

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 21st April, 2005/1 Vaisakha, 1927 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Introduction of MPLADS

*401. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:††
SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

- (a) since when the MPLADS has been in place;
- (b) the purpose for which the scheme was introduced;
- (c) whether any survey has been made to assess the efficacy of the scheme;
- (d) if so, the results thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES):
to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) has been in place since 23rd December, 1993.

(b) The purpose of the MPLAD Scheme is to enable Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature in their constituencies with emphasis on creation of durable assets based on locally felt needs.

(c) The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission conducted a study on the MPLADS implementation during 1994-95 to 1998-99 through sample survey in the structure schedules from 22 State Nodal Departments, 92 Lok Sabha MPs, 25 Rajya Sabha

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Manoj Bhattacharya.

MPs, 103 District Collectors, 590 development functionaries, 590 villagers/urban persons and 2892 local people. The report was finalized in November, 2001.

(d) and (e) Some of the important suggestions given in the Report are as follows: (i) Adequate arrangements need to be made for making all relevant information available to the Member of Parliament. (ii) The State Nodal Departments should be strengthened in terms of staff and other infrastructure. (iii) At the grass root level, the Panchayat Raj Institutions may be involved in execution as well as in monitoring to a larger extent. (iv) The Panchayat Raj Institutions may be asked to provide a list of works to be recommended to the MP annually and to help them to draw up priority list of works. (v) It may be appropriate to think in terms of coordination of works recommended under Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development (MLALAD) Scheme together with those recommended for the respective Lok Sabha Constituencies and utilize them in a more fruitful way without interfering with the freedom of individual MPs and MLAs to recommend work of their choice within their budgetary limits. (vi) The MP may consider allocation of fund only after the cost estimates is prepared and detailed work plan and coordination mechanism are made available to him. (vii) Since engaging contractors and payment of contingency charges cannot be avoided for pragmatic reasons, the Guidelines may be amended accordingly and precise procedures specified for this purpose. (viii) It is necessary to locate an agency to maintain the assets before the issue of sanction. (ix) In order to overcome the problem of rising unspent balance in the districts, the report suggested that the funding of MPLADS should be a lapsable. (x) Details of MPLADS work should be compulsorily displayed at the site.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 401.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTANCHARYA: Sir, through you, I must thank the hon. Minister for a very exhaustive reply to my query, even though, I do have some clarifications or some supplementaries to ask.

Sir, you know it very well that we, as Members of Parliament, have sanctioned funds for calamity relief after the Orissa cyclone that took place in the year 2000, for calamity relief in Gujarat after the earthquake in 2001; and, also for Tsunami relief, when you appealed to us, we responded immediately, and, we sanctioned eleven lakh of rupees.

Sir, personally, I don't know as to what is the progress of work in these places, and, how to gather the utilisation certificates from these States, or, the implementing agencies concerned. Sir, of late—and, hon. Minister would tell me whether it is a fact—in absence of the utilisation certificates, up to a particular limit of expenses, the money is not being sent to the nodal agencies. Due to that, administratively it is becoming difficult for us to sanction the amount, and, a huge backlog is piling up. I would like to know as to how the Ministry is contemplating to resolve this problem.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, as far as Tsunami and Gujarat calamities are concerned, the Gujarat Calamity Fund that was made through the MPLAD scheme has been properly utilised, and, the progress is available to be seen in Gujarat. As far as the present Tsunami tragedy is concerned, both the Houses of Parliament have got the Committees for this purpose. These Committee have exercised over the matter, and, we are awaiting the reply of these Committees so that the funds could be transferred to the States. Sir, our department on its own has prepared a scheme but we are waiting for the advice of the Committees.

As far as the utilisation certificates are concerned, it is our concern also that from time to time many of the Deputy Commissioners, the District administration, have not been able to send us the certificates. So, we have started an online scheme and we have prepared a software through which every District office will be connected to our department so that we will get the information from time to time, and, I have also taken measures to inform the Members of Parliament in every section as to the position of each Member in their respective constituency.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Sir, my question was as to how do we exercise our options, the administrative decisions that we take to sanction the amount. The amount is not being given to the nodal agencies, and, naturally the backlog is piling up. How do you resolve this problem?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, this is a matter of concern for all us. We are also concerned about this. Unless the amount granted is spent and we have the utilisation certificate, we are not able to release the subsequent amount. But as far as both the Houses of Parliament are concerned, new Members are concerned, without the utilisation certificates, for the new Members also, we have released the amount of one crore of rupees. We have been able to release the second instalment.

also in majority of the cases. Sir, my office is in touch with the District Commissioners on a day-to-day basis to get the utilisation certificates. We are also taking measures to see that the Chief Secretaries, or, the State Government's nodal agency take up this matter so that the utilisation certificates are given to us in time.

श्री सभापति: ठीक है। श्री शरद जोशी।

श्री मनोज भट्टाचार्य: नहीं, सर। I have my second supplementary.

श्री सभापति: आपका सेंकंड सप्लीमेंटरी हो गया।

श्री मनोज भट्टाचार्य: नहीं सर that was the clarification.

श्री सभापति: सेकंड नहीं, थर्ड सप्लीमेंटरी, I have allowed third supplementary.

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Thank you, very much, Sir. You are so kind towards me. Please, be kind, Sir. It will be advantageous for me. My another question is a little technical. I would like to seek a clarification, that is, when the scheme was introduced in December 1993, as you have reported, it was a part of the Central planning. In 1995, I understand, the funds for this started coming from the Central assistance to the States. Now, whether such diversion of funds, that is, from the Central planning to Central assistance, whether it goes against the federal character or federal nature of the Constitution of ours; and, whether, in view of that, you are going to change the pattern of spending or the nomenclature of spending.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, the matter has been raised in the Supreme Court also. Earlier, this particular scheme was under the Planning Commission. But, subsequently, it has been transferred to the Ministry of Programme Implementation and we are dealing with it. These questions have been raised in the Supreme Court. The basic question that has been raised in the Supreme Court is whether the scheme has to be invoked at all or not, because Parliament is supposed to legislate and not to deal with executive function. But, since the Parliament has approved the scheme, we are going through the scheme. We will wait further for the decision of the Supreme Court in this regard.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Sir, this year, out of the sum of Rs. 2 crores, a sum of Rs. 1 crore was released to begin with. And, even though the utilisation has exceeded that Rs. 1 crore, and you have got

the report, further amount has still not been released. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria under which the second release of the fund takes place.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, a Member is eligible to get Rs. 2 crores in one year and the first instalment of Rs. 1 crore, as I have already stated, we released without waiting for the utilisation certificate of the earlier Member's term or earlier Member. Now, we have to get certain certificates from the Deputy Commissioners. But, the Member has conveyed to me that his certificate is already with us. I will check up in the office and if the money is not released, not only of this hon. Member but of all the Members, those amounts will be released without any delay.

श्री आर० पी० गोयनका: सर, माननीय मंत्री जी से मेरा एक ही सवाल है कि 2 करोड़ की राशि बहुत बड़ी राशि है और हमें इस बारे में कोई शिकायत नहीं है, लेकिन MPLAD की स्कीम में 25 लाख रुपया एक स्कीम के लिए दिया जा सकता है। सर, पिछले 5 वर्षों में मैंने देखा है कि 25 लाख में क्या किया जा सकता है—एक प्राथमरी स्कूल खोला जा सकता है, एक डिस्पेंसरी खोली जा सकती है या कुछ रोड्स बनवाए जा सकते हैं। इसलिए मेरा मंत्री जी को सुझाव है कि अगर कोई और अच्छी स्कीम हो तो उसके लिए ज्यादा amount देने के बारे में भी सोचें। फिर उसको अगर किसी से examine करवाना हो तो करवा लें, उस संबंध में मेरी कोई शिकायत नहीं है। मेरा कहना सिर्फ यही है।

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, whenever there is a proposal where the amount exceeds Rs. 25 lakhs, it is referred to the Parliamentary Committee and if the Committee recommends, the Ministry also agrees. In most of the cases, we have agreed to this. But, the hon. Member has made a positive suggestion that the ceiling itself can be removed. This is under consideration of the Ministry.

श्री मुख्तार अब्बास नकवी: सभापति महोदय, अभी कुछ दिन पहले कुछ समाचार पत्रों में समाचार छपा था कि कुछ सांसदों ने अपनी सांसद निधि का पैसा खर्च नहीं किया और उसमें कई सांसदों की एक लंबी लिस्ट थी जिसमें मेरा भी नाम था, महोदय, जब यह समाचार छपा तो मैं अपनी सांसद निधि का सारा पैसा खर्च कर चुका था, लेकिन मेरी constituency के और आसपास के लोग आकर मुझे कहने लगे कि आप तो सांसद निधि का पैसा खर्च ही नहीं करते और क्षेत्र का विकास नहीं करते। इसलिए मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूँ कि इस तरह के समाचार कौन सी एजेंसी देती है? क्या यह मंत्री जी की knowledge में है कि ऐसी समाचार एजेंसी इस तरह के अधूरे समाचार के माध्यम से देश में गलतफहमी पैदा करती है कि सांसद अपनी सांसद निधि का उपयोग नहीं करते?

श्री ऑस्कर फर्नांडिस: सर, हमारी योजना है कि क्या स्कीम एक मेंबर recommend कर सकता है, कितना पैसा मंजूर कर चुका है और कितनी प्रोग्रेस हो चुकी है। We are putting it on the Internet. It will be available to all the citizens in the country. (Interruptions)

SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI: It is wrong information.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: If anybody has picked up a wrong information, we will go through the report and try to clarify it. Otherwise, it will be available not only to the Members of Parliament but also to all the citizens.. (Interruptions)

श्री मुख्तार अब्बास नकवी: सभापति जी, मेरा प्रश्न यह नहीं था। मेरा प्रश्न यह था कि किस एजेंसी ने यह wrong information पत्रों में छपवाई।

श्री सभापति: इसको आप देख लीजिए...(व्यवधान)... देख लीजिए...(व्यवधान)...

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, I will look into it.

श्री मुख्तार अब्बास नकवी: सर, क्या मंत्री महोदय को यह जानकारी है? यदि जानकारी है, तो वे कार्रवाई करेंगे या नहीं?...(व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: इसको आप देख लीजिए। श्री मोती लाल बोरा।

श्री मोती लाल बोरा: माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि एम्प्ली लैंड के अंतर्गत जो धनराशि हम लोग स्वीकृत करते हैं मेरे अपने छत्तीसगढ़ में जो धनराशि मैंने स्वीकृत की है, उसमें कम-से-कम डेढ़ सौ-पौने दो सौ काम पिछले दो वर्षों से अधूरे पड़े हैं। जितनी धनराशि मांगी, उतनी दे दी गई। उसके बाद भी काम अधूरे पड़े हैं और आधे-अधूरे कामों को कब पूरा किया जाए, क्योंकि जितनी धनराशि मांगी जाती है, जितने एस्टिमेट्स आते हैं, उतनी हम लोग बराबर देते हैं, सैंक्शन करते हैं। उसके बाद भी हमारे पास रिपोर्ट आती है, उसमें लिखा रहता है कि आपके 145 काम अधूरे पड़े हैं। तो इसकी जिम्मेदारी किसकी होगी? मेरा कहना है कि यह जिम्मेदारी वहां के जिलाधिकारियों की होनी चाहिए।

श्री ऑस्कर फर्नांडिस: सर, मैं मानता हूँ कि progress of implementation of the works is slow. डिप्टी कमिश्नर भी टाईम लेते हैं और उनकी अजेंसी एस्टिमेट प्रीपेयर करने के लिए, सैंक्शन करने के लिए टाईम लेती है। कभी वर्क कम्प्लीट होने के बाद भी हमें उसकी रिपोर्ट मिलने में ढिले होती है। इसलिए हमारे डिपार्टमेंट, ऑफिसर्स, खुद हम स्टेट लेवल पर जाकर, स्टेट लेवल की मीटिंग ऑर्गेनाइज करते हैं and we emphasise on the need of informing us about the completion of the work so that the money could be released to the members from time to time.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, as a former Member of Lok Sabha and a present Member of the Rajya Sabha, I can talk with a little authority about the MPLAD Scheme. Sir, to be honest with you, this is one of the most popular schemes and the importance of the MPs, if at all, very much felt, is through this scheme. This is the way I look at it. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the question of unspent balance does not arise. It is a very popular scheme. You would be very keen to know as to what my question is. What I am trying to ask is this. This MPLAD fund was increased from Rs. one crore to Rs. two crore long back. Even this amount of Rs. two crores was enhanced about four or five years back. There is tremendous amount of pressure from public that the amount is very less and it should be enhanced and they want to know whether any new move to enhance is there. The hon. Minister is very active and he is convening meetings of the MPs, and he has enough interaction with them. During his tenure, at the earliest possible opportunity, will there be any proposal to enhance this fund from Rs. two crore to Rs. three or four crore? This is what I want to ask specifically.

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी: सर, इसको खत्म कर देना चाहिए। बहुत परेशानी होती है।

श्री सभापति: आप कुछ समय सम्भालिए।

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, the hon. Member has made this suggestion. I had organised State-wise meetings. We had five rounds of meetings with different State MPs, and, in these meetings, Members made some suggestions. But the present problem is that there are quite a number of States where large number of amounts are unspent. Unless we streamline the whole thing and see that the amount is spent properly, we will not be able to take up this suggestion.

श्री सभापति: प्रो० राम देव भंडारी।

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी: सर, यह स्कीम तो बहुत अच्छी है और इसके माध्यम से सांसदों को विकास के काम करने में मदद मिलती है।

श्री सभापति: आप क्वेश्चन कीजिए।

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी: मगर परेशानी यह है सर, कि जब हम लोग क्षेत्र में जाते हैं या दिल्ली में रहते हैं तो सौ में से 95 फोन ऐसे आते हैं, जिनमें पैसों की मांग होती है। जितने भी वर्कर्स हैं, किसी भी पार्टी के, मैं अपनी पार्टी की बात नहीं कर रहा हूँ, किसी भी पार्टी के जो वर्कर्स हैं, वे स्कीम चाहते हैं। वे इम्प्लिमेंट भी अपने माध्यम से करना चाहते हैं। सर, मेरी तो राय है कि स्टेट्स को दूसरे

माध्यम से पैसा दिया जाए। इसको खत्म कर दिया जाए। यह मेरी व्यक्तिगत राय है, चेयरमैन साहब।

श्री सभापति: ठीक है। श्री मूल चन्द मीणा।

श्री मूल चन्द मीणा: सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदया से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि यह जो MPLAD स्कीम है, इस स्कीम के माध्यम से, जैसे राजस्थान के अंदर पीने के पानी का बहुत संकट है और इस संकट को दूर करने के लिए केन्द्र सरकार की स्वजल-धारा स्कीम चली है, जिसमें 10 प्रतिशत गांव के लोगों का योगदान रहता है और तभी जाकर स्कीम सेंक्सन होती है,...

श्री सभापति: आप तो क्वेश्चन कर लीजिए।

श्री मूल चन्द मीणा: सर, राजस्थान जैसे राज्य के अंदर कई सालों से अकाल पड़ता रहा है।

श्री सभापति: यह आप क्या अकाल को याद कर रहे हैं। आप तो क्वेश्चन पूछिए।

श्री मूल चन्द मीणा: सर, ऐसी स्थिति में गांव के लोग तो अपना 10 परसेंट हिस्सा दे नहीं सकते। इसलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि यह जो दस परसेंट राशि है, वह सहाराशि जमा कराने के लिए क्या आप इजाजत देंगे, जिससे स्वजल-धारा के अंतर्गत जो स्कीम सेंक्सन होनी हैं, वे सेंक्सन हो सकें?

श्री सभापति: यह स्कीम तो डिफरेंट है, वे सेंक्सन कैसे दे सकते हैं? नेक्स्ट क्वेश्चन।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

Conversion of LOC into International Boundary

*402. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the claim made by former US Assistant Secretary of State Sortbe Talbot on Indian willingness to convert LoC as international boundary with Pakistan; and

(b) if so, whether such a proposal was considered or considered or conveyed to the US by India at any stage?

The MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) A Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Government of India's principled and consistent position on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir is that the entire State of