

**Plight of people displaced under MRPL Project, Mangalore**

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (KARNATAKA): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to draw the attention of the Government to a grave injustice meted out to the people who sacrificed their assets for the sake of a prestigious project which is coming up in Mangalore. The Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Limited acquired 1,800 acres of prime irrigated agriculture land at a paltry sum of Rs. 45,000-60,000 per acre. The agriculturists sacrificed their lands in order to bring in this prestigious project in the interest of the nation and on the assurance given by the management and the State Government of Karnataka that one member from each family would be given a job in the project. In 1992, even the State Government committed itself to this. From 1992 to 1994, the construction work was in full swing. A rehabilitation colony also came up for the people who were displaced from their dwellings. But I am sorry to say the condition of this colony is horrible. Not only the basic amenities like drinking water, roads, hospitals, post office, etc., are not made available, but even the water available is saltish and is not fit for drinking. The agriculturists who sacrificed their lands have no other go except going on *dharnas*, that too half-a-dozen times so far with no result. Every time the management says, "Give us some time; we will provide jobs". But the irony of the situation is that nearly 1,500 people, all outsiders, have been brought in by 8-10 contractors. They have been engaged in the project complex in various posts such as attenders, sweepers, security personnel, gardeners and drivers. The company is playing with the lives of the people who have sacrificed their lands and is encouraging the contractors at the cost of the livelihood of the poor agriculturists. The most heinous act of the Karnataka Government which has failed to fulfil its promise of giving jobs is that it picked up the protesting people and put them in the Bellary jain; Even the local MP, Shri Oscar Fernandes, who is now elevated as the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, and four local legislators were among the people who were thrown behind the bars.

The most serious thing is that the whole atmosphere is vitiated, Many industries thinking twice before establishing their projects, Karnataka is being looked down as a trouble-shooting area. Even the prestigious projects like Conentrix and Nagarjuna Steels have got into difficulties in getting the land because of the cheating by the MRPL and the Karnataka Government of the people who have sacrificed their lands.

Even though Karnataka is full of engineering and technical colleges, the management has resorted to campus recruitment in Madras, Bombay and Gujarat. Not even one engineer is selected from the area, whereas 128 engineering colleges are running in Karnataka. 600 flats have been constructed only for engineers and officials and not for the workers at all. In the company, only 27% of the capital is owned by the MRPL. Out of the balance, 27% is owned by the HPCL, which again is a public undertaking. 46% is owned by public and financial institutions. Added to this, the company has been given a moratorium on tax for 11 years. With all these benefits given to the company, the company has not only not kept up its words, but it has also cheated the poor villagers.

It is high time the Government of India, whose investment is to the extent of 73%, in the interests of the industry, the local people and the NRIs and the multinationals whom the Government is inviting for taking up projects in the States, provided these 600 jobs, even at lower levels.

I hope that the United Front Government will open its eyes to this burning problem before the local people get enraged and block not only the MRPL but also the coming up of the Cogentrix and Nagarjuna Steel Projects. Unless the Government takes care of this situation and eases it, it cannot think of any power project around Mangalore; and, maybe, this kind of a situation may arise in the whole of Karnataka.

May the hon. Prime Minister, who comes from Karnataka, set his own house in order to create a congenial atmosphere for the industry to come up, about which he is claiming that multi-crore projects have been cleared by his Government.

SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN (TAMIL NADU): Sir. ....

SHRIN. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Sir. ....

**उपसभाध्यक्ष (प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा): बहुत थोड़ा टाईम है। आप सिर्फ एंसेसिएट कीजिएगा। अभी बहुत से मैम्बर्स बोलने के लिए बाकी हैं।**

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM (TAMIL NADU): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, so far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, there is water scarcity not only in Kamraj district but also in Kanyakumari district. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, it faces two problems. One of the problems related to Krishna water. In this connection, the latest position is that the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu recently inaugurated a function for releasing Krishna water. But, in spite of the inauguration, that water has not reached Tamil Nadu. Till date, we are not getting a single drop of water from the river Krishna. The reason is that a lot of damage was caused to water channels.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA): You just associate yourself with it.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Sir, I would like to request the Central Government to see that the engineers set right whatever damage was caused to the water channels. I would also request the Government to send a common-team to inspect the Krishna water so that the Krishna water is immediately released to Tamil Nadu.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA): You kindly associate yourself with it. I have six more names before me.

#### **Drought situation in Southern Districts of Tamil Nadu**

\*SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN (TAMIL NADU): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, first of all, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise an important matter.

With a sense of paralysing calamity, I bring to the notice of the Centre a serious drought situation prevailing in the Ramanathapuram and other southern districts of Tamilnadu.

\*English translation of the original speech delivered in Tamil.

Ramanathapuram is a backward district and majority people living in the district belong to Scheduled Castes and backward classes. About 90% people live below the poverty line. Nearly 50 years after independence, people of Ramanathapuram district are reeling under severe drought due to non-availability of water for drinking as well as irrigation. No alternative arrangement has been made to provide adequate water to this drought prone area. The people depend only on rain water for their needs.

Since rains have failed continuously for several years, the people of Ramanathapuram district are in grip of drought and famine. They have no water, no food and no clothings. They are living in utter misery. The farmers had spent lot of money for raising crops that have failed due to drought. They are unable to pay back the loans they have taken from banks and money-lenders. Unless the centre comes forward to help them, they would have to undergo worse kind of turbulence.

Sir, the whole district of Ramanathanpuram looks like a desert. The fury of drought is writ large every where. Pilgrims from the north proceeding to Rameswaram pass through Ramanathapuram district, are pained to see the plight of people living there. Even the pilgrims do not get drinking water. Such is the condition of drought there. Unless the centre takes steps on warfooting to tide over the water crisis, the situation will turn out to be very pathetic condition.

The centre has recently appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Hanumantha Rao to study the feasibility of linking all the major rivers of India. While welcoming this move, I wish to point out a long pending demand for harnessing the water of the west flowing rivers of Kerala for use in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Over 230 TMC water of both Pambai and Achankoil rivers are flowing waste into Arabian sea every year. If these rivers are diverted towards Tamilnadu, the surplus water of these rivers could be fruitfully used in Ramanathapuram, Kamarajar and also Pasumpon districts. Our beloved leader Dr. Puratchni Thalaiivi was negotiating with Kerala when our ADMK was in power. The Centre should not waste time in