

17.42 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Demands of Farmers and Agricultural Labour

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, we take up Discussion under Rule 193. Two hours are allotted. Shri Janga Reddy to initiate the discussion. (Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): I would like to know at what time you are going to stop the discussion. Is it at 6 o' Clock? (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We will start discussion today and continue tomorrow.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, we are having the discussion on the Kisan's agitation. It is a very important subject. If we are going to have it at the tag end of the day and are carrying it on up to night, it will not be desirable. So, please decide it first. Do you adjourn the House at 6 o' Clock and take it up tomorrow?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: What about the hon. Minister's opinion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRIMATI SHEILA DIKSHIT): It is the consensus of the House. If they would like to continue the discussion tomorrow, I would just like to remind that tomorrow is Private Member's day and we will not be able to finish it. (Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Let us adjourn today at 6 o'Clock and take it up tomorrow at 12 o'Clock. That is the option.....(Interruptions) On such an important subject on which the Kisans were on the march for the last several days, we do not want to carry it on up to 9 o'Clock and all that. That is not proper. You may please tell us what is your opinion.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: First, we will continue upto 6 o'Clock and after that we will decide what we want.

Mr. Janga Reddy to initiate the discussion.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY (Hanamkonda): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, 70 to 80 per cent population of our country lives in villages and are dependent on agriculture. We know that in rural areas some people have agriculture land, and some earn their livelihood by carrying other professions connected with agriculture or are dependent on land for their livelihood. Everybody knows how much our farmers community have been neglected for the last 10 year due to which their condition has become worst. Small land holders are finding it very difficult to lead their lives smoothly. Had Government paid attention to their problems even once in the last 40 years since independence, the condition would not have deteriorated to this extent. Today the situation has assumed such a serious proportion that each and every farmer is disgusted with cultivation profession and wants to give up it. If you go to the villages and ask the farmers to express their opinion about the profession of cultivation, they will say how miserably a farmer has to lead life. Today, even a rich farmer having 30 or 50 acres of land is ready to leave his profession and is eager to accept a post of clerk in the Government offices by selling his land so as to settle in the cities. When such is the condition of big farmers, you can well imagine the condition of small and marginal farmers. They are very much in trouble. That is why even after 40 years of independence, farmers are bent upon agitation. On the other hand, our hon. Prime Minister says that second green revolution is in the offing in southern parts of the country after first green revolution in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. I am unable to understand the meaning of this statement. On one hand green revolution is taking place, on the other farmers are committing suicide and they are agitating. Has the Government ever thought of the basic causes of discontentment among

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the farmers? The Government have no time to think about farmers. Disunity among the farmers is attributable to their misery. They are not united. Many political parties are serving their own interests by aligning with the farmers. Due to agitations, farmers are not in a position to come to one platform. You might be remembering that 10 years ago in Madras, Shri Satya Narayan Swami started a non-political agitation of farmers. A large number of farmers were jailed, but the then Chief Minister Shri M.G.R. refused to talk with them, as recently our hon. Prime Minister also refused to talk with the farmers, who come at the Boat Club. When the elections came, the same M.G. Ramachandran went to Narayan Swami, bowed with respect and asked his support in the elections. Not only this, he also accepted all their demands. Shri Narayan Swami started such an agitation that even vegetables, milk and essential commodities became scarce in the cities. The Government has to bow down in the end. On the same pattern, an agitation of farmers has been spearheaded in Maharashtra by Shri Sharad Joshi. Be it B.J.P., C.P.M. or for that matter any other party, all are supporting the farmers in accordance with their own political view points.

In Bengal, farmers are agitating for remunerative prices for jute. For the last one year, agitation has been going on in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Shri Tikait. Agitations are going on in Gujarat and Karnataka also. For the last one year, we are agitating in Andhra Pradesh. What are the reasons behind it. Now the farmers have understood that without unity the Government will not bow down. The Government is agreeable only when there is someone to make it agreeable. In several States of the country, farmers have been agitating in support of their demands. Shri Rajiv Gandhi only deliver speeches for the farmers but refuse to talk with them. This has been going on for the last 6 months. We welcome him, if he wants to provide some concessions to the farmers and then announcement should be made soon. I would like to submit that farmers are agitating peacefully. They will not indulge in

any kind of violence or burning buses. They will only go to jails and do picketing. Today, if employees burn buses or workers agitate, then the concerned ministers come to talk with them, but when farmers are agitating, Shri Rajiv Gandhi is not ready to talk with them.

In the whole country, farmers are agitating for their demands. Except one or two, all their demands are legitimate. All the demands are common. These demands are related to the whole country, except one or two regional demands. So, could the Central Government issue necessary instructions to the State Governments to talk with the leaders of farmers and political leaders on State level and accept their legitimate demands after hearing their problems. It can do this, but it is not doing so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Central Minister of Agriculture always come from Haryana, be it Shri Rao Birendra Singh or Shri Bhajan Lal or Shri Bansi Lal or any other else. It is true that the performance of Haryana and Punjab on agriculture front makes us happy. They attained top position in production of foodgrains in the country. But the farmers of other regions also do the same labour as is done by the farmers of Haryana and Punjab. But they have not been provided any facilities. If water and electricity are made available to them, they can also attain the some position: Water and electricity are required to be provided for the farmers all over the country. They are demanding these facilities. You know that first of all farmers need land, then water. But today the condition such that even after 40 years of independence Government is not able to provide water to the farmers. Without water, land cannot be cultivated. For the last one or two years, there was no rain due to which drought situation was created. This year there is heavy floods. In this way, farmers of India are being crushed in between drought and floods. For the last four years we have been discussing here about drought and floods but we could not find a solution to this. We can use our machinery to check floods and drought by evolving

scientific methods. We can provide water to our farmers from the rivers in case of scanty rainfall. But due to the wrong policies of the Central Government, nothing is being done. The State Governments are ready to make their projects but the Central Government is not permitting them. Cases have been pending decision for the last 30 years. I raised this issue in the meetings of the Water Consultative Committee, but there was no reply. In States, whether there are Congress Party Government or non Congress Party Government, as many as 78 projects in our country are running without the permission of the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Water Resources. Telugu Ganga Project is going on in Andhra Pradesh. Shri Shankaranand may like to attribute the reasons therefore. There are rainfalls in the country only for four months. By preserving this water in reservoirs, we can utilize it at the time of need. We know that though water is available in abundant quantity in the country as a whole, yet it is available in some States and other States suffer from drought. Even in one State when drought occurs in one district, other districts face flood. Have we ever thought of doing something to remedy this situation. What are the reasons for this. I want to know whether Government does not want to take any steps in this direction?

During the last 40 years we have been concentrating on achieving progress in the industrial sector. But the progress in the industrial as well as agricultured sector is also no better. What are the reasons behind it. I want to know whether Government has formulated any policy on this subject or not? When an area faces famine or severe drought occurs in an area, the Government tries to solve the problem by providing funds immediately from the I.R.D.P. It is only a temporary measure which the Government takes to solve the problem. Did the Government ever think of doing anything for a permanent solution of the problem? I think the Government has not so far thought anything about it. The Government simply allocates funds from the I.R.D.P. and R.L.E.G.P. and never bothered to know as to how this money is being utilized. In spite of all this what per-

cent of land has been brought under irrigation. I may quote the example of Andhra Pradesh. In all even 33 per cent of land has not been brought under irrigation. Not even 10 per cent has been added to the total irrigation capacity after independence. Now-a-days the farmer depends on his fate and his hard labour. He looks towards the sky and depends on the mercy of God to maintain his livelihood. He is just continuing as farmer under these difficult circumstances as he has no other alternative. That is why he is constrained to stick to this profession. No other job is available to him. He is simply thinking about his lot. The Government should make standing provision of 60 to 70 per cent in the Budget for irrigation. The State Government should also be asked to act on these lines.

Most of the major projects are lying incomplete. The Pochanpar project of Andhra Pradesh is one of such projects. Its foundation stone was laid by Pandit Nehru 35 years ago. It is going to complete 35 years in 1994, but nothing has been done there. The same is the position with regard to the Nagarjun Sagar Project and the Narmada project. There is a project called Puttobagu in Aasamabad district of Andhra Pradesh. It will irrigate an area of about 4000 acres of land. Already 15 years have elapsed since the work was started. Its estimated expenditure is Rs. 50 crores. What action has been taken to obtain I.T.D. fund? What the Central as well as the State Governments are doing in this regard? Our legislatures come here to demand clearance of this project after a lapse of 15 years. But instead of clearing the project they were ill-treated here. Tear gas shells were burst on them and they were lathi charged. Shri Rajiv Gandhi has no time to talk to them. We do not mind if has no time. But the foundation of that very project had been laid by the Congress Government and they had started the work. No work was carried on this project for the last 15 years. The work is now in progress and it is expected that it will be completed after 5 years.

In this connection I would like to submit that once a work is taken up, it should

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not be stalled in the middle. By this time a large amount of silting has taken place in Pochampur project. After 4 years there will be no water. I, therefore, ask the Planning Commission, the Ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation to see as to when a particular project should be taken up. It should be well planned.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: How much time do you want?

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: I shall take 15 minutes more.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You have already taken twenty minutes. Try to finish your speech in another five-seven minutes.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: I shall continue tomorrow.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No, you finish it today.

18.00 hrs.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: I am of the view that major projects viz. the Godavari Project, the Krishna Project should be treated as national projects. Irrigation facilities should be made available. When the Government fails to provide irrigation facilities to the farmer, he makes up his own arrangements. He has to take loan for that. He sets up electric pump to lift water. But the problem arises when he does not get water even after that. If some stone comes in the way of boring, water cannot come up and the farmer has to face difficulties. Suppose he takes a loan of Rs. 10 lakhs

and digs deep well (Barli) and the same remains bereft of water, then he has to blame his luck. He cannot repay the loan under these circumstances. The Government should come to the rescue of the farmers at such junctures. Did the Government ever think of this situation? Even Now-a-days the farmer cultivates his land and depends on nature. If the nature does not help, he has to curse his luck. What I mean to say that the Government should make all arrangements to provide irrigation facilities to the farmer. The Government charges Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 per H.P. The Government of Andhra Pradesh charges Rs. 18 per H.P. Similar H.P. charges could be fixed in respect of Haryana, Punjab and other States also. Water should be made available free of cost to all, in all such areas where irrigation facilities are not provided. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reduced the tariff rate. The Central Government has raised the tariff in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. In order to remove this anomaly, the Central Government should fix the minimum and maximum tariff in respect of agriculture sector. Because of this, agitations have been taking place at a number of places. On the one hand the Government does not make arrangements for irrigation and on the other hand it penalises the farmer who makes his own irrigation arrangements. Besides, the Government fixes one or the other condition on the loan, the farmer takes to make arrangements for irrigation. Could I know from the Government as to how many industrialists have been sent to jail who failed to repay the loans. As a matter of fact the Government gives subsidy to set up industries. For this the Central Government gives 25 per cent subsidy and the State Government gives 10 per cent subsidy. But these people set up limited companies and grab public money and Government cannot take any action against them. I would like to ask Shri Bhajan Lal as to how many such persons have been sent to jail on this account. There is one Shri Ranga Reddy in my area. He had 2 acres of land and he took a loan of Rs. 2000. He repaid Rs. 600 but he was sent to jail as he failed to repay the balance amount. He had to pay Rs. 6200 to get himself released from jail. This is the policy of your Govern-

ment and the Reserve Bank of India. The State Bank of India has done it. In this connection I would like to tell Shri Bhajan Lal that he should not send the farmer to jail for his failure to repay the loan. Instead, his land may be auctioned. Could the hon. Minister say as to how many industrialists have been sent to jail whose industries become sick? I think he has no reply to this. The Government have written off Rs.45000 crores due from industrialists. This is the latest position. No industrialists has been sent to jail. We know how the industrialists do bungling. They set up one industry and instal machines one after the other.....

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude:

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Sir, I need at least one hour. If you ring the bell after 15 minutes I will conclude my speech. I shall continue it tomorrow. Sir, why are you ringing the bell. I am raising some important points. I am disturbed when you ring the bell. I have to speak in Telugu. This problem concerns whole of India. Farmer's problem is not an ordinary problem. We should understand one thing that if the farmer starves, all of us would starve. Shri Rajiv Gandhi did not understand this problem. That is why the farmers resorted to agitation. The total amount of loan given to farmers will amount to 42000 crore rupees, the Government may write it off. It is equal to 50% of the total loan written off in the case of industrialists. There should be no difficulty with the Government to write off this amount. I am citing an example. Shri Mabiwala Krishnaya son of Govindaya Kahasi, District Chittoor took a loan of Rs. 3000 and he had to pay Rs. 7200 at the time of repayment. Some other person took Rs. 1500. Shri Bhajan Lal, just listen please.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): I am listening.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: He paid Rs. 6200. I have got these figures. Another

person took Rs. 2000 and he had to pay Rs. 6200 later. Still another man took Rs. 2,300 and he had to repay Rs. 7000. Then one person took Rs. 1100 and he had to pay Rs. 5250 at the time of repayment. It is a sin.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: The Bofors company got it but they have not repaid.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Had the money taken by the Bofors been returned, the farmer could have taken up the work himself.

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI (Mandsaur): All have purchased tap recorders. These have been sent.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Hon. Shri Bairagi's poems and speeches have the same message. A person takes Rs.1200/- and pays back Rs.6700/- we have come to know of many such instances. The action taken further was that each one in Rajahmundry jail was lashed for a month or two. The Government did not let its Land Revenue Act take effect. The Government is aware of the famine conditions and that there have been no rains for the past seven years. And when there have been rains they were so excessive that the entire crop was destroyed. More water or less water, losses were incurred either way. So we want that this time farmers should be relieved of their debt burden. If Rs. 145,000 crores in loans given to industrialists can be written off in the past 40 years, the same should be done for farmers. Of the remaining Rs. 22000 crores, Rs. 11000 crores may be due to the Government and this should be waived. This will help farmers in continuing their occupation. Even after all this, if the farmer gets manure, water and favourable weather and is able to give a good yield, what is his condition? Is the Government aware of what is being imported this year? Cotton is being imported from Pakistan inspite of bumper cotton crop. During an year of famine the Government imported 10 lakh tonnes of rice. The Government is importing sugar, pulses and oil. Why do we have to depend on other countries for foodgrain even after the Green Revolution?

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Farmers do not get the right price for their produce. Hon. Shri Bhajan Lal is giving us support prices which we do not want. We want remunerative prices. Farmers need support because they are about to fall. The Government is giving inputs to farmers. Every person needs rice and wheat but every person does not need industrial products. If this is so will the farmer be killed so that others can be fed? The N.T.R. Government is buying rice at Rs.3/- a kilo and selling it for Rs.2/- a kilo. The Government can do likewise and buy rice at Rs.5/- a kilo to sell it at Rs.2/- a kilo. We have no objection if a Central subsidy is given. If hon. Shri Bhajan Lal visits the market he will find that tomatoes are being sold at a price of Rs.20/- a kilo. As tomatoes are so dear we cannot drink tomato juice even if the doctor advises it. There we can get three pumpkins for a rupee but over here it is sold at Rs.10-12 a kilo. But the farmer does not get anything because of the presence of middlemen. The reason is that adequate facilities do not exist for the storage of vegetables. This is the reason for the proliferation of middlemen at the expense of farmers. And as all this happens the concerned authorities relax in air-conditioned comfort. So the farmers had no alternative except to go on strike.

[English]

We do not want your support price. We are not at the mercy of your Government or any other Government. We want our own price.

[Translation]

The Government is responsible for price fixation. A central subsidy should be given if the interests of the consumers are to be served. But the Government should have an 'Open-Market' approach and fix as low a price as possible. Price of foodgrains in subsequent years should be fixed in advance. If the market price of foodgrain is less and middleman tries to buy it off at low rates, the Government should intervene and buy the foodgrain. If the market

price is high the Government should exercise price-control. But we want remunerative price and not the support price. In fertilizers, Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- have been increased on 50 kilos of Urea. An increase in price implies a decrease in subsidy. The limit of Rs. 13000 crores set in 1980 by Shri Charan Singh was reduced by Rs. 6000 crores by the present Government. This year this limit was reduced even further. There is an official statement to this effect. What happens if the price of 40 kilos of foodgrain is increased by Rs. 10/- The cost of producing 40 kilos of foodgrain should be calculated and a 20% profit be added to that figure. Then remunerative price should be fixed and after that the farmer should be given an opportunity to sell his foodgrain wherever he desires.

Recently levy was imposed in Uttar Pradesh. We resisted the imposition of levy and now we are up against both levy and Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Levy implies the forceful acquisition of a thing belonging to another.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your fifteen minutes are over.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: I am about to conclude.

As I was saying we want remunerative price and the restriction on movement to be lifted. The need for restriction arises because of imposition of levy. But what can the millowner do. If he purchases at the rate of Rs. 200/- and the Government purchases at the rate of Rs. 150/- he will have to adopt ways to make his high rate purchases profitable. *(Interuptions)*

Please be seated for five more minutes. Details of the crop insurance scheme were given while we were asking for a number-wise survey. If a person has an insurance the money goes to his wife. To know what would happen in these cases a number-wise survey was asked for. The hon. Minister came to Andhra Pradesh and said that a village would be treated as a unit. Let the Government conduct a number-wise survey. I have read the official statement and want to raise 2-3 points.

First of all I feel that the Land Acquisition Act needs to be changed. Let me tell you an interesting fact. Our Government is imposing income-tax on Land Acquisition cases. As someone mentioned, fifteen years ago land was acquired from the farmers at a price of Rs. 2000. Fifteen years have passed, farmers are still receiving interest from the Government and the latter is imposing income-tax on the interest amount it pays to the former. I request hon. Shri Bhajan Lal please listen to me. Is interest paid only to get it back in the form of income-tax? The Government is at fault for making delayed payments. We want the Government to return as much land as it acquired from the farmers. Let the Government write to Shri Chavan. This is the reason behind the farmers agitation. The hard working farmers of our country are adversely affected by floods and famine. The least the government can do for them is to relieve them of their debts. The rally held at the Boat Club seven days ago is a precursor of more rallies to come. An agitated farmer means an agitated nation. The country as a whole would be affected if its farmers are hungry. In such a situation 30% of the farmers will take to rickshaw-pulling in cities. Farmers can work efficiently only if they are relieved of their debts, get free

electricity and bank loans at the lowest possible rate of interest. In the rally held at the Boat Club, at least the Delhi Administration and Central Government should have given farmers an opportunity to voice their demands. Instead they made matters worse by cutting off the water-supply to farmers.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Reply will be given tomorrow..

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Instead of summoning farmers from every State the Government can hold discussions with responsible leaders of the farming community. I request the Government to accept the demands of farmers and relieve them of their debts.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned till 11.00 hours tomorrow.

18.16 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, November 4, 1988/Kartika 13, 1910 (Saka)