

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 12, 1965/Chaitra 22,  
1887 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the  
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

(Dr. P. S. Deshmukh)

**The Prime Minister and Minister of Atomic Energy (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are very much grieved over the sad demise of Dr. Punjabrao S. Deshmukh.

He was one of the oldest Members of this House, and he served as Minister of Agriculture for ten years. He was a great supporter of kisans, and had worked a good deal amongst them. He took keen and active interest in taking various measures as the Minister in charge of Agriculture for the amelioration of their condition and for their uplift, progress and advance.

He was a prominent figure in public life, and he had many social activities to his credit. Especially he took interest in education and built up a number of institutions, schools and colleges which are running very well indeed.

We deeply mourn his loss, and I would like you kindly to convey to Mrs. Deshmukh and the members of the bereaved family our heartfelt condolences.

**Shri Ranga (Chittoor):** It was a shock to me and I am sure to most of us, to all of us, to learn that Dr. Punjabrao S. Deshmukh passed away so suddenly, without any of us hav-

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ing any fear, any suspicion, that the end was so near.

When I went to pay my last respects to him yesterday, as he was kept there lying in State, it did not appear as if he had already died—so serene, so complete in himself as he was.

I have had the honour of knowing him for the past 40 years. Both myself and my wife used to meet him at Oxford when he was my junior and was doing his research for Ph. D. After that, after he came over here, during those years when it was not so fashionable or popular to function in the name of the great Sivaji, he had the foresight and courage to establish a number of educational institutions, naming them after the great Sivaji, and work for the educational uplift of the class of people who are mostly kisans, who are known as Marathas in his area, and who at that time were very backward in education.

After that he took up the cause of the kisans as such over the whole of India, and I had the privilege of having him as one of my colleagues and we worked for several years together. When he joined the Government, I was not quite sure whether he would be able to carry on that work, but he had that strain of constructive ability in him, and so, though he was a Minister, he was able to develop a kisan organisation which slowly has been growing to be an independent non-official organisation. He provided it with large funds through constructive efforts that he had himself made, including the organisation of the unique—and I think the first of its kind in India—World Agricultural Fair. He made it a success.

He developed also the backward classes organisation for the whole of this country, took advantage of the provision made in the Constitution for their protection, roused those people, helped them everywhere to form their own organisations and used his influence with the Government in order to get grants for a large number of hostels which he had started under his leadership and through his initiative all over the country. Therefore, the ignorant masses and the backward classes in this country mourn his death. In addition to that, he made himself agreeable to the State Governments as well as the Union Government to such an extent that he was able to persuade the governmental authorities as well as the kisans to develop agricultural production in a unique manner. Many other Ministers did not succeed, but he did where so many had failed.

So, Sir, I was not quite happy when he was left out of the Ministry last time. Although I belong to the Opposition, I would like to see such good and competent and constructive-minded people becoming Ministers in the Government, here as well as in the States, so that they would be able to emulate the example of Dr. Deshmukh and serve the people in various directions. I hope you will convey to his wife, who is herself in her own right a public worker, and his family our condolences.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee** (Calcutta Central): Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself and my group with the expression of condolence which has fallen from the lips of the Prime Minister and Prof. Ranga at the sad death of Dr. P. S. Deshmukh. It must have been a shock to most of us to learn very suddenly that Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh was no more. This kind of thing reminds us how in the midst of life we are in death, and it also makes us sensible perhaps of the triviality of so many other things that we do from time to time.

His death means a void in this House which, I fear, will be difficult to fill. I knew him since 1952 when I came here as a member of the first Parliament. He always impressed us as a person who was capable and considerate at the same time and who had, as a matter of fact, a grip over whatever problem he was dealing with and who had a human way of approach to different problems. He had a very distinguished academic career but that did not prevent him from throwing in his lot with the common man in this country and he tried to serve them by means, particularly, of two instruments: education and social reform. Very few people have devoted themselves like Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh did to the cause of the uplift of the so-called backward classes of our people. The Sivaji Education Society, of which he was the life and soul, would remain a very lasting memorial to his work.

We are all very sorry that he is no longer with us and I am sure you would be conveying to his family the condolence of all sections of the House and the sense of irreparable loss at his passing away.

**Shri Surendranath Dwivedy** (Kendrapara): On my behalf and on behalf of my group I associate myself with the feeling expressed at the sad demise of Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh. On Friday when he was here attending the House he was so active and agile that one could hardly believe even now that he is already dead.

His association with Parliament was long, and his parliamentary methods of work were unparalleled. He was a great champion of kisans, whether he was in the Ministry or outside. Even after leaving the office, he was organising the kisans and he was, so to say, the main exponent of the rights of the kisans, especially the right of kisans over the land. I think no other kisan movement has done so much as he had done for the kisans.

He was a veteran nationalist and we have lost a great nationalist by the death of such a person.

I associate myself again with the feelings expressed here and request you to convey the feelings of the House to the bereaved family.

**श्री बड़े (खारगोन) :** अग्र्यज्ञ महोदय, डा० पंजाब राव देशमुख का निधन एक बड़ी दुःखद घटना है। इतनी जल्दी वह चले जायेंगे, इसकी कल्पना भी नहीं की जा सकती थी। वह न केवल महाराष्ट्र के एक नेता थे बल्कि देश के भी एक नेता थे। कृषकों के तो खास तौर पर वह एक नेता थे। उनमें वह बहुत दिलचस्पी लिया करते थे। इतने ज्यादा वे कृषकों के हितैषी थे कि आज यहां का पूरा कृषक समाज आश्रयहीन हो गया है।

महाराष्ट्र में मास एजुकेशन या बैंकवर्ड क्लासिस के लिए एजुकेशन के लिए दो व्यक्तियों का नाम सब से ज्यादा लिया जाता है, दो ही व्यक्ति हो गये हैं, एक तो श्री भाऊ राव पाटिल और दूसरे डा० पंजाब राव देशमुख। यही दो मुख्य नाम हैं। उन्होंने इतना वहां शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में काम किया है कि अगर हम डा० देशमुख के दूसरे कामों को भूल भी जायें तो भी केवल इसी कार्य से वह सदा महान् व्यक्ति माने जायेंगे, महान् व्यक्तियों में उनको गिना जाएगा।

उनकी कल्पना का ही फल था कि भारत कृषक समाज की स्थापना हुई। भारत के कृषकों के बारे में कोई बोलने वाला यहां नहीं था। सभी लोग दूसरों के बारे में बोला करते थे, दूसरे उद्योगों के लिए बोला करते थे लेकिन कृषकों के बारे में कोई इतना ज्यादा नहीं बोला करता था। डा० पंजाब राव देशमुख कृषकों के खास सेवक थे। उनके उठ जाने से कृषक समाज आश्रयहीन हो गया है। आज पूरा हिन्दुस्तान का कृषक समाज, किसान

समाज, को महाराष्ट्र में और महाराष्ट्र के आसपास सारे कृषकों को बड़ा धक्का लगा है।

मैं भारतीय जनसंघ की ओर से तथा अपनी ओर से उनके प्रति श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूं और आप से बिनती करता हूं कि आप उनके परिवार वालों को यह सन्देश भिजवा दें कि हम सब उनके साथ इस विपत्ति की घड़ी में सहभागी हैं।

**श्री बागड़ी (हिसार) :** डा० पंजाब राव देशमुख की मृत्यु पर मैं अपने दल की ओर से उनको श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूं। उन्होंने इस देश के पिछड़े हुए और दलित लोगों को उठाने के लिए जीवन भर बहुत कुछ कार्य किया है। उनके इस कर्म से इस देश की पिछड़ी हुई जातियों को और उनके नेताओं को और उनके कार्यकर्ताओं को पथ प्रदर्शन मिलेगा।

इन शब्दों के साथ मैं उनको श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूं।

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): Sir, I cannot speak of Dr. Deshmukh without some kind of emotion. We had been co-workers in Vidarbha for more than 40 years, and I found during all these 40 years, notwithstanding some serious points of difference between him and us, he gained a name as a devoted worker to the cause of the poorer classes, particularly the Mahrathas and the krishaks of the country. He came out as an educated man in the Mahratha community at a time when the whole of Vidarbha had no persons in that community who really could be called, in the modern sense, educated men at all. He and my other friend, Barrister Ramrao Deshmukh, were the two persons in the Mahratha community who had the benefit of foreign education and came out to India, and they had before them bright prospects if they had followed their own profession, pursued it or had joined any of the high posts

that could have been offered to them, but it must be said to their credit that they chose the difficult path of serving their countrymen rather than serving themselves by occupying some lucrative posts elsewhere. It was a great example they had set before the young Mahrathas and the young members of the backward classes.

Secondly, the cause of education had been espoused by many persons before him also, but Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh took it up on a scale which was really a source of admiration for us all. In fact, it was due to his work—it may be said with great confidence—that the doors of higher education were opened in the rural areas so that the poor boys could see that they had also the opportunity of prosecuting higher studies and occupying places of equality along with the members of other communities. That was the kind of great constructive work which he had done.

He died in harness and in the midst of so many activities which he had started. I have said in another place that they remain unfinished. He had given them a push, and I expect that his great example will be a source of inspiration to others who are left behind to carry on those activities in the future.

I wish to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by other hon. Members and I request you to convey the profound feelings of sorrow of Members of all sections of the House to Mrs. Punjabrao Deshmukh.

**Mr. Speaker:** I fully associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the House and other Members on the passing away of Dr. Punjabrao S. Deshmukh.

Dr. Deshmukh was a sitting Member of this House from the Amaravati constituency of Maharashtra. He was also a Member of the Constituent Assembly of India, Provisional Parliament and the First and Second Lok

Sabha during the years 1946 to 1962. He was Minister of Agriculture during the years 1952 to 1957 and again from 1958 to 1962. He was Minister of Co-operation during the years 1957 to 1958.

Several aspects of his activities have already been referred to by the Leaders of the various Groups and the Leader of the House himself. It was a sudden shock that we had to suffer, because we do recollect that only on Friday last we saw him sitting there, quiet and calm, and trying to participate in the proceedings.

Dr. Deshmukh had many qualities of head and heart. Indeed the loss would be great. Particularly the contribution he made to the amelioration of the lot of agriculturists and actual farmers would be remembered for a very long time. It was a surprise to me indeed when I learnt how many educational institutions he had been managing, and were in his charge. There would be thousands of students, and other members of his family, who would be mourning the loss of this friend. Indeed, we have lost a great patriot, a nationalist, good parliamentarian and a successful minister that he had been.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences, as have been expressed by several Members, to the bereaved family.

The House may stand in silence for a short while to express its sorrow.

*The Members then stood in silence for a short while.*

#### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

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