

RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 3rd March, 1982/12th
Phalgun, 1903 (Saka)

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*141: [The questioner (Shri S. Kumaran) was absent. For answer vide col. 33-34 infra.]

Production of pulses

*142. SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:

SHRI R. R. MORARKA:†

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current production of pulses and what is the requirement of our country in this regard;

(b) whether it is a fact that the prices of pulses are increasing day by day and if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) what steps Government have taken to raise the production of pulses during the years 1980-81 and 1981-82 and with what results; and

(d) what is the future programme in the next year for improvement of seeds and production of pulses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI BALESHWAR RAM): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) During the crop season 1980-81 the production of pulses was 112 lakh tonnes. For 1981-82 final figures are not yet available but according to advance assessment it is likely to be about 120 lakh tonnes. Keeping in view the requirements of the population consistent with the objectives of the plan a target of production of 45 lakh tonnes of pulses has been fixed for 1984-85.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri R. R. Morarka.

(b) No, Sir. The wholesale price index of pulses has in fact registered a steady fall in the last six months. The index (1970-71=100) fell from 368.1 in August 1981 to 325.8 in January, 1982.

(c) and (d) The following steps are being taken to increase the production of pulses:—

(i) Mounting an yield maximisation effort, utilising the available technology, i.e.:

(a) Multiplication and use of improved seeds of pulse crops. For the first time a minikit programme of pulses was taken up during 1981-82 and 63,444 minikits were distributed. During 1982-83, 70,000 minikits are proposed to be distributed;

(b) adoption of plant protection measures; and

(c) use of phosphatic fertiliser and treatment of seed with rhizobium culture and other package of practices;

(ii) Increase in the irrigated area under moong, urd, gram and arhar. Additional area under short duration varieties of urd, moong, etc. in rice fallow by utilising the residual moisture in rabi season and cultivation of short duration varieties of moong in summer after oilseeds, sugarcane, potato, wheat with irrigation as cash crops;

(iii) Inter-cropping of arhar in soyabean, bajra, cotton, groundnut both under irrigated and unirrigated conditions and

(iv) As a part of implementation of the New Twenty Point Programme, intensive research, extension and development efforts are being mobilised for increase in production of pulses.

The growth in pulses production is constrained by the fact that pulse crops are mainly grown under rainfed conditions by small and marginal

farmers on marginal lands. Available technology does not lead to significant increases and only about 8 per cent of the pulses are grown under irrigated conditions. In spite of these limitations, progress of summer moong and more recently new varieties of arhar give promise for achieving increased production. As indicated earlier, current year's production of pulses is likely to be about a million tonnes higher than last year.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: Sir, is it not a fact that production in 1955-56 was of the order of 11.71 million tonnes and that in 1980-81, that is after 25 years, it has come down to 11.17 tonnes? Then, Sir, the area under cultivation has also come down from 23.22 million hectares in 1955-56 to 22.53 million hectares in 1980-81. May I know what progress the Government has made in the production of these pulses in India?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir the hon. Member knows that pulses are cultivated mostly in marginal type of lands under rain-fed conditions. And I admit that we have not been able to achieve any major break-through...

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: Why 'any major break-through'? No break-through at all.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: But we have produced fine varieties of some pulses. The Baisakhi moong is of a very short period variety, and the Ludhiana Agricultural University has also produced a variety of moong which is high-yielding... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do not know who is a bigger expert, you or the Minister.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: I am saying from the figures of the Economic Survey which was presented to the House last week. It is not a question of anybody being an expert; it is only taking information from the Minister and telling him that even

after years of effort the total production has gone down instead of going up.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir, production has been fluctuating from year to year. It is not that we have gone down in production. For instance, in 1974-75, production was only one hundred lakh tonnes. We produced 111.7 lakh tonnes in 1980-81. So you cannot say that it has not gone up.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: In 1960-61 the production was 127 lakh tonnes. Now it has come down to 111 lakh tonnes.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: From 107 lakh tonnes?

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: From 127 lakh tonnes.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I do not have figures for 1960-61 but I have figures for 1979-80 when it was only 85.7 lakh tonnes. Arhar is another crop where we have developed a very good variety through our Research Institute. The duration has gone down from 11 months to only about five months. About the duration of this crop, it is also a break-through if you would like to accept this as a break-through. These are various things which are being done. We know that we are short of pulses. We are taking up special projects for increasing production in pulses. We know that the requirement would be around 14 million tonnes by the year 1984-85, and we are short of nearly two million tonnes of pulses in the country. We are trying to make up this deficiency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: First Mr. Patel, then Mr. Piloo Mody and then Mr. Raju.

SHRI R. R. MORARKA: Sir, is it not a fact that the per capita availability of pulses has come down from 70.4 grammes in 1955-56 to only 39.1 grammes in 1980-81? It is a main source of protein for the vegetarians.

If that is so, may I know what the hon. Minister is doing to increase the per capita availability of pulses, by importing or otherwise?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I admit, I know that 39 grammes per capita availability is less than what is required for proteins in the body. We need at least, according to medical experts, 47 gms. per capita, that is, this protein food. But, because production is less than the demand, less than the requirement the per capita availability also has gone down. This is the fact.

SHRI R.R. MORARKA: What about import?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Import?

SHRI R.R. MORARKA: Yes.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: There are very few areas in the world from where pulses can be imported. That is why we are trying to achieve self-reliance in this matter and the only way we can increase the availability is by larger production.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Patel.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: Sir, the production of pulses has gone down while the population has gone up. So, the gap between the availability of protein is also going down and down and down. As the Minister has just now explained, we are short by two million tonnes.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We will be short by two million tonnes by 1984-85 and not now.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: We are short even now and, by 1984-85, according to his calculations, the production will go up to 145 lakh tonnes from 120 lakh tonnes, an increase of 25 lakh tonnes and still we will be short by two million tonnes. Again, Sir, in the same statement the hon. Minister has confessed that the available technology does not lead to significant increase in production. So,

Sir, I would like to know what the alternative schemes are that the Government has to provide protein-rich food or make up the protein deficiency. We are already deficient and the new generation, especially those hard-working labour class people who require protein will be deficient. So, what are you going to do to build up our future generation? In this connection, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Ministry has got any alternative schemes to raise the production of pulses or, in order to give sufficient pulses to the vegetarian people, the production of non-vegetarian protein food items like fish and meat will also be increased so that the pulses are spared for the hard-working vegetarian people?

SHRI PILOO MODY: You should become non-vegetarian now?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I will reply to both the questions.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: No; you reply to my question first.

MR. CHAIRMAN: About change of food habits.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Sir, that is one thing as you have rightly suggested. But there are people in India who would not like to make up their protein deficiency by taking to non-vegetarian food.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. That is not what I said. I am not thinking of that, Mr. Minister. I was thinking that those who are non-vegetarian should leave pulses for the vegetarian people. You are putting it just the other way.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: That is a very good suggestion. But, Sir, if the non-vegetarians take more meat for this purpose, and more people take to meat, then meat will also become costly. Compared to other countries it is still very cheap in India...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have to find methods of bringing the gap. That is what Mr. Patel wanted to know.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: We have taken up several programmes. They have already been mentioned in the reply, in the statement given to the hon. Member. We are trying to evolve high-yielding varieties of pulses. Research is going on; rice culture is one method by which we are trying to increase the yield. Then for plant protection better methods are being evolved to try and save the crop from insects which cause a lot of damage, particularly to pulses. Then soyabean cultivation is being taken up on a very large scale. Very special attention is being paid to this. A special project for M.P. has already been sanctioned wherein we shall spend about Rs. 15 crores for developing soyabean cultivation. Soyabean is another protein food which can be used. This is not counted amongst pulses. It is counted among oil seeds. This is a protein food which can be used also for making up the deficiency. Then we are trying to encourage cultivation by distribution of mini-kits to farmers. Several districts have been specially selected for pulses development programme. These are the various schemes and programmes through which we are trying to increase production.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: By the end of 1984-85 we will be deficient by 2 million tonnes. That is the statement of the Minister.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: If we do not increase production.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us hope we will progress also.

SHRI PILOO MODY: I am surprised, the Minister who is very knowledgeable in agriculture, has not been able to tell us why this great gap has been increasing in the per capita availability of pulses. The fact of the matter is that pulses as they are constituted, involve for the farmer half the yield and double the risk. There-

fore, the price of pulses always takes on four-times the price of wheat. Given the option of sowing either wheat or pulses, the farmer sows wheat for the simple reason that technology in wheat has shot up to such an extent that there are any amount of high yielding varieties available to the farmer and no variety of high yielding pulses. This has been the lacuna in the research programme of the Ministry of Agriculture which gives preference, an unequal preference, to wheat as compared to pulses. Therefore, I would like to ask the Minister, because he mentioned in his last few remarks that some programmes are going on, about the need to intensify the research in pulses tremendously, tremendous in the sense that the inputs required to be put are something of the nature of four to five times the inputs that have to be put in the others, to have high-breed seed which will increase. I think as far as I know, the use of atomic energy and nuclear devices in order to accelerate the experimentation of these pulses...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Isotopes.

SHRI PILOO MODY: Whatever its name; you know better, you are a greater scientist than I am. Therefore, I would like to ask the Minister whether he would consider increasing the inputs in the research of pulses because, as has been said by several people, it is deplorable how much per capita consumption of these pulses has fallen.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I entirely agree with the honourable Member, Mr. Piloo Mody. Research efforts have to be intensified. We are taking action in that regard. It is also true that pulses development has not proceeded as fast as it should on account of its inability to compete with other crops in terms of good returns to the farmer, and that is why in spite of the fact that expansion of irrigation is taking place at a very rapid rate, all the areas that come under irrigation are taken up for cultivation of more paying crops like wheat, rice, sugarcane and other

cash crops. That is why I said that it is one of the factors. It has not been possible to increase the production in pulses to the extent that the country needs. They are still being cultivated on marginal lands and in rain-fed conditions. We are trying to make it more profitable to the farmer to cultivate pulses and that will only be by way of providing them with very high yielding varieties of seeds so that they get good returns, and also with protection measures which I have already mentioned. There is a very big damage on account of insecticides and pesticides in the cases of pulses and oilseeds. All these programmes have been taken in right earnest. Our research institutions are paying special attention to it. We hope that shortly we shall be able to release good varieties of gram also. It is one of the main crops amongst pulses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was a seminar recently which I inaugurated on pulses.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Yes, Sir. There were various seminars and workshops held from year to year. Demonstrations were also held and...

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: It is produced only on papers. ,

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was one suggestion. I do not think I should waste the time of the House telling them. One was that pulses bushes sagged down and therefore pests attacked them. What has been done is to push it, to stand up so that it is clear of the ground; and the results which were shown to me on a screen were very important. I think there were... (*Interruptions*). I think, Mr. Patel, if you come to me—I have got their charts—I will show you.

SHRI PILOO MODY: When you stand up, nothing is recorded. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I took the permission of the House. (*Interruptions*) Mr. Mitra.

SHRI SANTOSH MITRA: I would like to ask the hon. Minister: What steps are being taken to remove the constraints which have already been mentioned? It is cultivated in marginal land and rain-fed area. And also, what concrete steps are taken by the Government to increase the yield per acreage?

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: To increase the yield per unit, we are providing subsidy for hybrid seeds. We are teaching the farmers as to how to make the best use of the land during the period when it is fallow, so that additional crop can be reaped from the same land. That is why, short-duration varieties have been evolved. And we also want to give incentives to farmers, so that they cultivate pulses and find it profitable even in good irrigated land.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Sir, the Chair and the Minister both seem to have agreed on one point that if there is no bread they can eat cake.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have not agreed. I do not like cake. Mr. Mody...

SHRI PILOO MODY: I prefer bread. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. B. RAJU: It is so surprising that when pulses are poor man's protein in India, this is the story for the last 34 years. It is not the fault of this Ministry alone. The question is that the Minister has agreed on many points which have been raised during the course of supplementaries that it is not profitable for the farmers to produce pulses. That is the basic question. That need not be repeated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is because the yield is poor.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: Not only the yield, but risk is also involved. Now, the market price is very high sometimes. Pulses are not available in the rest of the world. The Minister knows that actually we could spend

a lot of foreign exchange on that also as we are doing for edible oil. This is included in the 20-Point Programme, the new 20-Point Programme. We have got in India only programmes. What achievements are there...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you have something to ask or something to say...

SHRI V. B. RAJU: The basic question is, the Minister said it is only grown in rain-fed areas marginally. Now irrigation has been on a very large scale. The irrigated lands, as the Minister conceded, that the second crop in rice-grown areas, should be limited only for pulses. Is there any such plan or programme to induce the farmers that the second crop should go in for pulses? What are the incentives that the Minister is going to provide for the farmers? A general word is no good. This has to be taken up as a challenge. There are State farms. Why should not the State farms be used entirely for pulse-growing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants to know whether you have any revised policy. He wants an assurance on that.

SHRI V. B. RAJU: We have to take practical measures. Therefore, my submission is whether the Government is going to give topmost place for this programme and whether he can assure the House that there will be a break-through before the end of 1983-84 or whatever. The Government must take it seriously.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: I have already stated that production of pulses and oilseeds is receiving the utmost attention at the hands of the Government. The programme is also included in priority in our new 20-point programme. Dry land cultivation, development of agriculture under dry land cultivation conditions and increased production of pulses and oilseeds, etc. research is also being directed towards that end.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now I am afraid the honourable Member over there has got some judgment to pass on pulses...

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: And the honourable Member also mentioned about inducement to farmers. In my view the best inducement and incentive to farmers is profitability, and we are trying:

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ever since the phenicians discovered money, that is the only incentive.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: I have not come here to pass any judgment; those days are over...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would mean whether we should eat protein through pulses.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: The honourable Minister has referred to many alternatives to pulses which are being developed. I want to know whether sufficient steps are being taken to popularise these alternatives.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: That is what exactly we are doing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One you said was soyabean; but the other alternatives...

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: Soyabean and groundnut also can be used for purposes of various preparations, from soyabean and groundnut.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are not suggesting kababs and things of that type.

RAO BIRENDRA SINGH: As I have said, we are providing special incentives to the farmers for growing more and more pulses and oilseeds. We are giving subsidies on various accounts for plant protection, for producing breeder seed and various other things. And the honourable Member has talked about production of pulses on State farms. I would like to inform the House that the State farms are mainly used for production of good seed, certified seed, that we need

in pulses as well as for other agricultural crops, and we are also subsidising part of these State farms all over the country for production of other planting material like good varieties of fruit trees and other such things.

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी : श्रीमन्, यहां दालों की चर्चा करते समय इस बात का उल्लेख हुआ है कि उनके दाम बाजार में बहुत ज्यादा होते हैं। आपके स्टेटमेंट में इसका रिवर्स है। आपने बताया है कि पिछले 6 महीनों में इसका प्राइस इन्डेक्स 368 में घटकर 325 हो गया। मैंने इसका उल्लेख इसलिये किया है कि मार्केट रेट में, पलसेज में फ्लक्चुएशन बहुत है और इस सबका फायदा केवल स्टोरेज करने वालों को होता है। प्रोड्यूसर को नहीं होता। इसलिये केवल मार्केट फ्लक्चुएशन में ही दालों की क्वालिटी नहीं बढ़ रही है। प्रोड्यूसर को कोई इन्सेंटिव नहीं मिल रहा है इसलिये नहीं मिल रहा है क्यों कि जब फसल का मौसम आता है तो किसान बहुत कम दाम पर दालें बेचता है, इसलिये उसको कोई इन्सेंटिव नहीं है। जिसके कारण जैसे ही दूसरी चीज प्रोड्यूस करने का मौका उसको मिलता है वह पास आने कर जाता है और उस चीज का उत्पादन करता है। तो क्या सरकार जिस दाल की इतनी बड़ी उपयोगिता समझती है प्रोड्यूसर को इन्सेंटिव देने के लिये दालों के लिये भी सपोर्ट प्राइस लागू करने का विचार करेगी ?

राव बीरेन्द्र सिंह : जनाब, यह सही बात है कि दाल गरीब आदमी, आम आदमी की खुराक है लेकिन जहां तक मैं समझता हूं पिछले चन्द महीनों में अगर इन्डेक्स नीचे आया है तो इसका यह मतलब नहीं कि कीमतें गिर गई

हैं बहुत ज्यादा। दालें हमेशा महंगी विकती रही हैं (व्यवधान)

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी : लेकिन किसानों को इनका क्या फायदा मिला... (व्यवधान)

राव बीरेन्द्र सिंह : अनाज की निस्वत महंगी हो गयी है। किसान को यह फायदा नहीं मिलता इसमें से मिडिलमैन काफी फायदा उठा लेते हैं। लेकिन अगर बाजार में कीमत हर समय ज्यादा अच्छी होगी तो किसान को भी उसी के मुताबिक कीमत ज्यादा मिलेगी। यह जरूरी नहीं कि किसान को हमेशा ज्यादा कीमत मिलती रहे जो कीमत बाजार में हो। तो इसका फायदा तो किसान को मिलता है। दूसरा यह होता है कि फसल के दिनों में उसको अगर बेचना जरूरी हो, रखने की कोई गुंजाइश न हो तो उसको थोड़ी कम कीमत मिलेगी लेकिन अभी हमने सपोर्ट प्राइस मुकर्र महसूस नहीं की क्योंकि दालों की कीमतें हमेशा बाजार में अच्छी रहती हैं। जिस वक्त हम यह समझेंगे कि यह कीमत इतनी कम हो गई है, गिर गई है और किसान को इस से नुकसान हो रहा है, तो जरूर हम उनके सुझाव पर अमल करेंगे।

श्री सुन्दर सिंह भंडारी : फसल के मोके पर जो कीमतें रही हैं, क्या पिछले महीनों के आकड़े एकत्र करेंगे ?

राव बीरेन्द्र सिंह : अगर आपकी परमीशन हो... (व्यवधान)

श्री सच्चान्द : अब आगे बढ़ या नहीं, यह तो दाल में कुछ काला पड़ गया है।

राव बोरेन्द्र सिंह : मेरे पास यह सारा स्टेटमेंट है, हर महीने के आंकड़े हैं, अगर आप फरमायें तो मैं पढ़ दूँ।

श्री सभापति : नहीं नहीं पढ़िये नहीं। जैसे मैंने कहा है दाल में काला पड़ा है, अब तो दाल में काला पड़ रहा है, आगे बढ़ने ही नहीं दे रहे हैं।

Should we not pass on something else? I think, we go to the next question. Enough is enough.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: Sir, you called me also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But we have enough of these pulses.

SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA NAIDU: Sir, as agriculturists, we have to put some questions. You allowed the consumers and not the producers to put the questions. You allow the producers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are so far below the others that now I have to think of the other questions also. 20 persons have asked their questions.

They also wanted to ask. Now, Question No. 143.

Train Accidents

*143. SHRI RAM LAKHAN PRASAD GUPTA:

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:†

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the number of major and minor train accidents which took place and the loss of life and property suffered as a result thereof during the following periods:—

(i) from March 25, 1977 to July 20, 1979;

(ii) from July 21, 1979 to January 15, 1980?

(iii) from January 16, 1980 to December 31, 1980; and

(iv) from January 1, 1981 to January 15, 1982?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

Periods	No. of train accidents, both major and minor	No. of persons killed	Cost of damage to Rly. property
(in crores of Rs.)			
(1) from March 25, 1977 to July 20, 1979	2,105	618	10.6
(2) from July 21, 1979 to January 15, 1980	432	135	3.8
(3) from January 16, 1980 to December 31, 1980	946	211	5.9
(4) from January 1, 1981 to January 15, 1982	1,154	546	11.7

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Lal K. Advani.