

13.06 hrs.

**RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE****Tenth Report and Minutes***[English]*

SHRI M. BAGA REDDY (Medak) : Sir, I beg to present the Tenth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Railway Convention Committee on 'Progress of Modernisation Programme in Railways including Energy Conservation measures' alongwith Minutes relating there-to.

13.06 1/2 hrs.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE****Fifth Report***[English]*

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore) : Sir, I beg to present the Fifth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Defence on Defence Research and Development Major Projects.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS****Twenty-Ninth Report***[English]*

PROF. R.R. PRAMANIK (Mathurapur) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy (Hindi and English versions) of the Twenty-ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests on the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 1995.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS****Evidence Tendered***[English]*

PROF. R.R. PRAMANIK (Mathurapur) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Evidence tendered before the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests on the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 1995.

*[English]*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, Statement by the Minister.

13.08 hrs.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER****On-Going Practice of Carrying Night Soil as head Load by Scavengers in the Country***[English]*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI. K.V. THANGKA BALU) : I share the concern voiced by Hon'ble Members on 23rd May, 1995 in the Lok Sabha during Zero Hour on the still prevalent practice of manual carrying of night soil. The House has raised the issue of this inhuman practice on a number of occasions.

The Government of India in 1980-81 launched the centrally sponsored scheme for liberation of scavengers under the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. The scheme provided for conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines and rehabilitation of scavengers in alternate and dignified occupations. With a view to giving greater thrust to the liberation programme, the task to conversion of dry latrines into water borne latrines was entrusted to the Ministry of Urban Development in 1991 and liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers continued to remain with the Ministry of Welfare. The National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers was launched by the Government in March, 1992 with the objective of eliminating manual scavenging by the end of the Eighth Plan.

The scheme provides for training upto 6 months to the liberated scavengers with stipend of Rs. 150/- p.m. Thereafter they are encouraged to take up alternate and dignified occupation for which financial assistance is provided upto Rs. 50,000/- with a subsidy of 50% of the cost subject to ceiling of Rs. 10,000/-, margin money loan of 15% of the project cost at 4% interest and the remainder as bank loans. Under the Scheme, the Liberated Scavengers have to set up production/service units. The Ministry of Welfare has released Rs. 255.20 crores so far to States/ Union Territories for implementation of the scheme. 37,694 scavengers were trained and 60,863 scavengers assisted under rehabilitation programme till 31st March, 1994. The targetted coverage during 1994-95 was to train 42,000 scavengers and rehabilitate 1,44,000 scavengers. 13.63 lakh dry latrines have been converted under the low cost sanitation programme liberating 83,566 scavengers upto.

The Ministry of Welfare is alive to the lack of adequate progress in the implementation of the scheme despite special efforts being made with State/UT Governments. We have written to the Chief Ministers thrice on this issue. We have also discussed the implementation of the scheme with Chief Minister and State Ministers in zonal Conferenc-

es held at Thiruvananthapuram, Bombay and Delhi in the past. The implementation of the scheme was again discussed at the recently held Conference of State Ministers at Bangalore where all the States concerned were requested to expedite the execution of this important scheme aimed at ending the opproxiuous practice of scavenging.

A meeting of Managing Directors of Banks was convened to sort out issues for facilitating adequate financing of Projects under the scheme by the commercial banks. We would also call a meeting of the Chief Ministers again to sort out other operational problems. We are taking steps to effect better coordination between the low cost sanitation programme of Ministry of Urban Development and our Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers.

From the feedback gathered so far about the implementation of scheme, certain operational problems stand in the way of acheiving desired progress. These are

- (i) delay in passing on the funds by States to implementing ground level agencies,
- (ii) inadequate stipend amount,
- (iii) reluctance of Banks to extend loans under the scheme,
- (iv) inadequate training facilities etc. It is proposed to restructure the scheme taking into account these constraints. Some of the proposals under consideration in this connection are
  - (a) Raising the amount of subsidy and margin money,
  - (b) Enhancing the ceiling of the project cost,
  - (c) Increasing stipend amount for the training,
  - (d) Direct funding to the State Scheduled Castes Development Corporations which are the implementing ground level agencies for the scheme.

As the Hon'ble Members are aware, the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis lasts only upto 31st March, 1997. Government would consider extending the term of the Commission. Regular office accommodation has been allotted to the Commission and it is expected to shift to Lok Nayak Bhavan shortly some staff has been given and proposal for giving more staff to the Commission is under consideration.

The Hon'ble Member Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has raised the issue of manual scavenging in the Kolar Gold Mines in Karnataka. The State Government has informed that out of 2890 latrines in Kolar Gold Mines, 1422 have been converted to pour flush latrines. 334 pour karmikas are still engaged in carrying night soil as head load in the remaining 1468 latrines. The Bharat Gold Mines, a public sector undertaking is a loss making unit and is on the verge of closing its operations. It is estimated that Rs. 60 lakhs would be required to convert the remaining dry

latrines. My colleague, Shri Buta Singhji had made a point that, atleast, Porbander, the birth place of Mahatama Gandhiji should be made scavenging free. We had taken up this matter with Govt. of Gujarat who have informed that all dry latrines were converted to water borne latrines by 1976.

Hon'ble Members have also pointed out that the safai karamcharis have not been given their salaries for over 18 months in some local bodies in U.P. I have taken up this matter with Government of Uttar Pradesh for expeditious payment of outstanding salaries of safai karamcharis in the local bodies.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera) : Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I raised this issue the other day, it had received support from all sections of the House. Even after 48 years of independence it is unfortunate and a matter of shame that the dalits have to carry the night soil on their head and that the Government has failed to put a stop to this practice.

Sir, Shri Sita Ram Kesri is present here and it is in his knowledge that to commemorate the Ambedkar Centenary Year. We had fixed a target of 3 years to end the practice of carrying night soil on the head in the entire country and an amount of Rs. 5,000 crore was earmarked for the purpose which was later reduced to Rs. 500 crore and we do not know whether this amount is also being spent or not or the entire amount is being spent on the bureaucracy.

Sir, the Government takes recourse to statistics. I would, therefore, like to know from the Government the number of scavengers who have been liberated. At that time we had identified 39 big and small cities where the practice of carrying the night soil manually was in vogue and we had decided that within a period of three years we would liberate all the 39 cities. How many cities have actually been liberated?

Sir, Karnataka is the only State where this practice has been stopped through a legislation, but how is it that this practice is still prevalent in a Central Public Undertaking, K.G.F. in Karnataka? I want to know whether the Government have fixed a target to end this practice of carrying the night soil on the head in the entire country. Thereafter, anybody building a house would be required to construct a W.C. latrine. Have the Government chalked out a scheme to provide monetary assistance to the poor so that they may take up alternative employment. We wanted to know the position on that day and the hon. Speaker as well as several Members also shared our desire. I think the problem is being handled in a casual manner. The problem cannot be solved without fixing time frame. Has any target been fixed, let Shri Kesari throw some light on it.

WELFARE MINISTER (SHRI SITARAM KESARI) : He has already made his submission.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : He just read a statement.

SHRI CHHEDI PASWAN (Sasaram) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Members and Chairman assigned with the task of eradicating the practice of carrying night soil on the head have neither been provided any office accommodation nor any staff. How will they be able to adhere to the schedule of three years unless they are provided with office accommodation, staff and other wherein that?

[English]

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have made it very clear in the statement as to what the steps taken by the Government until now are. With regard to implementation, we are not interested in delaying the matter. Rather, we have taken a number of steps. Three meetings of the Chief Ministers were held, we have discussed this matter thoroughly and we have requested the State Governments to implement the process. That is why in my statement we have clearly stated that we want to revise the programmes, revise the operational methods so that we can have a much more impact on the issues. And, particularly the State Governments have to cooperate with us. When we are giving the money to the State Governments they are the implementing agencies.

Apart from that about Rs. 985 crore are earmarked for this. We want to do it. Our main aim is to complete it latest by the end of the Eighth Plan itself. But the progress is not so encouraging. That is why we have requested in the recent meeting of the Chief Ministers held in Bangalore two months back to cooperate with us and speed up implementation. My senior colleague requested very seriously that this programme must be implemented. We have got a monitoring agency in our Ministry also with regard to this particularly. I also assure the House that we will do our best—whatever is at our command—to see that this menace is once for all sorted out as in Karnataka. I am telling hon. Members that we are interested in this and we are doing it.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : This is not a matter of interest. It is a constitutional right. It is not a matter of interest or obligation.

[Translation]

Carrying night-soil on the head is not an interest or obligation.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : Shri Paswan, it is not somebody's interest. It is a commitment of the Government. I said that it is a commitment.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : We want to know what the progress is because five years have already elapsed.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : Shri Paswan, please wait. I have mentioned the progress made in this regard. It is very clear in my statement. That is one point. Secondly, I said that we are not happy about the progress.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : What is the question of being happy?

[Translation]

What is the meaning of happy? This practice was to be eradicated in five years last there has been little progress.

[English]

If you are happy, thank you.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : I said that I am not happy. Why are you twisting? I said that we were not happy about implementation. You should understand what I said.

You said that it was announced that Rs. 5000 crore were earmarked. When was it announced? You were also a Minister in this Department.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : You find out from the Ministry of Finance.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : I agree, as far as our Government is concerned it is committed to this programme. Our Prime Minister announced it from the ramparts of Red Fort. After that we took a decision and started implementing it. We requested the State Governments to coordinate with us. Many State Governments have not cooperated with us in identifying the persons. That is why we had a meeting again and asked them to cooperate and support us. Our Government has started a separate programme with regard to dry latrines and water borne latrines. A sum of Rs. 80 crore was earmarked by our Ministry and this is also going on.

He has said about new construction. There is a clear guideline given by the Ministry of Urban Development that those who are building new houses must have water borne latrines. This instruction was already given. We even asked them not to give licences to them.

So, we have taken a number of steps to clear this malady and our commitment is alive. We will do our best at our command and we will not rest until this is quickly disbanded.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Paswan has put one question. In Karnataka the entire area comes under this except KGFM which comes under the Central Government.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : That also we have taken up. I have mentioned about this in the statement very clearly. We have taken up the matter with the authorities to see that anomaly is removed.

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (Kolar) : Sir, to stop the carrying of night soil I have requested the Deputy Commissioner, Kolar to release Rs. 10 lakh for construction of latrines. The amount was released. The Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. has also sanctioned Rs. 23 lakh for the same purpose. In addition to that, the Municipal Sanitary Board has given

Rs. 10 lakh. I asked the Bharat Gold Mines to construct these latrines. The work is under progress. The Government of India and the Government of Karnataka are very much keen to stop the carrying of night soil in KGM. They are also giving financial assistance to stop this work. *(Interruptions)*.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He is speaking because he is from that constituency...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : He is confirming whatever I have said. This is for the information of this august House. The work is under progress. We have taken up the matter with the Government of Karnataka and with the money from the MPs quota, the total comes to Rs. 50 lakhs. The work is under progress.

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITA RAM KESRI) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, so far as the public undertaking are concerned, in Karnataka, what Shri Paswan has suggested is a fact. The Minister of State of my Ministry has also stated about it. In my humble opinion I can only say that in reality it is a feeling on our part that the public undertakings are not implementing our programme. So far as the State Government is concerned, that is quite a different matter.

*[Translation]*

As regards accommodation for the commission, I would like to submit.

*[English]*

Not once but many a time I have written for their accommodation not only to the Ministry of Urban Development but also to the Prime Minister's Office. *(Interruptions)* There was a meeting also...

*[Translation]*

It is not a question of Bihar Government. An hon. Member had pointed out that no accommodation had been provided to the commission. We had written to the Urban Development Ministry and the issue was also raised in a Ministerial Sub Committee several times. Now the issue is about the location of the office building i.e. should it be located outside the city. We are insisting that it should be within the city limits and it is hoped that the issue will be sorted out soon.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Have you fixed any time limit to eliminate this practice of carrying night soil on the head?

*[English]*

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : There is already a time-limit and within the Eighth Five Year Plan we want to complete it. But the progress of implementation is not that much effective. If necessary, we will increase the time also. But we do not want to lag behind for a long time. We want to quickly complete this process. This is a malady and this cannot be allowed to continue for ever.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : I would like to highlight the activities of an organisation by the name Sulabh International and its proprietor, Durgeshwar Pathak. He has put up a sign board that the objective of the organisation is to liberate the Scheduled Castes whereas he is using them to clean the latrines and is minting money from this organisation. I would request you to handover this organisation to a cooperative of the dalits so that they are not exploited and are able to earn their livelihood also.

He is receiving funds from the Central Government and is earning huge profits in the name of dalits.

*[English]*

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : Sir, it is a good suggestion. We will consider it.

*[Translation]*

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI (Darbhanga) : Sir, I have been giving notices for the past several days but I have not been permitted to make my submission. The flood situation in Bihar particularly in 3-4 districts is highly critical. In district Darbhanga, 10-11 blocks are fully submerged in water. The issue was earlier raised here by Shri Devendra Yadav and Shri Hari Kishore Singh but not official from the Centre has been deputed to visit Bihar. It is the Bihar Government which has taken some relief measures with its meagre resources. Every 2-3 years Bihar is affected by floods and the cause of the floods is flow of surplus water from Nepal into Bihar. A treaty was signed between Nepal and India to build a barrage to check flow of water, but no progress has been made in this direction. In 1992, when Bihar became the victim of floods, the Central Government gave an assurance that not only will the dam be strengthened but funds would also be provided to carry out relief measures to compensate for the damage suffered by the people. It is with a sense of pain that I want to point out that cause of the floods this year is that the funds which were sanctioned in 1992 were actually not provided to Bihar.

A team of senior officers should be deputed to study the flood situation in Bihar. The floods have caused untold misery to the people and there is fear to spread of an epidemic in the flood affected areas. If a statement or an assurance is made on the floor of the House, it would be a matter of gratification for me.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Out of our six constituencies, four are inundated by floods. I would urge the Government to take this problem seriously and provide relief measures or anything also needed for their amelioration. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : The entire railway track has been damaged.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : The entire area between Kusesar, Darbhanga and Madhubani is completely

submerged in water and the life of the people is thrown out to year. The Government should treat it as a human problem and provide relief and succour to the people and a statement to that effect should also be made in the House.

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV (Jhanjharpur) : Jhanjharpur Kamla Balan river is causing havoc in Darbhanga, Samastipur and Madhubani. The rivers flow from Nepal and enter Bihar causing floods, bringing with them misery and loss of life and property for the people of the affected areas. Bihar Government is carrying relief work within its own resources and capacity but without the Central assistance these relief measures will not be very effective. I visited the flood affected areas and found that the situation is worse than even 1987. The roads are completely damaged and there are no means of communications between various areas. The Central Government should take up the relief work on war footing in Bihar to bring about normalcy.

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM LAKHAN SINGH YADAV) : The hon. members may be aware that about 2-3 days back a delegation from Bihar comprising irrigation and P.W.D. Minister and some officers had visited Delhi and we discussed a number of subjects. In that meeting, no such question about North Bihar was raised.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : It was a meeting of the Civil administration.

[English]

MR. DEPT. SPEAKER : Are you to violate the rules of the House? It is allowed only under extraordinary circumstances. If it is misused, I think anybody can raise objection and the Chair will be helpless in answering that.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM LAKHAN SINGH YADAV : Some very important issues have been raised here, whether they relate to flow of rivers in to North Bihar from Nepal or the management of rivers in coordination with Nepal. The dam has also suffered damage. The people of Bihar should discuss the matter with the concerned Minister. I personally feel, relief measures in the flood affected areas should be our first priority. I do not know what the Bihar Government is doing. Neither have they approached us. But the Centre will extend all possible assistance which is its pious duty.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : It is under extraordinary circumstances, this issue, being a very important one, is allowed to be raised in the unscheduled hour and it cannot be taken as a precedent all the time.

Now, we take up Matters under Rule 377.

13.32 hrs

### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377 /

#### (I) Need to sanction Jadidaha Irrigation Project in Mangovindapur in Mayurbhanj District, Orissa

[English]

DR. KARTIKESWAR PATRA (Balasore) : Sir, the proposal of irrigation project named Jadidaha in Mangovindapur G.P. under Badsahi block in Mayurbhanj district, Orissa, needs immediate consideration of the Union Government. Nearly 16 G.P. fully and 20 GPs partly of Badsahi, Khunta-I and G.B. Block mostly inhabited by the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Backward poor cultivators will be benefited by this project. There is no other irrigation facility for them to cultivate their land. The proposal was put up several times by the State Government to the Union Government for sanction under either Centrally sponsored scheme or foreign aid scheme. In order to redress the grievances of the poor cultivators, I request the Central Government to look into it.

#### (II) Need to Fix Price of Silk Cocoon at Rs. 150/- per KG.

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (Kolar) : Sir, Karnataka produces more than 80 per cent of the country's total production of silk. Out of this, more than 30 per cent comes from Kolar district. Most of the families residing in Kolar district are dependent upon sericulture. The farmers, weavers and reelers are facing a very tough situation in the State, because of the frequent fluctuations in the prices of silk.

The import of a large quantity of silk from China has affected the domestic silk industry to a very large extent.

I have made several representations to the Government in this regard. In fact, the hon. Minister of Textiles was kind enough to visit Karnataka to take of the situation and some relief has been given to the silk industry. But no concrete measures have been taken to stabilize the prices of silk in the country, particularly in Karnataka.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to look into the matter immediately and to fix the price of Silk Cocoon between Rs. 125/- and Rs. 150/- per kilogram, in consultation with the Sericulture Department of the State Government, to protect the farmers, reelers and weavers.

The World Bank has provided an assistance of Rs. 550 crores for the development of Sericulture to the Central Silk Board. Unfortunately, a major chunk of this amount has been utilised for Establishment expenditure instead of encouraging research and development in the field. I urge upon the Government to divert the funds for research and development activities immediately.

#### (III) Need to Open a Regional Provident Fund Office at Connanore, Kerala

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMCHANDRAN (Connanore) :