

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 13th March, 1987/22
Phalguna, 1908 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Master Plan of the Brahmaputra Board

*241. SHRIMATI BIIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a master plan of the Brahmaputra Board has been submitted to Government recently; and

(b) if so, what are the long-term and short-term measures proposed in the said plan?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) Brahmaputra Board has submitted Part I of the Master Plan covering the main stem of the river Brahmaputra in December, 1986 wherein the Board has recommended *inter-alia* construction of storage reservoirs catering not only for flood moderation and silt control, but also for hydro-power, irrigation, navigation, watershed development and other benefits as long-term measures, and anti-erosion works, embankments, strengthening of existing embankments, drainage works etc. as short-term measures.

SHRIMATI BIIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in spite of the fact that a big project for the river Brahmaputra was prepared for eight long years, flood and erosion is still going on unchecked. It is known to the Hon. Minister that short-term measures like bandhs in river Brahmaputra simply cause more erosion in new areas and this aggravates the situation. So, I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether there is any provision for channel improve-

ment in the Master Plan for the river Brahmaputra.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any proposal for channel improvement?

SHRIMATI BIIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: This means that the river Brahmaputra is taking new currents and new course. When the river takes new course, it creates new erosion. So, whether there are any measures contemplated to bring back the river to the main course, the main current in order to save the erosion. If it takes new course, it will create more erosion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you sit down, he will reply.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I can say at this stage that the first part of the Master Plan is just ready and it is under the consideration of the Government. The other two parts are yet to be ready and what the hon. Member is thinking of is certain actions which the Brahmaputra Board can take up under its functions. That will come at a very late stage. I will take it as a suggestion for action.

SHRIMATI BIIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: That is not the answer. Anyway, my second supplementary is that it is known to all that the Master Plan is composed of a number of projects. So, what is the total number of projects in the Master Plan for Brahmaputra and whether the Government of Arunachal Pradesh gave the clearance for it to start, to execute, the plan at an early date?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this also has been explained in my answer to the main question. It comes at a later stage when we take up the construction of reservoirs.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from our hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the post of Chairman of the Brahmaputra Board is vacant, and the post of the Vice-Chairman is also

vacant, the post of the General Manager is also vacant and the post of the Secretary of the Board is also vacant.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: what is left then?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The name-board.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, now the Brahmaputra Board is more or less like a boat without a boatman being hurled in the floods and any time it could get drowned. I would like to know from the Minister for what purpose we are keeping the Board without any office-bearers like Chairman, the Secretary and others to look after the matters. Is it a showpiece to hoodwink the people of that areas?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it a fact?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I do not think these big volumes of the Master Plan that have come could have come just without these officers. There are people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I am not satisfied, I will ask the Minister.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: It is a fact, at the moment, the Chairman's post is vacant. One of the members on the Board is holding the charge and he is doing the work.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it a fact that the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary etc. are vacant?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: One thing that we have to appreciate is that people are not willing to go to the extreme end of Assam and work on the Board. That is the main difficulty in getting people.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Are you satisfied, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you any further question to ask?

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Sir, the Minister says nobody is willing to go and work on that Board. This is the answer he has given to my question. Then, why don't you dismantle the Board? For what purpose are you keeping the Board?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The purpose of the Board is to see that the work is carried on.

SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI: Sir, the Brahmaputra Project is, I think, the biggest multi-purpose hydel project, and the mighty Brahmaputra river could change the economic face of the entire North-East. Some people are opposing this project as they fear that if this project is started, then about 50,000 hectares of land will get submerged and about 8,000 families will be affected. I would like to know from the Minister the reaction of the Government and whether any clearance has been given by the Government and when the work will be started.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I do not know what particular project he is referring to.

SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI: Some people fear that 50,000 hectares of land will get submerged. I am referring to Dihang project and Subansiri project.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says that there is the Dihang hydel project which if executed will submerge a large area. Have you considered this and have you given clearance?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: So far no clearance has been given to any project that has come to the Government. Dihang and Subansiri are the two major projects which on completion will generate large amount of hydel power. But they are in the

initial stages. Projects were scrutinised and some comments have been sent to the Board to which replies are awaited.

DR. H. P. SHARMA: One of the major constraints about formulation and implementation of the major river projects is that water resource is a State subject and that creates problems all over, whether it is the Telugu-Ganga project or other projects. Does the Government think of bringing the water resource subject to the Concurrent List?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a question of policy. Shri Nagen Saikia.

SHRI NAGEN SAIKIA: It is known that Brahmaputra project is a project only on paper. Whereas the Government computed at least Rs. 12,000 crores for the two dams, the amount sanctioned is only Rs. 35 crores in the Seventh Plan for the Brahmaputra Board. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether there are any proposals in the hands of the Government to save the life and property of the people of Assam from the floods of Brahmaputra river and its tributaries during this monsoon which has already started in Assam?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the Board has recommended certain long-term and short-term measures. As far as long-term measures are concerned, they cannot be implemented overnight. Huge amounts are required for this. The State Government is not able to do this. As far as the short-term measures are concerned, like strengthening the embankments and other things, these are being taken up every year and the Central Government is providing loan assistance to the Government of Assam for this purpose since 1974-75. An assistance of Rs. 112 crores has been provided up to the end of the Sixth Plan. (Interruption) I am just giving you the figures. Sir, the outlay during the Seventh Plan for this purpose is Rs. 70 crores. Out of this, Rs. 15

crores was released during 1985-86. In the current financial year, against the outlay of Rs. 13.5 crores, an amount of Rs. 8 crores has already been released.

SHRI NAGEN SAIKIA: Sir, the Brahmaputra Board itself has computed a few years ago that every year, the floods in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries wash away property worth Rs. 2,000 crores. But the hon. Minister is speaking in terms of a hundred crores of rupees or less than hundred crores of rupees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister said there is constraint of resources. You said Rs. 35 crores have been given in the Seventh Plan. The Minister says, Rs. 70 crores have been allocated.

श्री जगदम्बी प्रसाद यादव : माननीय मंत्री जी, जैसा कि हमारे माननीय सदस्य ने कहा कि इस बोर्ड का चेयरमैन, सचिव, प्रबंधक कोई नहीं है। इसलिये मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो नदियों की इतनी परियोजनाएँ बन रही हैं, उसके लायक इस देश में किसी व्यक्ति को चाहे एजुकेशनल, चाहे प्रैक्टिकल क्षमता न होने के कारण भी आप इन पदों को भर नहीं पा रहे हैं। यह जो प्रतिवेदन प्राप्त हुआ है मास्टर प्लान का, वह भी बिना अध्यक्ष का, बिना एक्सपर्टाईज का, सिर्फ ब्यूरोक्रेट का प्राप्त हुआ है, जो आगे चल कर क्रियान्वयन की स्टेज में कारण सिद्ध नहीं होगा।

इसलिये मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि आपका जो मास्टर प्लान है, उस पर विशेषज्ञ लोगों की एक समिति बना कर जांच करा लेंगे, जिससे कि उसके रेकोमेंडेशन को वास्तव रूप में क्रियान्वित किया जा सके ?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this is a suggestion for action. The Ministry is doing the work which the hon. Member has suggested.

SHRI DHARANIDHAR BASUMATI: Sir, Brahmaputra is a mighty and turbulent river. Unless it is con-

trolled, the economy of Assam, in particular, and that of the North-Eastern Region in general, cannot be developed in a proper manner. I would like to know whether the Government is contemplating construction of a dam on the Brahmaputra like the Bhakra Nangal, so that it will provide irrigation facilities and generally benefit the whole of Assam.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this is a suggestion, an imaginative suggestion, for action.

Sanction to Multi-purpose Projects in Manipur

*242. **DR. BAPU KALDATE:** Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had sanctioned any multi-purpose project in Manipur during the First Year of the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what was the estimated cost of those projects;

(d) what was the total amount spent so far on those projects;

(e) by when those projects are likely to be completed; and

(f) whether the THOUBAL Multi-Purpose Project was also included in these projects?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

(f) No, Sir. The Thoubal Multi-Purpose Project was sanctioned in the year 1980.

डा० बापू कालदाते : सभापति महोदय, मैं वही जवाब, जिसके ऊपर मैं आपका ध्यान खींचना चाहता था, उसका

जवाब आपने दिया है, बाकी, नो सर, से मुझे कोई ज्यादा मतलब नहीं है। मैं खुद मणिपुर गया था, कांग्रेस के हमारे माननीय सदस्य तोम्बी सिंह जी के साथ और मैं इस प्रोजेक्ट पर गया था।

हम यह प्रश्न इस लिये आपके सामने उठा रहे हैं कि बार-बार जो होता है जो पहाड़ी इलाके होते हैं, जो इकनामिकली बैकवर्ड इलाके होते हैं, उनकी सारी की सारी विकास की प्रक्रिया कुछ बुनियादी तत्वों पर होती है, जिसमें कि इस प्रोजेक्ट को मैं मणिपुर की हद तक देखता हूँ।

मैं लोकटक गया था मणिपुर के दूसरे हिस्से में और यहाँ एक ऐसा प्रोजेक्ट है जो मल्टी-प्रोजेक्ट है, बहुविध है, जिसमें बिजली का सवाल है, जिसमें सिंचाई का सवाल है, जिसमें इम्फाल शहर को पानी देने का भी सवाल है और यह 1980 से चल रहा है। उसमें जब गये, तो पता लगा कि डैम की कंस्ट्रक्शन के बारे में आप कुछ नहीं कर रहे हैं। एक बैज सिर्फ तैयार हो रहा है, जिससे तीन-चार हजार हेक्टेयर तक की जमीन की सिंचाई संभावित है। मेरा सवाल सीधा सा यह है कि यह पहाड़ी इलाका है और इसकी प्रगति के लिये यह बहुयोजना अत्यावश्यक है। इसको ध्यान में रखते हुये आपने वर्ष 1980 से आज तक कितना इस पर खर्च किया है, कितनी इसकी एस्टीमेटेड कोस्ट है और कब तक इसको पूरा करने की बात आप सोच रहे हैं?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the project in question is the Thoubal multipurpose project. It envisages construction of a storage dam across the river Thoubal near village Pheyang and a barrage near the village Keithel manbi to pick up the river flows for diversion. The project will provide irrigation facilities to 21860 hectares of CCA and generate about 7.5 MW of hydro-power and supply of 10 Million gallons per day of raw water to the city of Imphal.

About the financial aspect of the project, as the hon. Member is interested to know, the expenditure till the end of the Sixth Plan, i.e. upto March 1985 was Rs. 11.73 crores. The