

the sea during the last monsoon, the Kerala Government did not allow Tamil Nadu to store just 15 TMC of water at the Periyar Dam. Had that been done, the farmers of Tamil Nadu would not be facing problems in raising crops now.

Only on the basis of a 999-year agreement, the World Bank extended a loan of Rs. 400 crores to Tamil Nadu to develop the irrigation systems like ayacuts and rivulets under the Periyar Dam Projects. The Tamil Nadu Government has spent nearly Rs. 600 crores on these irrigation development schemes.

While water is shared even among belligerent nations, warring principalities, here is a State in the Federation called India that refused to let a sister State store surplus water.

The farmers of Tamil Nadu, particularly, in the southern districts, are agitated over the issue. They are planning to picket the Central Government offices. The farmers feel that even on the Cauvery water issue, the Centre has not been fair to Tamil Nadu. The new Veernam Project, taken up by the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Puratchithalaivi Jayalalitha, to provide drinking water to Madras depends on our right to the Cauvery water because the Veeranam Lake gets water from the Coleroon, tributary of the Cauvery. It is most unfortunate that sister States, instead of following the dictum of "love thy neighbours", pursue a policy of "hate thy neighbours".

Therefore, I urge upon the Centre to take a serious view of this matter and prevail upon the Kerala Government to let it honour the agreement and give the legitimate right to Tamil Nadu to store 152 ft. of water in the Periyar Dam. The Centre should also prevail upon the Karnataka Government to honour the verdict of the Tribunal and abide by it.

Thank you, Madam.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Madam, Deputy Speaker.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: "Deputy Chairman". You are in the Rajya Sabha now. (*Interruptions*). It takes some time to get used to this House.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: I went from the Lok Sabha to the Kerala Legislature and have come to the Rajya Sabha. It takes a little time to get used.

Madam, before I go on to the flood situation in Kerala, I hope you will permit me to make one sentence about the story made out by Mr. Muthu Mani. The facts are actually the other way round. They are taking water from the Periyar and Parambikulam without our knowledge. I am not for a confrontation. The Government of Kerala is ready to discuss and resolve the problem rather than adopting a confrontationalist attitude. I hope the Tamil Nadu Government will also adopt the course of mutual respect and understanding. I just wanted to mention that. It is an inter-State dispute and I think we should not quarrel here over that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Actually, last year, when the Cauvery water dispute was going on, practically for fifteen days, our House was flooded with Cauvery water and there were discussions from all sides, by all political parties, and the differences were only on the State. For the first time I saw the different political parties joining hands to take up the Cauvery water dispute on the same platform. Since you have been added to this House, you will also join them.

**Devastating flood situation in Kerala**

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Madam, the only thing I am suggesting to my hon. friend is that the Government of Kerala will be ready

for a dialogue rather than for a confrontation. Madam, I am on my legs to draw the attention of the Government, through you, to the grim flood situation in Kerala which has posed a serious threat to the State as a whole. Madam, monsoon has come to Kerala a little earlier in the end of May. Of course, we love rain and love it to continue. But, unfortunately, it continued for a month and the effect is devastating. Due to this, during July, 103 people have died. Now, the toll has gone up to 121 and the number of houses damaged by the rains has gone up to 20,000. It almost affected one million people. The Government had to open 100 more relief camps in addition to the 600 relief camps already in existence. Such was the devastating effect created by the flood situation in Kerala. The Minister made a statement here. Unfortunately, I could not seek clarifications or some kind of an assurance from the hon. Minister of Agriculture regarding the help which can be given. Madam, the Finance Commission has recommended some kind of a Calamity Fund and the Kerala share, according to this Fund, comes to Rs. 31 crores. Out of this, we have to meet 20 per cent expenditure on our own. In this regard, two instalments have been released. The assessment of loss when the Chief Minister last wrote to the Prime Minister in the end of July was about Rs. 110 crores. Now, today, "The Hindu" made a report and it is with me. According to this report, the death toll has gone up and the estimate of loss has gone up to Rs. 200 crores. Unfortunately, no Minister from the Government of India has visited the State. Of course, the visit of a Minister will not solve our problem. Even if they give us assistance without paying a visit to our State, that will solve our problem to some extent. But nothing has been done so far. Even the money to which the State of Kerala is entitled

has not been released. I appeal to the Government of India, through you, Madam, that the serious situation that has been created by the continuous rain and the devastating floods which have created a havoc in the State, have to be dealt with in all seriousness. Moreover, as you might have seen in Kerala, we are always under the threat of the Arabian Sea. The Arabian Sea is the border. The Kerala border is the sea coast. We are very much conscious about the Pakistani border and the Bangladesh border. Naturally, we have to protect our border also. Unfortunately, the Government of India all along has taken a position that the question of sea erosion is purely a State matter. But, we are losing. In my childhood, we used to go to the Alleppey coast. At that time we had to walk up to three-four kms to the sea shore. Today, it is at a stone's throw distance because of sea erosion and the sea has taken away the entire land. Sea erosion is also a perpetual problem. I appeal to the Government, through you, Madam, to release the assistance quickly and some Minister may visit and make an on the spot assessment of the loss and damage suffered by the State of Kerala. I hope, the Government will consider with all seriousness the problem that we are facing in Kerala.

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Pradhan, your name is there. But Mr. Chellappa says that they have an appointment with the Prime Minister and that is why he wants to go early. If you agree, then I can permit him to make his Special Mention. Mr. Chellappa, how long will you take?

**SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA** (Tamil Nadu): Madam, I will take only two minutes.

**THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** All right. I will look at the watch. It is 12.35 now. Let him speak for two minutes. (Interruptions) There is no

Zero Hour. It seems as if everybody has walked out of the House—not only the Opposition. There is nobody.

**Opening a new regional office of University Grants Commission in Madras**

**SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA** (Tamil Nadu): Madam, the University Grants Commission richly deserves and creditably merits to receive encomiums and congratulations from all the academics of India for having taken the right decision to decentralise the administration of the University Grants Commission by opening regional branches of the Commission.

In fact, it has been long awaited from the University Grants Commission which has now concretised. It is universally acknowledged that such a decentralisation will definitely facilitate speedy and effective disposal of all academic and administrative proposals and applications referred to the University by the secretaries, professors and principals of the colleges. Moreover, such a move will greatly contribute to the growth, advancement and development of qualitative higher education as all the financial bottle-necks could be sorted out by the regional branch officer of the University Grants Commission.

But the administrators and the academics of the South are far from satisfied because Madras City does not find a place in the network of University Grants Commission offices. In fact, the Madras city could serve as an ideal centre for the University Grants Commission for it is reachable by all the administrations and academics of Southern States. This grievance is not unfounded or without cause or without supportive facts and figures.

In the first place, out of 147 autonomous colleges spread all over India, 47 are situated in Tamil Nadu and that is a considerable number. It

works out to roughly one-third of the total number of autonomous colleges. Secondly, in Tamil Nadu there is one MGR Medical University with several post-graduate departments working in six medical colleges. Then, there is the Anna University on Technical Education with 87 departments. Apart from this, there are seven Government-run Engineering colleges and fourteen private colleges. Then, there are the Gandhigram University and the Mother Teresa Women's University. Moreover, there are five full-fledged Universities with 262 departments put together.

In the third place, in Tamil Nadu there are 323 affiliated colleges apart from the autonomous colleges. In Karnataka, there are five universities with 127 departments put together and 258 affiliated colleges. In Kerala there are seven universities with 197 departments put together and 400 affiliated colleges.

For these three Southern States where there are so many universities and autonomous colleges, Madras would be easily accessible and, therefore, could house the regional branch office of the University Grants Commission in an ideal manner. In fact, from time immemorial Madras City has continued to enjoy the privilege of being the seat of higher education and learning.

Therefore, from the points of view of reachability, less travel time and less travel cost, Madras city could serve as an ideal regional branch office of the University Grants Commission. Hence, I request the Minister for Human Resource Development to open one more regional office at Madras and fulfil the needs of the academics.

Thank you, Madam.