

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Wednesday, May, 8, 1985/

Vaisakha 18, 1907 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : We are starting with
a very mild temper today.

Shrimati Chandra Bhanu Devi.

[*English*]

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : Good
start, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : Well begun is half
done.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

“Review of State Government Activities
in the Field of Environment”

*750. PROF. CHANDRA BHANU
DEVI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be
pleased to state :

(a) whether Union Government are
reviewing the activities of various State
Governments in the field of environment :

(b) if so, the broad details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to
merge the Departments of Environment
and Forests with a view to have a unified
authority for a better coordination of the
schemes in the field of environment ?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
FORESTS (SHRI VIR SEN) : (a) and (b).
States have been advised about suitable
structures, activities and programmes for
environmental management. As the
Departments of Environment have recently
been set up, it is too early to make a review
of their activities.

(c) The Government has already crea-
ted a separate Ministry of Environment &
Forests for better coordination of the
schemes in both the departments. How-
ever, there is no proposal to merge the two
Departments.

[*Translation*]

PROF. CHANDRA BHANU DEVI :
Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has been stated
in the annual report of the Department of
Environment for the year 1984-85 that the
industries in Gujarat, Karnataka and Maha-
rastra have done a Commendable job in
controlling industrial pollution in com-
parison to other states. I would like to
ask the hon. Minister whether the Central
Government would issue special direction to
other States also to take concrete steps in
this regard ?

SHRI VIR SEN : Mr. Speaker, Sir all
the states have been issued directives that
they should formulate their schemes regard-
ing environment and when these schemes
are forwarded to us, we review them.

PROF. CHANDRA BHANU DEVI :
I would also like to ask the hon.
Minister if the Central Government have
formulated any time bound programme to
have an effective control on increasing
pollution in metropolitan cities ? If so what
are the main features of the programme ?

SHRI VIR SEN : Sir, The Pollution
Central Boards of all the states have been
given this direction that they should for-
mulate the schemes and when the schemes
are received by us, the Board would review
them and we would take action on them.

[English]

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Mr. Speaker Sir, this is one of the examples of the gap that very often exists between the philosophy and the commitments of the Government of India and the level of implementation by the State Governments. Now we are having a Ministry of Environment for several years at the Government of India's level. But is it not a fact that there are several major States like Maharashtra which up to now not even have a Department of Environment? And where the Departments of Environment do exist, they are not functioning and one of the major reasons for their not functioning is lack of funds. I would like to know which are the States which up to the moment do not have a Department of Environment and what steps the Government have taken to increase the financial assistance to the Departments of Environment in the States, and secondly, now at the Centre we have a very well carved out Department of Environment. They have merged the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forest but this is not being implemented. I would like to know why this is not being done at the State Government level also. What is the dialogue you are having with the State Governments so that what you are doing at the Centre namely having one Ministry for Environment and Forests is also done at the level of the State Governments.

SHRI VIR SEN : The pollution control measures have to be implemented by the State Governments. The Central Government can give only instructions and advices. The implementation part rests with the State Governments.

As far as the question regarding how many States have set up departments, I may inform the House that four States have a division each under some other department and fourteen States and one Union territory have set up Department of Environment. Five States and two Union Territories have got separate divisions. So, in this manner, of course, all the States are establishing their own departments.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : What about the Financial assistance the Centre

is giving to them so that they can become effective? The Minister has not replied to this question. Or is it that you also do not want them to become effective?

MR. SPEAKER : And do you want a separate Ministries in the States also?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Separate Ministries or there should be separate departments. If they are not there, they should be directly under the Central Government. They have no money. What are you doing about it?

SHRI VIR SEN : On this question, of course, we will request the State Governments to look to their demands also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I am going to ask a question that has become highly explosive and controversial today. Environment is connected with pollution. It is connected with congestion in various States.

MR. SPEAKER : I know that you will be doing this.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Congestion in cities is connected with environment. If the congestion in cities is to be avoided, in that case various areas have to be developed and regional economic imbalances have to be removed and Bombay hinterland has to be developed. Instead of that the Government is thinking of a very wrong and irrational path of banning influx of population in any city whether it is Bombay or Calcutta. And if that is done, as has been indicated by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra in his Press conference yesterday, it will mean the violation of Article 19 of the Constitution, which says all citizens shall have the right to move freely throughout the territory of India. Therefore, will the Minister give an assurance that such an irrational measure of decongestion will not be followed, but they will have an economic balance in different regions so that nobody will take such an irrational attitude of banning any city for any population in the country?

PROF. K.K. TEWARI : The atmosphere is sought to be polluted by induction of politics.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :
No, Sir. I am very serious about it.

MR. SPEAKER : He listed it so that
Bombay could just come in.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I
am further add that Prof. Ranga is support-
ing my question.

SHRI VIR SEN : I think there can be
no restriction of any citizen going to any
cosmopolitan city. Anybody can go there
and reside there if there is proper
accommodation.

As far as congestion is concerned, the
Maharashtra Chief Minister, of course,
has taken a decision some time back to
increase the floor space index and there
are some objections about it. That is
being considered.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV
GANDHI) : Because it is a very important
subject raised by Prof. Dandavate, I may
add a word. There can be no question of
such restrictions.

MR. SPEAKER : You might be remem-
bering we had a question.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :
No restriction of people coming and no
people will be driven out also. Both.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, we can have
satellite towns.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I would like
to clarify. There will be no restrictions
on coming in and no restriction on going
out.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : But,
Sir, anti-defection Bill has already been
passed.

MR. SPEAKER : You might be re-
membering the question once put on the
floor of this House, and I just said under
the Constitution it cannot be. That is
what we did at that time and I think the
whole House is aware of it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Now we have done
it. There is no question of any more of
this and we do not know what it is.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Thomas.

(Interruptions)

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : Sir,
what I want to ask is that in Kerala the
forest land is being assigned by the Govern-
ment for the occupants who are there
illegally in the forest area for some time
on one pretext or the other. This has
ended in deforestation of a vast area. I
would like to ask the Minister whether the
Central Government will take steps to
avoid this because this has been going on
for a long period in Kerala where there
was good forest land which is now com-
pletely destroyed. This has also caused
environmental difficulties there. Even the
Silent Valley which was declared as a
national park by the Central Government
in the Western Ghats, is being destroyed
and this has happened because a section of
the people went to live there and en-
croached that area with the support of the
Government there.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A. CHARLES : No support has
been given by the Government. In fact,
they have also taken timely action wherever
there are encroachments. So, the Member
should withdraw his remarks.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister will
refute it.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, this is a
Question Hour. He cannot make an allega-
tion. He cannot ask such things.
(Interruptions). This is a Question Hour.
So, that should not go on record. He
should withdraw it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You just put a
question.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : Sir,
there was an instance when the Ordinance
prohibiting deforestation was lapsed and
no new Ordinance was brought in which
enabled persons to continue deforestation.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Are there any aspersions on anybody ?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Thomas, you just ask the question. Otherwise I will call it irrelevant.

(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER : The Minister in charge will refute. What are you doing ?

Is it going on record ?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am to record everything, but I will also see that nothing as aspersion goes on, but the Minister is there to refute. If there is anything we will take note of it. Please sit down, there is no allegation.

(Interruptions)

SHRI THOMPAN THOMAS : Will the Central Government take action in this matter for safeguarding the forests in Kerala which were being destroyed with the support of the Government ?

(Interruptions)

PROF. N.G. RANGA : How can he say 'with the support of the Government' ?

SHRI A. CHARLES : No government is allowing it, Sir.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is his view. But the Minister's view might be different.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Member is totally misinformed. The forests in Kerala are not being destroyed by the support of the Government.

PROF. N.G. RANGA : That is why I took objection. He should not have said that.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : He is also

misinformed about the lapsing of the Act. I am told that the Act was not allowed to lapse and an Ordinance was issued some time before it could lapse, I think two or three days before but there was no gap between the old Act and the new Act coming in. (Interruptions) I have not finished yet.

Sir, the Member has raised a very vital question as to what the Centre can or cannot do with the forests in a particular State. There are certain historical problems regarding this question which we must tackle in this House at some stage. Originally, forests were for exploiting. They were a wealth to be harvested. On top of that, there is a tremendous population pressure on land and the result is that forests have diminished very substantially. The political pressures in the States, in the districts, in the blocks, are invariably much higher than they are here, at the Centre. So, there are certain decisions we can take at the Centre which are very difficult to take at the lower levels, in the particular locality. Unfortunately, we do not have enough jurisdiction over this to actually take action. I would like that this subject is debated sometimes and we come to a conclusion on how the problem is to be handled because the dangers of the depletion of forest wealth are very great and are going to do untold harm to the country.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : That is all now. I think, 15 minutes have passed on this Question.

Steps to Attract Tourists to Andhra Pradesh

*751. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Will the Minister of tourism and Civil Aviation be pleased to state the steps taken by Government to attract more tourists to the historically important places like Kondapally near Vijayawada, Amaravathi, Nagarjunasagar, Golconda Fort, Fataknama Palace and other places in and around Hyderabad city in Andhra Pradesh ?