially exploit these rare ground water resources in many parts of the country like Plachchimedra in Kerala and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and in Sivagangai District and Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. Gangaigondan in Tirunelveli District situated near Tamiravaruni river bed has got a rich water potential as ground water aquifer. This has potential to meet the demands for basic water needs of drought prone villages and town in that area. Heavy drawing of water to the extent of 9 lakhs of litres per day from Tamiravaruni river-bed and more water from Gangaigondan aquifer would

\*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

affect 46 villages around the place in due course. This may eventually leave them high and dry without water even for drinking purposes. This trend must be arrested. Such MNCs must be stopped forthwith from heavily drawing and exploiting ground water for the manufacture of soft drinks.

These MNCs have managed to get permission to manufacture soft drinks. These soft drinks are also not free from pollution. The Pollution Control Board of Kerala has found that lead and cadmium chemical compounds are present in the soft drinks manufactured by Coca Cola Company in Plachchimedra. Hence, I urge upon the Government to take it upon itself as a National issue involving poor innocent people living in such areas. It should not be treated as a mere State subject. I also urge upon the Union Government to set up an expert committee to go to places where all these MNCs are manufacturing soft drinks affecting the interests of the poor as well. The views of the local bodies in those areas must be given due consideration before opening of such MNC units.

MR. SPEAKER: The other admitted matters will be taken up at 6.00 p.m.

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