MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the question is:

That the Bill further to amend the Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 6 were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula, and the Title were added to the Bill.

श्री रामविलास पासवानः महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूं :

कि बिल को पारित किया जाए।

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): Sir, I beg to move:

That the Bill further to amend the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

Sir, the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014, *inter alia* seeks to introduce reforms to strengthen the capital base and improve the overall capabilities of the fifty seven Regional Rural Banks. The Regional Rural Banks were established under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976 to create an alternative channel to the cooperative credit structure and to ensure sufficient institutional credit for the rural and agricultural sectors. RRBs are jointly owned by Government of India, the concerned State Government and sponsor banks and the issued capital of the RRBs is shared in proportion of 15 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. The RRBs are an integral part of our agricultural credit system and have over nineteen thousand branches, 1.6 lakh crores of gross loans, cover virtually every district and employ eighty thousand people. In view of the growing role

of the RRBs in extending banking services in rural areas, developments which have taken place in the recent past, including amalgamation of geographically contiguous RRBs, technology upgradation and recapitalisation support provided to RRBs from time to time, a need to amend the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976 has been felt. Structural consolidation of the Regional Rural Banks was initiated in 2005 by amalgamating RRBs sponsored by the same bank in a State with a view to having economies of scale, better customer services, better infrastructure, larger area of operation, enhanced credit exposure limits and diversified banking activities. Keeping in view the role of RRBs in financial inclusion in rural areas and to improve their functioning and technology upgradation, several steps have been initiated. The RRBs had rolled out core banking solution and had joined the national payment system. RRBs have been advised to take necessary action for e-governance and concrete branch expansion plans to cover under-banked and unbanked areas etc. In view of the modernisation and technology upgradation, a need for further consolidation of the RRBs was felt. Therefore, amalgamation of geographically contiguous RRBs was initiated with the concerned State Government and the sponsor banks. The amendments have been necessitated in view of the fact that the amalgamation of geographically contiguous RRBs, the technology upgradation and recapitalisation support provided to RRBs from time to time has led to a situation where the share capital deposits of RRBs have crossed 500 crores in case of some RRBs, which is many times over the limit of ₹ 5 crores for authorised capital provided under the said Act. proposed amendments also provide for raising capital by RRBs by sources other than the Central Government, the State Government and the Sponsor Bank, but, this is subject to conditions. In no event, the combined shareholding of the Central Government and the Sponsor Bank shall be less than 51 per cent and the State Government concerned will be consulted if its shareholding is reduced below 15 per cent.

In view of the proposed provisions for raising private capital by RRBs by sources other than the Central Government, the State Government and the Sponsor Bank, provisions have also been made for shareholders to elect Directors, a person not to be a Director on the Board of more than one RRB and appointment of an officer of the Central Government on the Board of RRB, if considered necessary.

I would, therefore, request the Members of this august House to support the Bill.

The question was proposed.

PROF. M.V. RAJEEV GOWDA (Karnataka): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I thank you for the opportunity to initiate the discussion on the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

[Prof. M.V. Rajeev Gowda]

Sir, as you know, the news from rural India has not been very encouraging recently. There have been unseasonal rains; there have been farmer suicides; there have been all kinds of stories of distress. But, within that rather bleak landscape, Regional Rural Banks are a bright spot.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN, (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA) in the Chair].

The junior Finance Minister has just mentioned the extraordinary reach and penetration of Regional Rural Banks and the kind of work that they are doing in terms of financial inclusion across rural India. When we think and talk about Regional Rural Banks, our minds and hearts go back to Shrimati Indira Gandhi, who set up Regional Rural Banks on Gandhi Jayanti day in 1975. Her plan was to ensure that rural India gets access to credit from sources other than the rural cooperatives and other banks that existed at that time. The structure, as Mr. Sinha has just pointed out, is 50 per cent ownership by the Government of India, 15 per cent ownership by the State Governments and 35 per cent ownership by the Sponsor Banks.

Sir, that farsighted move of Shrimati Indira Gandhi is being continued by numerous Governments that have followed ever since. Financial inclusion has been the central agenda with an aim to ensure that credit and access to a variety of financial services are available to our rural brothers and sisters. Today, rural India's financial inclusion landscape is a buzz. You have banking correspondents. You have new bank branches. You have micro finance institutions. Post office is expanding its operations. Along with the kind of work that we had done, as part of the UPA, to increase bank penetration to every village, which had a population of 2,000, today, the NDA Government has taken the Jan Dhan Yojana forward which is ensuring that every individual also gets access to bank accounts. There is the old initiative to establish rural roads, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, which we expanded under the UPA. It is allowing horticulture, animal husbandry and various kinds of market connected products to reach the market and rural prosperity has grown substantially over the last decade. It is one of the facts to which we have not paid enough attention in the last few years. But, that has been one of the sterling achievements of the UPA Government.

Sir, as Mr. Jayant Sinha just pointed out, Regional Rural Banks are a unique set of financial players in rural India. If I may say something, as a way of describing them, I would call them the true sons of the soil. They have an extraordinary connect with the ground. If you look at their performance in rural India, you will see that 31 per cent of

the deposit accounts of the Indian scheduled commercial banks belong to RRBs. Thirty-seven per cent offices and 37 per cent of all loan accounts are also those that accrue to the Regional Rural Banks. Sir, even more importantly, there are many areas of India where farming families are excluded from the financial sector, especially in the North-East, etc. In those areas, you will see that the Regional Rural Banks have a very significant presence – 34 per cent branches in the North-East, 30 per cent in the East and 32 per cent in the Central India. These are historically under-banked areas. Further, more than 40 per cent of the share of the Self-Help Group linkage is the thrust that the Regional Rural Banks have been able to accomplish.

So, why have many Regional Rural Banks done well and some others have not? In those cases where they have not done well, the Government, in the past, has ushered in a scheme of mergers and acquisitions which has ensured that the banking sector in this domain has got strengthened. Today, Regional Rural Banks are now down to 56 from 196 across 27 States. According to the Rangarajan Committee's report of 2008, these banks have a critical mass to be financially viable and successful, and to add to that base, Mr. Jaitley in his latest budget announced ₹15,000 crores of RRB refinancing funds. So, those will provide additional strength and support to the RRBs as they pursue their mission going forward.

Sir, while all this is a positive and rosy picture, there are many aspects where the RRBs require strengthening. There are areas where things have not worked that well.

The first point that I want to bring to the attention of the House, and, through you, to the Minister is the issue of Sponsor Banks. The idea of the Sponsor Bank is a very good idea. These were young and new initiatives. They needed the guidance from the established banking institutions, and the idea was that for five years they would help these Regional Rural Banks get up to speed, go up and do their job. But that umbilical chord has never been cut, and essentially the Sponsor Banks have remained in a position whereby they continue to have a very strong effect on the decision making and operations of the Regional Rural Banks. Sir, I think, the Sponsor Bank feature has outlived its utility. My impression is that the relationship between the Sponsor Bank and the Regional Rural Bank is not any more that of a sponsor, but that of a competitor. In fact, that of a stepmother, with no negative aspersions on step-mothers, but I am talking about this as a figure of speech.

Sir, when you think about what has happened to the Regional Rural Banks, Sponsor Banks have often used them as a source of funds which come out of rural India and then get transferred to various other activities and investment elsewhere. That is not the [Prof. M.V. Rajeev Gowda]

purpose for which these banks were established. Therefore, these kinds of actions of the Sponsor Banks need to be remedied. Many Sponsor Bank staff see posting in RRBs as a punishment posting. That doesn't augur well for the morale of those who work hard on the ground, and that has not certainly ensured more efficient and effective service. It is time that the Government brings about an amicable separation between RRBs and Sponsor Banks.

In this Bill there are provisions in terms of the allocation of shares which ensure that the 35 per cent of the Sponsor Banks currently hold can be brought down to as low as one per cent in order to meet the 51 per cent target of the States, the Centre and Sponsor Bank's holdings that would yield a huge 49 per cent share which could then be sold through IPOs, through auctions, through a variety of other measures of tapping financial market.

Sir, the junior Finance Minister knows about a concept called 'the impact investors'. There are numerous institutions around the world and in India who are very keen on investing not in the highly commercialised sector, but in sectors where there is significant impact on poverty, on under-banked areas. I would urge them to ensure that impact investors are given a chance to take over the share holdings of Sponsor Banks and bring in their expertise, their concern for the poor to enhance the capability of the Regional Rural Banks. Along with that, to make such a change happen, we may need to change the umbrella governance structure for this sector. Just like we have NABARD in the case of the rural credit, we may need a similar umbrella structure. That is also entirely possible under the details of how this Bill will be actually implemented.

Sir, when we think about what a counter argument maybe, the RBI is allowing numerous institutions to enter, you have Payments Banks, you have Small Banks and you have a whole variety of new kinds of players operating in rural India. But Regional Rural Banks are strong and unique players, they have tremendous geographic focus, they have tremendous depth in terms of their ability to penetrate rural India, and we should not lose that capacity which they have built over the years. Sir, the point I would like to highlight is the need for autonomy and professionalisation. In the Budget Speech, Mr. Jaitley already has pointed out that Public Sector Banks will get more autonomy in the ways in which they get to choose their chairmen, in a variety of other ways as well. We need similar autonomy for Regional Rural Banks also. We need to ensure that the Government does not tie the hands of these institutions through a variety of interest rate caps, etc. And even the RBI can be persuaded to not apply the rates of interest requirements, the statutory lending requirements, SLR rates and other things so that this particular set of

organizations, the RRBs, which are going out and performing a stellar and yeoman's service to the country can then actually lend at lower rates of interest.

Sir, the third is about management. Again, I have already mentioned that the top management comes from sponsor-banks, and they have not been doing justice to these organizations. We need to turn that around. We need to ensure that RRBs become a choice-posting, especially for those who want to prove their capability as they move up their career ladders. Let possibilities be created for people to come here on deputation and create autonomous boards here as well with professionals, with expertise, strengthen the governance and accountability of various players in the Regional Rural Bank Boards. If you make these reforms, and if you put them in place first before reaching out to investors, you will reap a benefit, reap a harvest, which will make every farmer, every banker proud.

Sir, finally, I would like to lay out a set of directions for Regional Rural Banks going forward. We can think of them as not small banks, payment banks or something else, but as policy banks. We have always had this thrust of a policy aimed at the priority sector -- agriculture, rural India. But if you see how the priority sector is actually working out, you will see that there is a lot of fudging, there is a lot of mislabelling. This is the reality on the ground. When you have entities that have that kind of connect and reach, let us use them as vehicles for priority sector lending, for private sector financing. So, let these RRBs come up with products of their own and price them accordingly. That is the kind of leeway the Government needs to give. Already, in the context of micro-finance, we have seen that people are willing to pay much more for a reliable source of credit in a timely manner. So, let these RRBs go out there and penetrate the communities, and let us use them also as vehicles for the delivery of a variety of financial services that are now beginning to become a reality in rural India.

Today, with Aadhar, you can send subsidies into people's bank accounts. Let us use RRBs as a vehicle for that. Let us use the RRBs as vehicles for pension and insurance schemes that Mr. Jaitley promised us in his Budget which take the concept of financial inclusion much more further than we have already done. RRBs also have the capacity to do self-help group organization, to do joint liability group organization; those are unique skills that would enable them to ensure that loans are also paid back in a much more community-supported manner and that would really make a difference.

Sir, another aspect, when we are thinking about selling the stake, is to think about how we can involve village Panchayats. Every village where a Regional Rural Bank has an office could also somehow be made a stakeholder in that bank. Not only will that

[Prof. M.V. Rajeev Gowda]

give the village a stake in the success of the bank and a chance to partake of its dividends and other profits, it would also ensure that this ability to include investors from a variety of sources goes down to the heart of rural India. The mechanics of this will need to be explored, but it is something that I would urge the Government to pay attention to.

Sir, there is a phrase 'diamonds in the rough'. Regional Rural Banks are diamonds in the rough. And if India is known for anything, if the State of Gujarat is known for anything, it is for our diamond cutting and polishing industry. I urge the Government to consider Regional Rural banks as diamonds in the rough, apply their advanced capabilities of polishing and cutting and ensure that these financial institutions shine and make a huge difference in financial inclusion so that it benefits every one of our rural brothers and sisters. Thank you.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया)ः डा. अशोक एस. गांगुली। इन्हें कहीं बाहर जाना है, इसलिए इनका नाम पहले पुकारा है।

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY (Nominated): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I am very grateful to you. I don't wish to repeat the points which have already been made by my hon. friend. I have a few suggestions for the hon. Finance Minister. I think the Regional Rural Banks are an extremely important instrument in India, if we can fully exploit them. By the way, I am supporting the Amendment. Therefore, I say all this in support, but I am providing a few suggestions. The point of fact is that a large section, it is estimated that almost 300 million people, both in rural India and in urban India do not have access to banking facilities. On the one side we have Regional Rural Banks, but the urban poor are getting increasingly excluded. My request is that the sponsored banks have a special responsibility in order to enable not only the Regional Rural Banks but also to create certain mechanism in urban India, which is necessary, in order to make banking accessible because now money lending is no longer attractive and the people are not using it; they are storing cash. In rural India, the moneylenders are not even interested in those people who are below the poverty line. I think we need mechanisms to provide for them. I am using this discussion to pass on a request to the hon. Finance Minister through you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, to increase or spread the ambit of making this a super priority sector for lending. There are priority sectors, but I think we need a super priority sector, and this is possible now. The RBI must follow a quarterly pattern of how the super priority sector is working, provided you feel this is something that is worth considering because we now have instruments to know your customers. The Know Your Customer (KYC) is no longer limited to having a Pan Card or something like that. You have got the AADHAAR. You have got this fantastic Jan Dhan Yojana, which we must use to drive this sector. The direct benefit scheme is now a reality. Can we make it more accessible? Finally, I would request that this is going to be the vehicle eventually to make, what the hon. Finance Minister has been pleading for, the productivity of one of the biggest schemes for poverty alleviation in this country, which is the MGNAREGA payments. Therefore, my request is that kindly use the instrument of the Regional Rural Banks. Very honestly, it has left a lot of people out of its ambit. The Cooperative Banks also have failed in this area, with due respect. Therefore, creation of a super priority sector and utilizing it for people below the poverty line is going to be a major initiative and as a supplement to the Regional Rural Banks system which you are upgrading. This will, of course, require the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India to play a far larger role. Therefore, in supporting the amendments to the Regional Rural Banks Act, I am requesting that please use this as a vehicle and treat it as one of the highest national priorities to provide liquidity for the poor. That is the only vehicle. It is not give away; it is not loan mafi; it will make the banking sector available as a driver for the elimination of poverty. Sir, I have not taken more time than what I have requested for. I wanted to make this request specifically to the Finance Minister and his colleague to be taken seriously and to bring in a specific Act to use the banking sector to drive poverty away rather than give handouts. Thank you.

श्री अजय संचेती (महाराष्ट्र): रेस्पेक्टेड सर, मैं आपका आभारी हूँ कि इस महत्वपूर्ण बिल 'The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014' पर मुझे बोलने का मौका मिला। सर, यह अमेंडमेंट बिल बेसिकली जिन मुद्दों के लिए लाया गया है, वह ब्रॉडली बात करते हैं क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों की ऑथोराइज्ड कैपिटल बढ़ाने के बारे में, स्पॉन्सर बैंक के बारे में, इश्यूड कैपिटल की सीमा तय करने के बारे में, बैंकों की कैपिटल रेज करने के बारे में, अप्वाइंटमेंट, सेलेक्शन, टेन्यर ऑफ डायरेक्टर के बारे में, एक टेक्निकल इश्यू - क्लोजिंग इयर की डेट चेंज करने के बारे में। ब्रॉडली इन्हीं विषयों के ऊपर यह अमेंडमेंट बिल लाया गया है।

सर, हमको थोड़ा-सा पीछे देखना पड़ेगा कि मूलतः इन बैंकों की स्थापना क्यों की गई थी, इस बात की ओर मैं आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। देश की रूरल पॉपुलेशन, जो एग्रीकल्चर, अलाइड एग्रो बिजनेस, अदर स्मॉल बिजनेसेज़ इन विलेजेज़ आदि को फाइनैंशियल सपोर्ट प्रोवाइड करना ताकि डेवलपमेंट सिर्फ शहरों का न हो, साथ में गांवों का भी उतना ही तेजी से विकास हो, यह इन्क्ल्सिव डेवलपमेंट की ओर उठाया गया एक सशक्त कदम है।

सर, इस देश में अनेक सरकारें आई, गईं, परिवर्तन होता रहा, लेकिन हर सरकार ने ग्रामीण क्षेत्र की जनता के विकास के लिए प्रयास किया है। वह बात अलग है कि प्रयासों का फल कभी कम मिला, कभी ज्यादा मिला, लेकिन इस सरकार की, हमारे प्रधान मंत्री जी के नेतृत्व में इस विकास की गंगा को और ज्यादा तेजी से ज्यादा से ज्यादा ग्रामीण इलाकों में ले जाने की मंशा है। अगर आप [श्री अजय संचेती]

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existing regional rural banks का performance देखें, तो सर, तकरीबन 25 से ज्यादा राज्यों में तकरीबन 55 से ज्यादा जगहों पर इन बैंकों का प्रजेंस है और मोर देन 90 परसेंट बैंक्स बढ़िया प्रॉफिट में हैं।

Sir, you will appreciate that farmers, small, rural businessmen engaged in small businesses and service providers, who have established businesses in rural areas, are far more fair in their practices and even in repayment of loans in comparison with the other sectors.

सर, इस मोदी सरकार का स्पष्ट मानना है कि गांव, गरीब, किसान की अगर तरक्की नहीं हुई, तो देश की तरक्की नहीं हो सकती। इस दिशा में आरआरबीज़ की functioning कैसे बेहतर हो, ज्यादा से ज्यादा राज्यों में फैले, शाखाओं का विस्तार हो, ज्यादा फंड्स की availability हो और importantly inclusive development with transparency हो, इसीलिए इस एक्ट में इन अमेंडमेंट्स को लाया गया है।

सर, समय तेजी से बदल रहा है, सरकार के कब्जे से धीरे-धीरे चीजों को निकाल कर समाज के दूसरे हिस्सों का सहभाग लेकर हमें आगे बढ़ना है। हां, यह निश्चित है कि यह करते समय सिस्टम्स, रेग्युलेशन इतने सख्त होने चाहिए कि उसका दुरुपयोग न हो सके और सरकार को इसके लिए बाध्य होना पड़ेगा।

सर, ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों का जितना विकास होगा, उतना ही शहरों की ओर आने वाली भीड़ कम होगी। गांव में विकास होगा, तो हमारे देहात में रहने वाले लोगों की जो financial position है, वह बढ़ेगी। सर, ये सब करने के लिए पैसा चाहिए, सिस्टम चाहिए, मैनेजमेंट चाहिए, ट्रांसपैरेंसी चाहिए और ये सब करने के लिए इस बिल में जितने अमेंडमेंट्स लाए गए हैं, वे जब एक्ट में आ जाएंगे, तो मुझे दढ़ विश्वास है कि आने वाले समय में इन रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स के द्वारा जो गांव, गरीब और किसान का डेवलपमेंट है, वह बहुत तेजी से आगे बढ़ेगा और हम इन सभी गोल्स को अचीव कर सकेंगे।

सर, सम्माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी, वित्त मंत्री जी ने देश के ग्रामीण क्षेत्र को विकसित करने की दिष्टे से यह एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम उठाया है। जन-धन योजना, मुद्रा बैंक, इन सभी की जो शुरुआत है, यह इसी दिशा में उठाया गया एक ऐतिहासिक कदम है।

सर, "जन-धन योजना" के बारे में तकरीबन सभी लोग यह मानते हैं कि ग्रामीण विकास की दृष्टि से यह एक ऐसा ऐतिहासिक कदम है, जो आने वाले भविष्य की दशा और दिशा तय करेगा। जब ये रीज़नल रूरल बैंक्स इससे जुड़ जाती हैं तो ग्रामीण क्षेत्र का भविष्य निश्चित रूप से उज्ज्वल दिखाई देता है। आप कुछ भी कहिए, लेकिन बहुत सालों से यह प्रयास चल रहा था। But it is better late than never और जैसा कि कहा गया है, seeing is believing. सर, मैं इस ऑगस्ट हाउस के सभी मेम्बर्स से आग्रह करूँगा कि वे यूनैनिमसली इस बिल को सपोर्ट करें और सरकार के इस कदम को सराहें। धन्यवाद।

श्री विशम्भर प्रसाद निषाद (उत्तर प्रदेश)ः माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे समाजवादी पार्टी के लीडर, माननीय प्रोफेसर साहब और आदरणीय नरेश अग्रवाल जी ने मुझे प्रादेशिक ग्रामीण बैंक अधिनियम, 1976 का और संशोधन करने वाले विधेयक, प्रादेशिक ग्रामीण बैंक (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2014 पर बोलने का मौका दिया है। मैं इसमें अपने कुछ तथ्य शामिल करना चाहता हूँ और माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी का ध्यान आकृष्ट कराना चाहता हूँ।

महोदय, इन बैंकों की स्थापना कुछ विशेष उद्देश्यों की पूर्ति के लिए 26 सितम्बर, 1975 को हुई। इनका मुख्य उद्देश्य देश के सुदूर क्षेत्रों में जनता को ग्रामीण बैंकिंग की सुविधा उपलब्ध कराना था। मुख्य रूप से गरीबी रेखा से नीचे जीवन-यापन करने वाले मजदूरों, शिल्पकारों, दस्तकारों, लघु एवं सीमांत कृषकों तथा लघु उद्यमियों को सस्ती एवं रियायती दरों पर ऋण की सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने के लिए ये बैंक गाँवों में खोले गए थे, तािक वे साहूकारों के चंगुल से मुक्त हो सकें। महोदय, हमने देखा है कि जब किसी को अपनी लड़की की शादी करनी होती थी, तो वह साहूकार से ऋण लेता था। मुझे याद है, हमारे जनपद बाँदा में एक साहूकार, शुक्ला जी थे। अगर कोई व्यक्ति उनसे ऋण माँगने के लिए जाता था और कहता था कि शुक्ला जी, हमको ऋण चािहए, मुझे अपनी बच्ची की शादी करनी है, इसलिए मुझे दो हजार रुपये, पाँच हजार रुपये चािहए। वह केवल उनसे बात करके चला गया और उनसे ऋण नहीं लिया, लेकिन जब चार महीने बाद उससे शुक्ला जी मिलते थे तो वे उस से कहते थे कि क्यों माई, अपना ब्याज मुझे देकर क्यों नहीं गए? जब वह कहता था कि पड़ित जी, मैंने तो आपसे पैसे लिए ही नहीं, तब वे कहते थे कि तुम्हारा तीन हजार रुपया खूँटी में बँधा रखा है। तुम्हें तो उसका ब्याज देना पड़ेगा, चाहे तुम अपना पैसा उठाओ या न उठाओ। इस तरह से किसानों को चंगुल में फँसाने का काम किया जाता था। इसलिए जब तक प्रत्येक गाँव में बैंक स्थापित नहीं होंगे, तब तक गाँव के किसान और मजदूर उसका लाभ नहीं ले पाएँग।

मान्यवर, हम बताना चाहते हैं कि ग्रामीण बैंकों की इस समय लगभग 15 हजार शाखाएँ हैं। यह संख्या अब भी कम है। जिस तरह से देखने में आया है, माननीय मंत्री जी यह जो बिल लाए हैं, इससे साफ जाहिर होता है कि धीरे-धीरे ये इनको प्राइवेटाइज़ करना चाहते हैं। इस बिल में भारत सरकार के 50 प्रतिशत शेयर में से 26 प्रतिशत शेयर निजी उद्योगपितयों, गैर-बैंकिंग वित्तीय कंपिनयों आदि को बेचने का प्रस्ताव है। यदि राज्य सरकारें चाहें तो वे भी अपने 15 प्रतिशत शेयर इन लोगों को बेच सकती हैं तथा जिस अनुपात में यह शेयर निजी उद्योगपितयों के हाथ में हो, उसी अनुपात में बैंक के निदेशक मंडल में उनके प्रतिनिधि निदेशक के रूप में बनाए जा सकते हैं।

महोदय, जैसा इसमें पता चल रहा है और जो भी उद्योगपित बैंक में या किसी कारोबार में शामिल होता है, वह हमेशा लाभ कमाने के लिए शामिल होता है। उसका उद्देश्य जनता के प्रति अपने सामाजिक दायित्वों का निर्वहन करना नहीं होता है। जब इन बैंकों का निजीकरण हो जाएगा, तो एक संकट पैदा हो जाएगा। बड़े शहरों में उनको लाभ होगा। जिन गाँवों में दो हजार, तीन हजार या पाँच हजार की आबादी रहती है, जहाँ असली भारत रहता है, वहाँ के लिए निदेशक मंडल, जो कि शेयरहोल्डर्स हैं, इस बात की संस्तुति नहीं करेंगे कि वहाँ शाखा खोली जाए, बल्कि वे तो बड़े शहरों में, करबों में और ब्लॉक स्तर पर शाखा खोलने की संस्तुति करेंगे। आज हम देख रहे हैं कि राज्य सरकार और केन्द्र सरकार की तमाम योजनाएं चल रही हैं, जैसे कि फूड सेक्यूरिटी बिल है, उस में सारा पैसा

[श्री विशम्भर प्रसाद निषाद]

बैंक के श्रू जाएगा। महोदय, उत्तर प्रदेश में अखिलेश यादव जी ने लोहिया आवास योजना चालू की है जिसके तहत 3 लाख रुपए का मकान दिया जाएगा। महोदय, हिंदुस्तान में किसी भी राज्य सरकार ने ऐसा काम नहीं किया है। इसी तरह से एक समाजवादी पेंशन योजना प्रदेश में चालू की है, जिसके तहत 500 रुपए प्रति माह पेंशन देने का प्रावधान है। महोदय, हमारे देश में गरीब ज्यादा हैं, लेकिन बीपीएल कार्ड्स बहुत कम हैं। उनका आज तक सर्वे नहीं हुआ है, लेकिन उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार ने ऐसे गरीबों को चिह्नित कर के उन्हें समाजवादी पेंशन देने का काम किया है। इसके तहत 500 रुपए प्रति माह और हर साल 50 रुपए बोनस के रूप में दिए जाएंगे।

महोदय, माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने जन-धन योजना चालू की है। इस योजना के भी बहुत से खाते खोले गए हैं। जन-धन योजना, छात्रवृत्ति, मनरेगा — ऐसी तमाम योजनाएं हैं। अब बैंक्स में इतनी लंबी लाइन रहती है कि दो-तीन कर्मचारी उन खाताधारकों को कंट्रोल नहीं कर पाते हैं और लोगों को बहुत परेशानी होती है। इसलिए प्रत्येक 4-5 हजार की आबादी के गांव में बैंक की शाखा खोलने की आवश्यकता है।

महोदय, मैं समझता हूं और मैंने उत्तर प्रदेश में देखा है कि बैंकिंग व्यवस्था में कोऑपरेटिव बैंक्स और कोऑपरेटिव सोसाइटीज अच्छा काम कर रही हैं। अब आवश्यकता इस बात की है कि जैसे अनाज, फल, दूध, सब्जी का उत्पादन करने वाले किसान हैं, जैसे कि विदेशों में हैं, उनको भारत सरकार की तरफ से बिना ब्याज का ऋण मिलना चाहिए। आप उन्हें जब तक बिना ब्याज के ऋण नहीं देंगे, तब तक इस परेशानी से वे उबर नहीं सकते। आज देश में और पूरे उत्तर भारत में दैवीय आपदा आ गयी और किसान तबाह हो गया है। इस संबंध में उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने सब से पहला कदम उठाया और हम प्रदेश में 1100 करोड़ से अधिक धनराशि बांट चुके हैं। महोदय, मैं बांदा जिले के तिंदवाड़ा गांव में गया हूं, वहां एक करोड़ रुपया बंटा है। इस में सीधे चैक के माध्यम से लोगों को पैसा दिया जा रहा है, लेकिन जब पैसा लेकर किसान बैंक जाता है, तो वहां बड़ी लंबी लाइन होती है और उसे बड़ी परेशानी होती है। आज दिक्कत यह है कि 4-5 दिनों तक उसका चैक ही क्लिअर नहीं हो पा रहा है। ये तमाम परेशानियां हैं।

महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी के ध्यान में एक बात और लाना चाहूंगा। किसानों के प्रति बैंक के कर्मचारियों का व्यवहार अच्छा होना चाहिए, क्योंकि मालिक जमाकर्ता होता है। उसको अच्छी सुविधा देनी चाहिए, लेकिन चाहे नेशनलाइज्ड बैंक्स हों या ये जो बैंक्स हैं, उनमें इतनी अच्छी सुविधा नहीं है। इसलिए इसमें कुछ गाइडलाइंस दी जानी चाहिए। हमें देखने को मिल रहा है कि बैंक के एम्प्लाइज़, कर्मचारी/अधिकारी सारे खाताधारकों का एकाउंट्स देखते रहते हैं। वे उनको कॉल करते हैं, वे आ गए, तो वे उनसे कहते हैं कि इसे इस शेयर में लगाओ, इस इक्विटी फंड में लगाओ, इस चिंटफड कंपनी में लगाओ, क्योंकि वे कम्पनीज़ उनको ज्यादा कमीशन देती हैं। सरकारी बैंक्स से यह धंधा भी बंद होना चाहिए। उनका दायित्व अपने बैंक के प्रति होना चाहिए कि लोग बैंक में ज्यादा धनराशि जमा करें, न कि वे बैंक में बैठ कर दूसरी कम्पनीज़ के शेयर बाजार का काम करें। (समय की घंटी)

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया) : आपका समय समाप्त हो गया।

श्री विशम्भर प्रसाद निषाद : इस तरह की तमाम अव्यवस्थाएँ पैदा होती हैं। महोदय, मैं आपसे निवेदन करूँगा कि अगर गाँव-गाँव में बैंक खुलेंगे, लॉकर सिस्टम होंगे, तो जो किसान है, गरीब है, वह अपनी पूँजी गाँव में रख सकेगा। अभी शाखाएँ बहुत कम हैं। माननीय वित्त मंत्री जी यहाँ हैं। इनके मंत्रिमंडल में शहर के लोग ज्यादा हैं। मैं इनसे निवेदन करूँगा कि ये गाँव के ऊपर भी दया करें। महोदय, सरकार चूंकि बड़ी तेजी के साथ काम कर रही है, लेकिन इसका ध्यान उद्योगपितयों की तरफ ज्यादा है। इसके कारण पूरे देश में एक मैसेज जा रहा है कि यह किसान एवं ग्रामीण विरोधी सरकार है। चुनाव के समय शुरू में इन्होंने अपने घोषणापत्र के माध्यम से लोगों से जो वादा किया था, उसे यह सरकार पूरा नहीं कर पा रही है। इनका ध्यान कानून बनाने पर ज्यादा है, जिससे उद्योगपितयों को ज्यादा फायदा हो रहा है। रिलायंस के पेट्रोल पम्प बन्द थे, फटाफट खुल गए। चुनावों में हजारों करोड़ रुपए खर्च हुए। वे कहां से आए? आज आलोचना होती है और आज यहां सुबह चर्चा हो रही थी कि कांग्रेस ने जो घोटाले किए उन पर चर्चा होनी चाहिए। मैं कहता हूं कि चर्चा उन पर भी हो, लेकिन इन्होंने चुनावों के समय जो हजारों करोड़ रुपए खर्च किए हैं, इस पर भी चर्चा होनी चाहिए और पूरे देश को पता लगना चाहिए कि इतना पैसा कहां से आता है। ये दिसयों हजार करोड़ रुपए चुनाव में खर्च करते हैं, वे कहां से आए? ...(व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया)ः श्री विश्वम्भर प्रसाद जी, आपने सारी बातें कह दी हैं। अब आप अपना भाषण समाप्त कीजिए। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री विशम्भर प्रसाद निषादः महोदय, बैंकों की सुविधा ग्रामीण स्तर भी होनी चाहिए। मेरा यही सुझाव है, धन्यवाद।

श्री हरिवंश (बिहार): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स अमेंडमेंट बिल, 2014 पर आपने मुझे बोलने का मौका दिया, धन्यवाद। एक अत्यंत पुराना, overdue संशोधन बिल, आवश्यक संशोधन बिल लाने के लिए मैं वित्त मंत्री का स्वागत करता हूं। यह आर्थिक आकांक्षाओं (economic aspirations) का दौर है। जिन माध्यमों (instruments) से, जिन संस्थानों (institutions) से यह आकांक्षा (aspiration) पूरी हो सकती है, कायाकल्प हो सकता है, उनमें बदलाव, समय और परिस्थितियों के अनुसार होना ही चाहिए। इस विषय में, इस क्षेत्र में अंतिम बदलाव वर्ष 2005 में हुए थे। इसलिए यह ओवरड्यू संशोधन बिल है। इस बिल में मुख्य रूप से छह-सात चीजें मुझे दिखाई दीं, जिनका में उल्लेख करना चाहुंगा। इसके माध्यम से इन बेंकों में अधिकृत पूंजी आधार (authorized capital base) बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव है। इससे गांवों में पूंजी का प्रवाह (rural credit) बढ़ेगा। यह समय के अनुकूल सही कदम है। शेयरहोल्डर्स द्वारा निदेशक का चुनाव और accounting year 31st March बनाने का प्रस्ताव, ये सारी चीजें सही हैं। स्पांसरर बैंक (Sponsor Bank) पांच वर्षों से अधिक समय तक प्रबंधकीय और वित्तीय मदद दे, यह भी सही है। RRBs capital raise करें, पर केंद्र सरकार, राज्य सरकारें, स्पांसर बैंकों का majority share रहे, controlling share रहे, यह भी सही बात है, लेकिन इसे लेकर आशंका है, जो मैं आपके माध्यम से सदन और वित्त मंत्री जी के सामने रखना चाहूंगा। इसे लेकर आशंका है कि क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों में निजी पूंजी का प्रवेश (private capital infusion, Regional Rural Banks) होने जा रहा है। ये रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स किस मकसद से बने थे? माम्ली, छोटे और सीमांत किसानों, कृषि मजदूरों, दस्तकारों और मामूली उद्यमियों को ऋण देने के लिए बने थे। इसलिए

[श्री हरिवंश]

जहां पर प्राइवेट कैपीटल इन्पयूजन होगा या जो प्राइवेटाइजेशन की राह पर संस्था बढ़ेगी, क्या उससे यह मकसद पूरा हो पाएगा? आम तौर से पूंजी के बारे में धारणा है कि पूंजी अपना रिटर्न चाहती है, अधिकाधिक मुनाफा (profit maximization) चाहती है। जहां का प्रबन्धन मैक्सिमम प्रॉफिट चाहेगा, वहां क्या सीमांत लोगों को ऋण मिल सकेगा? अगर सीमांत लोगों को ऋण मिलेगा, तो उसमें बहुत जाहिर सी चीजें हैं कि वह डूबेगा भी। आज हम अखबारों में खबर पढ़ते हैं कि देश के बड़े कॉमर्शियल बैंक्स के बड़े-बड़े घरानों के बड़े bad debts हो रहे हैं। जब निजी पूंजी क्षेत्रीय बैंकों के मैनेजमेंट पर हावी होगी, तो क्या वह इसकी इजाजत देगी, इस सवाल को सरकार को स्पष्ट करना चाहिए?

महोदय, दूसरी बात यह सही है कि आज क्रेडिट सिस्टम को बहुत मजबूत करने की सबसे अधिक जरूरत है, बल्कि किसानों की बढ़ती आत्महत्या और युवा बेरोजगारों की बढ़ती संख्या के हालात क्या हैं? मैं कोट करना चाहूंगा 13 अगस्त, 2013 को तत्कालीन डिप्टी गवर्नर श्री के.सी. चक्रवर्ती द्वारा दिया गया एक बयान, जो उन्होंने Indian Banks Association, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and FICCI के संयुक्त अधिवेशन में दिया था कि "Rural branches have declined to 37 per cent of total branches, from 54 per cent in 1994. Rural deposits constitute just 9.1 per cent of bank deposits down from 15.1 per cent." अगर सरकार गांवों की इस स्थिति को ठीक करने की कोशिश इसके मैनेजमेंट में प्राइवेट कैपीटल लगाकर करना चाहती है, तो उसे सावधान रहना पड़ेगा।

महोदय, हमारा दूसरा मकसद है कि रोजगार बढ़े। यह इस सरकार की भी चिंता है। हाल में एक खबर आई है, जिसे मैं कोट करना चाहूंगा। यह इकनॉमिक टाइम्स की 20 मार्च की खबर है कि "The Government has directed regional rural banks to become slim by cutting jobs and outsourcing non-core functions such as IT maintenance, cash remittance and house-keeping." एक इंस्टीट्यूशन को जब आप प्रॉफेशनल बनाएंगे, उससे प्रॉफिट चाहेंगे और वह अपने बल पर चले, तो ये सारी चीजें करें, यह मैं समझता हूं, लेकिन Regional Rural Banks का मकसद अलग है। इस खबर में दूसरी सूचना है, उसके अनुसार भविष्य में क्षेत्रीय बैंकों में लोगों के चयन में, लोगों को रोजगार देने में 10 से 20 परसेंट की कमी होगी। यह भी सरकार को स्पष्ट करना चाहिए कि ग्रामीण इलाके में रोजगार बढ़ाने की जो स्थित होनी चाहिए, उस पर इसका क्या असर पड़ेगा।

महोदय, यह सही है कि आरआरबीज़ के अंदरूनी हालात खराब थे। सरकार ने दस एक्सपर्ट कमेटियां बनाई, साथ ही इनके रिवाइवल के सुझाव देने के लिए कहा, पर 1981 से 2005 के बीच कोई सार्थक हस्तक्षेप नहीं हुआ। 2004 तक आधे से अधिक घाटे वाले आरआरबी चार राज्यों में थे — मध्य प्रदेश, ओडिशा, महाराष्ट्र और बिहार में। 31 मार्च, 2014 तक मर्जर के बाद 56 आरआरबी रह गए हैं, इसलिए हालात सुधारने के लिए अमेंडमेंट्स ज़रूरी थे, पर इन बदलावों से रूरल क्रेडिट के हालात बेहतर हों, यह सुनिश्चित करना जरूरी है। मैं फिर क्वोट करना चाहूंगा, रिज़र्व बैंक के तत्कालीन डिप्टी गवर्नर को, कि आज रूरल क्रेडिट की स्थिति क्या है, यह अगस्त 2013 की उनकी बात मैं उद्धृत कर रहा हूं - "Rural credit has increased just 1.4 per cent between 1994-2013." तो 1994 से 2013 के बीच 1.4 परसेंट रूरल क्रेडिट बढ़ा। जब आप गांवों को पैसे नहीं देंगे, मदद नहीं करेंगे, तो वे

साहूकारों के पास जाएंगे, वे आत्महत्या करेंगे, इसलिए आपको यह तय करना पड़ेगा कि आप जो संशोधन करने जा रहे हैं, इससे क्या ये हालात दूर होंगे?

महोदय, मैं इस सरकार से इन आशंकाओं को दूर करने की गुजारिश करूंगा। साथ ही मैं दो-तीन बातें और कह कर इसका समर्थन करता हूं कि समय के साथ लोन डिस्बर्समेंट (ऋणों का भुगतान) हो, खाता खोलने का कल्चर बदले, क्रेडिट फैसिलिटी देने का काम एक अलग कल्चर से हो, यानी आरआरबीज़ का वर्क कल्चर बिल्कुल अलग हो। मेरा यह भी सुझाव है कि आरआरबीज़ में काम करने वाले लोगों के लिए बेहतर ट्रेनिंग इंस्टीट्यूशन्स हों, जो उनको प्रशिक्षित करें, जो मित्रवत व्यवहार करें, जो गांवों के लोगों के साथ सही-सही प्रोफेशनल ढंग से व्यवहार करें। फाइनेंशि यल इंस्टीट्यूशनल के नेटवर्क से बिल्कुल दूर गांवों के जो लोग हैं, जो जंगल, पहाड़ में बसने वाले गरीब लोग हैं, जिन्हें गांधी जी ने ''समाज का अंतिम व्यक्ति'' कहा, उनको ये बैंक जोड़ सकें। मैं आपसे गुजारिश करूंगा कि दीनदयाल उपाध्याय जो ''एकात्म मानववाद'' की बात कहते थे, उससे प्रभावित कल्चर वाले लोगों का बैंक अगर बना सकें, जो मानवीय संवेदना के आधार (humanitarian ground) पर काम करें, तो शायद आपका मकसद पूरा होगा, धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Shri Muthukaruppan.

SHRI S. MUTHUKARUPPAN (Tamil Nadu): Hon. Vice Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to my leader Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and also to you for giving me the opportunity to discuss the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014. I would like to make certain suggestions regarding this Bill. The Regional Rural Banks were established with a view to develop the rural economy and to create a supplementary channel to the cooperative credit structures, to enlarge the institutional credit for the rural and agricultural sector. The Regional Rural Banks accept deposits, primarily from rural, semi and urban areas and provide loans and advances, mostly to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans and other segments of priority sector. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the hon. Finance Minister has mentioned about the need to amend the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, to strengthen the Regional Rural Banks capital base and improve their overall capacity. Sir, my first point is that the financial assistance by the sponsoring banks beyond five years of setting up of RRBs is understandable. But managerial assistance beyond five years of setting up means control of the RRBs through the higher echelons of Managers of Regional Rural Banks appointed from the sponsoring banks. Instead of managerial assistance from the sponsoring banks, the apex body of RRBs can have a pool of experienced executives who can be deputed to the RRBs. Sir, I would like to inform that, as per the Ministry of Finance, recruitments of branch level staff and officers of Regional Rural Banks from 2012 to 2013 onwards are done through a common written examination conducted by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, similar to the procedure followed in public sector banks.

[Shri S. Muthukaruppan]

While this being the case in lower level staff, why should we want to control the RRBs through managerial assistance of sponsoring banks, which actually mean remote control by the sponsoring Banks? Sir, my next point is about the capital norms, raising the authorized capital to $\ref{2}$,000 crores with minimum fixed capital at $\ref{1}$ crore, and also fixing the minimum issued capital to $\ref{1}$ crore. This is a good proposal, as the quantum of capital required for the operational requirement of RRBs in their enhanced working capacities is huge and no doubt that increased capital for RRBs means increased rural credit disbursal. I fully support this move.

Sir, another important point is about shareholding pattern. Allowing RRBs to raise their capital sources other than the Central and State Governments and sponsoring banks with a caveat that in such a case, the combined shareholding of the Central Government and the sponsoring bank cannot be less than 51 per cent. Additionally, if the shareholding of the State Government in the RRB is reduced below 15 per cent, the Central Government would have to consult the concerned State Government. My opinion is against this.

Further, Sir, the State Governments already hold 15 per cent share, and that need not be allowed to be reduced. My leader, hon. Amma, always stressed that shareholding pattern of public sector institutions should never be allowed to be diluted detrimental to the interest of the common poor. An important example is, when five per cent shares of the Public Sector Neyveli Lignite Corporation was sought to be disinvested, my leader, hon. Amma, negotiated with the Central Government and other regulatory authorities and ensured buying of the shares by the Government of Tamil Nadu, so that the larger objectives and legal rights of the public sector institutions and the workers do not suffer even in the distant future.

Sir, this Bill states that any person who is a Director of a Regional Rural Bank is not eligible to be on the Board of Directors of another RRB. This is a good measure, and I support the move, Sir.

Sir, another proposal in the amendment Bill is enabling the Central Government to appoint an officer of the Central Government on the Board of Directors to ensure effective functioning of the RRB. Considering the field level hands and experience of State Government officials, the proposal should be enabling appointment of officer on the Board from the Central Government or State Government, and if such an appointment is made from the Central Government, then, the State Government should also be consulted and only after the concurrence of the State Government, such appointment should be made.

Sir, I am making this point very specifically because, at no point of time, any attempt should be made to remote control any RRB in the veil of appointment of an officer of the Central government.

Sir, the suggestions of the Reserve Bank of India are these. The Reserve Bank of India has mandated that all new banks will have to open 25 per cent of their branches in un-banked rural areas; existing banks are also pushed to open more branches in rural centres; the rural India has only 36 branches for every 10 lakh people, compared with over 100 branches in urban areas; according to a survey even if banks open 25 per cent of their branches a year in rural areas, the number of branches per 10 lakh persons in rural areas will reach only 70 by 2020; to prevent people in rural areas from borrowing at usurious rates from money lenders and parking money with non-established chit funds, banks must use business correspondents as a temporary measure to bridge their banking divide. (Time-bell rings)

Sir, under the guidance of my leader, hon. Amma, the Government of Tamil Nadu has written a letter to the hon. Prime Minister and also the Finance Minister that in order to provide the LPG Gas Subsidy to the people the Rural Banks must be established in each village.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Please conclude.

SHRI S. MUTHUKARUPPAN: Further, to provide marriage assistance to the girls given by hon. Amma, ₹ 25,000, and ₹50,000 for graduate girls, and old age pensions, etc., to the all old aged people of Tamil Nadu, the Rural Banks are essential for each rural habitation. Sir, I thank my leader, hon. Amma. I also thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Bill.

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनी (उत्तर प्रदेश): माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपको धन्यवाद देता हूं कि आपने मुझे प्रादेशिक ग्रामीण बैंक (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2014 पर बोलने का मौका दिया और अपनी नेता, बहन सुश्री मायावती जी का भी आभार व्यक्त करता हूं और उन्हें हृदय से धन्यवाद देता हूं, जिन्होंने मुझे बीएसपी की ओर से इस बिल पर बोलने के लिए अधिकृत किया।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आर.आर.बी. की स्थापना ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था को विकसित करने तथा सहकारी ऋण ढांचे के लिए एक सम्पूर्ण चैनल सृजित करने की दृष्टि से 1976 में की गई थी, तािक ग्रामीण तथा कृषि क्षेत्र के लिए संस्थागत ऋण को बढ़ावा दिया जा सके। आर.आर.बी. को स्थापित करने का मुख्य उद्देश्य विशेष रूप से गांव के गरीब किसान, सीमान्त किसान, खेती पर आधारित मजदूरी करने वाले एवं गांव में रहकर गुजर-बसर करने वाले शिल्पकार तथा लघु उद्यमियों को सुलभ ऋण व अन्य स्विधाएं प्रदान करना था।

[श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनी]

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, आर.आर.बी. इस उद्देश्य को पूर्ण करने में पूरी तरह से सफल नहीं हो पा रही है। इस संशोधन विधेयक में प्रत्येक आर.आर.बी. की प्राधिकृत राशि को पहले से काफी बढ़ाया गया है। इससे ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में और अधिक ऋण सुविधा बढ़ने की उम्मीद जगी है। प्रस्तावित संशोधन आर.आर.बी. को केन्द्र सरकार, राज्य सरकार एवं प्रायोजित बैंक के अलावा अन्य स्रोतों से पूंजी एकत्रित करने का प्रावधान करता है। इसके अलावा शेयरधारकों द्वारा निदेशक को चुनना, एक व्यक्ति का एक से अधिक आर.आर.बी. बोर्ड का निदेशक न बनना तथा आर.आर.बी. के प्रभावी कार्यक्रमों के प्रयोजनों के लिए आवश्यकता पड़ने पर केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा अधिकारी की नियुक्ति करने का प्रावधान है। इसके लिए मेरा सरकार को सुझाव है कि बैंक के प्रभावी कार्यक्रम के प्रयोजन के लिए केन्द्र सरकार को बैंक के ऋण में एक अधिकारी की नियुक्ति अनिवार्य करनी चाहिए, जिससे कि बैंक के कार्य में पारदर्शिता बनी रहे।

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, संशोधन विधेयक में लेखों की वार्षिक खाताबंदी 31 दिसम्बर के स्थान पर बदल कर 31 मार्च कर दी गई है, यह अच्छा कदम है। आर.आर.बी. के इस संशोधन विधेयक में केन्द्र सरकार, राज्य सरकार प्रायोजित बैंक की कुल शेयर पूंजी के अलावा अन्य स्त्रोतों से पूंजी निवेश एकत्रित करने की बात कही गई है। इसका मतलब कई बैंकों का निजीकरण की ओर बढ़ता हुआ कदम तो नहीं है?

उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, विधेयक का समग्र दृष्टिकोण होना चाहिए। यह एक आधारभूत और गंभीर मुद्दा है। इस विधेयक में यह प्रस्तावित है कि यदि प्रादेशिक ग्रामीण बैंक में राज्य सरकार की शेयरधारिता का स्तर 15 प्रतिशत से कम किया जाता है, तो केन्द्रीय सरकार संबंधित राज्य सरकार से परामर्श करेगी। क्या इससे बैंक पर राज्य सरकार का नियंत्रण खत्म नहीं हो जाएगा? इसलिए मेरा सुझाव है कि राज्य सरकार से परामर्श के स्थान पर राज्य सरकार से सहमति होना चाहिए।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया)ः लगातार नहीं पढ़ना है। लगातार पढ़ने का रिवाज़ नहीं है। प्याइंट बनाते जाइए।

श्री नीरज शेखर(उत्तर प्रदेश)ः वे प्वाइंट बनाकर ही पढ़ रहे हैं, लगातार नहीं पढ़ रहे हैं।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं लगातार नहीं पढ़ रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया)ः अच्छा, ठीक है।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनी: आपकी दृष्टि मुझ पर ही पड़ी है, क्योंकि मैं हिन्दी में बोलता हूं, ग्रामीण अंचल का हूं, जो अंग्रेजी में बोलते हैं, पढ़ते हैं, उनको बिल्कुल नहीं बोलते हैं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया)ः मैंने उनको भी रोका है।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः उनको बिल्कुल नहीं रोका है, उनको बिल्कुल नहीं कहते हैं, उसका प्रमाण है कि ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री नीरज शेखरः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इसमें मैं इनके साथ हूं। अंग्रेजी पढ़ने वालों को बिल्कुल नहीं रोकते हैं।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः अंग्रेजी में बोलने वालों को बिल्कुल नहीं टोकते। उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं एक बात और निवेदन करना चाहता हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया)ः सुनिए, जोर से बोलकर बात नहीं बनेगी। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, इसका प्रमाण यह है कि जो ग्रामीण अंचल से संबंधित लोग हैं, वे मेरी बात सुन रहे हैं और जो केवल नाटक करते हैं, दिखावा करते हैं, उनकी यहां पर खाली बैंचेज़ पड़ी हैं। यह इस बात का प्रमाण है।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया)ः नियम में है कि लगातार नहीं पढ़ना चाहिए, मेरा कहना सिर्फ यह है। ...(व्यवधान)...मैंने उनको भी याद दिलाया था ...(व्यवधान)... इस तरह से नहीं होता है। इस तरह से आवाज को तेज करने से, आप चेयर को दबा नहीं सकते हैं। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री नीरज शेखरः सर, चेयर को बता रहे हैं। ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः मैं दबा नहीं रहा हूं। मैं दबा नहीं रहा हूं। ...(व्यवधान)...उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं अपनी बात कह रहा हूं। मैं दबा नहीं रहा हूं। मैं चेयर का सम्मान कर रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया)ः नियम से बात होगी, नियम से बात करनी है।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः मैं आपका सम्मान कर रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया)ः हां, तो फिर बोलिए। आप लगातार पढ़ रहे हैं, फिर भी ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः मैं आपका सम्मान करता हूं। ...(व्यवधान)...

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया)ः मैंने उनको भी कहा है।...(व्यवधान)...मैंने उनको कहा है। इस तरह से नहीं होता है। नियम बताने पर भी ...(व्यवधान)... इस तरह से नहीं चलेगा। ...(व्यवधान)...

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI): Let him complete. ... (Interruptions)... Let him complete. ... (Interruptions)...

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं जिस पार्टी से आता हूं, वह बहुजन समाज पार्टी है और जो मेरी नेता हैं, वे बहन कुमारी मायावती हैं। वे हमेशा हमें अनुशासन सिखाती हैं, वे हमें हमेशा सम्मान करना सिखाती हैं। मैं पीठ का सम्मान करता हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जिटया): आप क्या कर रहे हैं, पर मुझे लग रहा है कि आप उस सारी बात को करने के लिए, जो कुछ कहना चाहिए, वह आप किहए और अपना भाषण जारी रखिए।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनीः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, धन्यवाद। विधेयक का समग्र दृष्टिकोण होना चाहिए। यह एक आधारभूत और गंभीर मुद्दा है। इस विधेयक में यह प्रस्तावित है कि यदि प्रादेशिक ग्रामीण बैंक में राज्य सरकार की शेयरधारिता का स्तर 15 प्रतिशत से कम किया जाता है, तो केन्द्रीय सरकार संबंधित राज्य सरकार से परामर्श करेगी, यह मैं कह चुका हूं। महोदय, जब हम 'स्वच्छ भारत' और 'बेटी बचाओ तथा बेटी पढ़ाओं' की बात करते हैं, तो सुनने में अच्छा लगता है और यह अच्छी बात है, लेकिन क्या हमें 'किसान बचाओ और गांव बचाओं की बात नहीं करनी चाहिए? अगर किसान बचेगा और गांव बचेगा, तो यह देश आगे बढ़ेगा, क्योंकि ग्रामीण भारत ही वास्तविक भारत है और गांव का विकास ही भारत का वास्तविक विकास है।

महोदय, मेरा काफी समय आपने लिया है, इसलिए मैं अपना समय पुरा करूंगा।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया) : श्री तपन कुमार सेन।

श्री नीरज शेखर: सर, यदि आप इतने कठोर होंगे, तो कैसे काम चलेगा?

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया) : आप अपने एक-दो प्वाइंट्स बोल दीजिए।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनी: सर, मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं और मैं पीठ का सम्मान करता हूं, लेकिन मुझे यह कहते हुए दुख हो रहा है कि मैं ग्रामीण अंचल का हूं और मैं एक किसान का बेटा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (डा. सत्यनारायण जटिया) : मैं भी ग्रामीण अंचल का ही हूं और मैं किसी शहर से नहीं आया हूं।

श्री राजपाल सिंह सैनी: सर, मैं अपनी बात पूरी करता हूं। महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करना चाहता हूं कि यह एक व्यावहारिक बात है। आपने गांव के गरीब किसान को, मजदूर को और गांव में बसने वाले दिलत को सुविधा देने के लिए बैंक की स्थापना की है। वे बैंक में जाते हैं और आपके अधिकारी उनको बैंक से ऋण देने के लिए मना कर देते हैं और यह कहते है कि तुम्हारी हैसियत ऐसी नहीं है कि तुम्हें बैंक का ऋण दिया जाए। माननीय मंत्री जी, मैं पीठ के माध्यम से आपका ध्यान इस ओर दिलाना चाहूंगा कि बैंक जिस उद्देश्य के लिए खोले गए हैं, वे अपना उद्देश्य पूरा नहीं कर रहे हैं। अगर मजदूर या किसान बैंक से ऋण लेने के लिए जाता है, तो उसको ऋण देने से मना कर दिया जाता है। अगर कोई दलाल ऋण लेने जाता है, तो वही अधिकारी और कर्मचारी तुरंत उसका ऋण स्वीकार कर देते हैं। एक किसान या गरीब आदमी साहूकार के पास मजबूर होकर ऋण लेने जाता है। उसको साहूकार से ऊंची दरों पर ऋण लेना पड़ता है, इसलिए मेरा अनुरोध है कि ऋण लेने की प्रक्रिया सरल होनी चाहिए, तािक किसान को आसानी से ऋण मिल सके।

मैं अंतिम बात कह कर अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं। मेरा प्रदेश उत्तर प्रदेश है और मैं उत्तर प्रदेश के जनपद- मुजफ्फरनगर से आता हूं तथा मेरा गांव लुहसाना है। मेरा पीठ के माध्यम से मंत्री जी से अनुरोध है कि जब मुझे बहन कुमारी मायावती ने भारत के सबसे उच्च सदन में चुनकर भेजा, तो मेरे गांव में खुशियां मनाई गई थीं और मेरी नेता की आरती उतारी गई थी। वहां के लोगों को उम्मीद थी कि हमारा बेटा उच्च सदन में जा रहा है, इसलिए हमारे लिए कुछ न कुछ करेगा। मेरा आप से यह अनुरोध है कि मेरे गांव लुहसाना में, जो जनपद- मुजफ्फरनगर, उत्तर प्रदेश के अंतर्गत आता है, वहां एक बैंक अवश्य खोलने का काम करें। वहां पर दिलत और पिछड़े लोग बसते हैं। आपके लिए यह कोई बहुत बड़ा काम नहीं है। मैं इस उम्मीद के साथ आपका आभार व्यक्त करता हूं कि आप वहां एक बैंक जरूर खोलेंगे। धन्यवाद।

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak on the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014.

While speaking on that, at the outset, I seek your indulgence for time. My time is too short. I can't complete myself within that time. So show a little bit of indulgence. This is number one. Number two, it appears from the very scene in the House that on this Bill, a consensus has already been achieved between the Government side and the principal Opposition. But there is still certain opposition to that, and I stand to oppose this Bill, the basic content of this Bill.

My point is that the Regional Rural Bank, set up in 1976, has got a purpose to widen the credit facility to the entire rural economy which represents or feeds more than 70 per cent of our population and also to pump the agriculture to make the agricultural economy more productive, more effective. This Regional Rural Bank set-up with its 56 Regional Rural Banks, which have around 19,000 branches, spread over in 27 States, has played some role in the initial period. We should take note that in 1976 when the RRB Act was enacted, it was post Bank nationalization phase, i.e., the purpose of the whole banking sector was looked upon by the then Government as a facilitator in putting the whole economy in an engine of growth, to speed up the engine of growth. But despite that and despite a commendable performance by this RRB set-up, what is the situation today? The situation today is that more than two-thirds of our agricultural community is deprived of institutional credit and they are victims of the private moneylenders. This is despite the RRB, NABARD and other such facilities. And in that kind of a situation, trapped by private moneylenders, our peasants are committing suicide, in a big way; that has become a general phenomenon. This House had discussed this particular issue just the other day in detail. Now, when we have landed in that system, what should be the target of our financial sector? It must be to remedy this kind of a very critical situation, without the resolution of which this country cannot grow. Even when more than 70 per cent of our population depends on a particular occupation, its contribution to the GDP is only to the tune of 13 per cent. This phenomenon needs to be drastically changed. With

[Shri Tapan Kumar Sen]

pumping money just into the industrial economy, I don't think we would go on to achieve our cherished goal of growth.

Now, in such a situation, what should be the approach of our banking system? This amendment bill is just moving things in the opposite direction. The basic content of this amendment bill is to dilute the shares holding pattern of RRBs and allow private capital to enter into the Regional Rural Bank, along with their representation on the Directors' Board. Now, capital comes in not for social objective but for returns. And that is why, when the state intervenes in the financial sector, it does intervene not merely for profit but also with a welfare orientation. The dilution of the equity holding, entry of private capital in the Regional Rural Bank and consequent participation of their representatives in the director board...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Please conclude. We have constraints of time, please.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Please, Sir; I plead your indulgence. I will be finishing very quickly. Please allow me to speak.

So, if you do that, if you allow them, they are destined to lose their orientation, which already seems lost as on date. RRBs are still under full Government control. No dilution of equity has been made. Till now, two-thirds of our peasants are out of the purview of institutional credit. I think, our priority should be to address that thing first, that is, not to allow dilution and entry of private people in the Bank's Directors' Board. They don't have the orientation. That is proved by the fact that as on date, more than 60 per cent of rural lending is in areas around the metropolis. Poor and marginal farmers are left out of it. And the role of the private banks is thoroughly nil in respect of rural credit. And, in such a context, you are allowing private participation in the Directors' Board of the Regional Rural Bank, by diluting its equity holding in favour of private. Is that in the interest of the rural people? Is that in the interest of easing the grim situation that would be emerging after this amendment? I don't wish to go into details, but my precise point is...that this Bill is against the interest of rural people.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Please conclude.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, on this occasion, I must ask the Finance Minister to seriously reconsider the present structure of operations of the Regional Rural Bank with the sponsor bank model. That is just not working. Sponsor banks are commercial banks.

They have their own business priorities, and rightly so. There must be a national level apex body of the Regional Rural Bank in association with NABARD, with an umbilical relationship with the RBI.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Please conclude.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Please, Sir, I would be finishing shortly.

And they should be manned by a management and workforce totally sensitized with the orientation as to how to utilize and expand credit facilities to the remotest corner of our rural economy, including making productive credit arrangement for our country's agriculture, which is in dire straits, which is in distress. So, different orientation is required. Sponsor Bank Association doesn't deliver that orientation to the Rural Bank operation. It requires a separate national level apex body in association with NABARD, if right, at this moment, which is the urgent need of our agricultural economy, of our rural economy. Please reconsider the present management and governance structure of the Regional Rural Banks. This is number one. I insist that I move the amendment. Please don't dilute its equity holdings; please don't allow private cherry pickers on the Director Board of Regional Rural Banks. Already two-thirds marginal farmers are out of the institutional credit, please don't further dilute it and invite more crisis in the agrarian economy and also in the economy of the country. *Achche* din will continue to remain a pipe dream if this arrangement continues to operate. I insist that the Government must accept my amendment. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Shri Dilip Kumar Tirkey, you have three minutes only. Please stick to the time.

श्री दिलीप कुमार तिर्की (ओडिशा) : माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, धन्यवाद। रीजनल रूरल बैंकों (आरआरबी) की स्थापना 1975-76 में इसलिए हुई थी, क्योंकि कॉमर्शियल बैंक ग्रामीण इलाकों तक नहीं पहुंच पा रहे थे। इसका उद्देश्य छोटे किसान, मजदूर, कारीगर और छोटे-मोटे व्यापारियों को कम ब्याज पर लोन देना था और यह काफी हद तक इसमें सफल भी हुआ था। बाद में दो-दो बार इन आरआरबी का मर्जर किया गया। एक समय 196 आरआरबी होते थे, मगर आज इनकी संख्या घट कर मात्र 65 रह गई है।

इसकी सफलता का अंदाजा इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि आज आरआरबी सिर्फ 196 करोड़ रुपये के शेयर कैपिटल से 3 करोड़ लोगों को लगभग 2 लाख करोड़ रुपये के लोन दे चुकी है और उसी पूंजी से इसने लगभग 2 लाख 40 हजार करोड़ रुपये की जमा पूंजी इकट्ठी भी की है। मगर सरकार अब जो संशोधन लेकर आई है, उसमें केन्द्र सरकार की पूंजी को 85% से घटाकर 51% करने की बात है।

[श्री दिलीप कुमार तिर्की]

दूसरा, आरआरबी के बोर्ड ऑफ डायरेक्टर में प्राइवेट शेयरहोल्डर के नॉमिनी का भी प्रावधान किया जा रहा है। तीसरा संशोधन, जिसमें ऑथोराइज्ड शेयर कैपिटल को 5 करोड़ रुपये से बढ़ा कर 2,000 करोड़ रुपये तक करने की बात है, इसमें कोई दिक्कत नहीं है, लेकिन हमारी शंका प्राइवेटाइजेशन को लेकर है। सरकार को यह आश्वासन देना चाहिए कि प्राइवेट पूंजी लगने के बाद भी आरआरबी अपने मूल उद्देश्य पर कायम रहेगी।

आज 2011 की जनगणना के आंकड़ों की ही बात करें, तो सिर्फ 7% गांवों में बैंकों की शाखाएं हैं। हमारे ओडिशा में अभी भी लगभग 4,597 ग्राम पंचायतें बैंक विहीन हैं। इनमें ज्यादातर वैसे इलाके हैं, जहां ट्राइबल, एससी, माइनॉरिटी और पिछड़ा वर्ग के लोग निवास करते हैं। इसके बारे में मैंने स्पेशल मेंशन भी दिया था और हमारे मुख्य मंत्री श्री नवीन पटनायक जी भी इसके लिए केन्द्र सरकार को लिख चुके हैं। जनधन योजना की सफलता के लिए भी यह जरूरी है कि पहले आप उन इलाकों में बैंक खोलिए, जहां बैंक नहीं हैं।

रिज़र्व बैंक ने अपनी एक रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि ग्रामीण इलाकों में लगभग 43% लोन महाजन और किमशन एजेंट देते हैं। नेशनल सैंपल सर्वे में भी यह बताया गया है कि पिछले साल किसानों की आत्महत्या का सबसे बड़ा कारण उन्हें लोन नहीं मिलना था। इन सब बातों को देखते हुए, सरकार को आरआरबी को और मजबूत करने की जरूरत है। आरआरबी ऐक्ट में संशोधन करते समय आप इन बिन्दुओं को जरूर ध्यान में रिखए। हमारी पार्टी इस बिल का समर्थन करती है। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं। धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Now, Shrimati Gundu Sudharani. There are three minutes at your disposal.

SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI (Telangana): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very important piece of legislation which aims to amend the parent Act of 1976.

Sir, let me begin by saying that till 90s, RRBs were flourishing with 196 RRBs and having nearly 14,500 branches. But, their decline started after that and after 2009 amalgamation, they have virtually come down from nearly 200 to just 56. The present net worth of RRBs was ₹ 21,200 crores in the last fiscal. Secondly, even if you look at the recovery performance of RRBs, it is also very good. Recovery performance of RRBs improved from 81.2 per cent, as on 2012, to 82 per cent in 2013. Nine RRBs have recovery of more than 90 per cent, 19 RRBs have recovery in the range of 80 to 90 per cent, and 28 RRBs have recovery percentage between 60 to 80 per cent. Sir, it is my opinion that the performance of the Rural Banks is appreciable. So, I request and suggest that the Government can plan to increase its share, not to make a drastic decrease but a marginal decrease.

Sir, under Narendra Modiji's pet project, PM Jan Dhan Yojana, two crore accounts have been opened by 56 RRBs, which is the highest amongst all the banks in India. The accounts are more than what SBI has been able to open. Secondly, RRBs have been playing a pioneering role in implementing various Government-sponsored schemes such as NREGA, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Old Age Pension, Widow Pension, apart from loans given to farmers, small and medium entrepreneurs, etc. They have disbursed 11.51 per cent of farm loans in 2013-14, and during the last year, I think, they have given 15 per cent. So, RRBs are doing yeomen service to the country.

The next point I wish to make is that under clause 3, the hon. Minister is proposing to increase the paid-up capital to $\ref{2}$,000 crores. But all I want to say is that by retaining 51 per cent by the Government of India and the sponsor banks, we can increase the authorised share capital.

The other point I wish to make is that RRBs can flourish like anything, but due to restrictions and conditions by the sponsor banks, they are not able to expand themselves. If you look at the original Act, it says that the RRBs will work under the sponsor banks. It has to be removed and freedom has to be given to the RRBs. Once they get freedom, I am confident that they will flourish like any other nationalised bank.

The next point is that there was a proposal to set up a bank at the national level by making all the RRBs as its branches all over the country. The proposal was to establish the National Rural Bank of India with State-level RRBs as its constituents and branches in every mandal or village. I do not know what has happened to that proposal. I request the hon. Minister to look into this and see that a national-level bank for RRBs is established.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Continuous reading is not allowed.

SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Lastly, I welcome that under clause 5, the Government is not permitting a Director of RRB from becoming a Director of another RRB and restricting his tenure to two terms. But the Government is giving an elbowroom to shareholders that depending on their shareholding, they can elect Directors. If they have 10 per cent shareholding, they can elect one Director and if they have 25 per cent shareholding, then they can elect three Directors. I have some apprehension that such Directors will ultimately control the RRB. So, I only suggest to the hon. Minister to look into this aspect.

With these words, I support the Bill.

SHRI ANIL DESAI (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014. The Bill seeks to introduce reforms to strengthen the capital base and improve the overall capabilities of the Regional Rural Banks.

The principal Act of 1976 provides for incorporation, regulation and winding up of RRBs to develop the rural economy by providing credit and other facilities to develop agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities. The intention of the Bill is to target small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs. It also seeks to introduce reforms to strengthen the capital base and improve the overall capabilities of the RRBs. Sir, one of the main features of the Bill is to provide for the continuance of managerial and financial assistance from the sponsor banks beyond the first five years of functioning of RRBs. It also envisages to provide for enhancement of the authorized capital of each RRB.

In no event, the combined shareholding of the Central Government and the sponsor banks shall be less than 51 per cent, that is, Government control will always be there on these banks. The Central Government will be consulted if its share is raised or reduced. There is also a provision to appoint Government Director, and, its span should not be more than three years. He could be re-nominated also but as per the condition laid down, the period should not exceed six years. Moreover, Sir, the date of closure of annual accounts from 31st December to 31st March is a welcome measure as it would bring uniformity with the financial year.

Sir, there is an apprehension that if managerial assistance is accepted beyond five years, then, the managers of RRBs appointed from the sponsor banks would restrict the autonomy of the RRBs, likely to be remote-controlled by the sponsor banks. Instead, these managers could be drawn from other financial institutions. Sir, today, RRBs need to gear up further in their working to help the farmer community in rural sector more effectively, particularly, in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra, where rural people have a lot of expectations from RRBs.

The credit facilities, which is one of the important things, are not accorded to farmers in easy way as it should have been. The Government should ensure that RRBs transform the standard of living of rural populace, thereby improving the rural economy. On this issue, the Government appointed, at least, ten expert committees — Narsimham Committee, Dantwala Committee, Kelkar Committee, Misra Committee and Basu Committee — to study the problems but the problems still persist in one form or the

other. The Government should also allay apprehensions that it is moving towards the privatization of RRBs, and, Sir, by bringing in private players into RRBs, it would be further relegated to the background as for private players, rural investment will not be the priority.

We all know that because of the cumbersome procedure, farmers, cottage industry players and craftsmen do not like to go to commercial banks for their financial needs, and, unfortunately, they are compelled to borrow from moneylenders. As there is no Government control on the local, unauthorized moneylenders, the poor and uneducated farmers are subjected to harassment and exploitation.

In the end, Sir, I hope that the hon. Finance Minister would consider the issues and address the difficulties involved in the same thereby achieving the aims and objectives of RRBs so that the rural economy is strengthened. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): Now, Shri Avinash Pande.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE (Maharashtra): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to speak on the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014, and, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

Sir, the creation of Regional Rural Banks was a watershed moment in our attempts to provide banking and credit facilities to the masses of rural India and develop the rural economy. The Narsimham Committee conceptualized the creation of RRBs in 1975 as a new set of regionally-oriented rural banks, combining the local feel and familiarity of rural problems characteristic of cooperatives with the professionalism and large resource base of commercial banks. Subsequently, the RRBs were set up through the promulgation of RRB Act of 1976 and RRBs were supposed to evolve as specialized rural financial institutions for developing the rural economy by providing credit to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs. Sir, since their inception in 1975, Regional Rural Banks started modestly with 6 RRBs, having 17 branches, covering 12 districts, and grew into 196 RRBs with 14,446 branches working in 158 districts across the country by 2004. However, over the decades, it was seen that the financial health of these banks required the intervention of the Government to achieve economies of scale and create a sustainable model of their functioning. Many committees were set up, which deliberated and recommended reforms for their institutional

[Shri Avinash Pande]

restructuring. After several years of restructuring, refinancing and amalgamation of geographically contiguous RRBs, following the implementation of the KC Chakrabarty Committee, there are now 57 Regional Rural Banks in the country, with a network of 19,082 branches, covering 642 notified districts in 26 States and the UT of Puducherry. Their equity is held by the Central Government, concerned State Government and the sponsor bank in the proportion of 50:15:35. Through this amendment Bill, Sir, the capital requirements of the Regional Rural Banks are being increased, admittedly, to align the CRAR with Basel-III norms and developing the rural economy by providing credit and other facilities for the purpose of development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities in rural areas, particularly to small and marginal farmers, artisans and small entrepreneurs. While investment in industry, infrastructure, etc., is extremely important, I wish to restrict my remarks to the impact of this amendment on the small and marginal farmers who are undergoing a great deal of distress. I am of the opinion that financing of the rural economy to boost growth cannot depend entirely on debt financing of its economic activity.

Sir, the increased share capital with banks implies greater availability of agricultural credit. However, the trend in disbursal and utilisation of agricultural credit needs to be remedied. According to the latest Annual Report of NABARD, the sub-sector wise ground level credit disbursed to agriculture and allied activities during 2007-08 to 2011-12 reflects the fact that investment credit has continued to remain stagnant around 28 to 30 per cent of the total credit disbursed for agriculture. Even though credit flow has increased over the years, the long-term credit in agriculture or investment credit has showed a declining trend over the years. The share of long-term credit in overall ground level credit flow reduced from 40 per cent in 2006-07 to 22 per cent in 2012-13. Many loans are being provided to farmers for warehousing, etc., but there is little or no improvement in the quality of agricultural assets, and farming remains a high risk activity. This year's Economic Survey has noted that the lending to agriculture may be excessive and going predominantly to large farmers, but it is not being used for agricultural capital formation.

Sir, this is simply to say that although the availability of agricultural credit is being increased, banks are surpassing their annual targets for lending to the agriculture sector, but very little of that credit is being invested in a manner that will generate substantial wealth and give financial returns to farmers. Sir, as we know, agriculture is a very high risk activity due to limited availability of irrigation facilities and the uncertain monsoon rains, which are becoming increasingly erratic and unpredictable. In such a situation, the provision of loans to farmers by rural financial institutions also becomes a high risk activity and, therefore, non-profitable for the banks. (*Time-bell rings*)

7.00 р.м.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, now conclude.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Sir, instead of mitigating the risk at its source and finding ways to reduce the threats faced by farmers due to crop failure caused by unpredictable and extreme weather conditions, the Government wants to increase the supply of loans to farmers. Perhaps, the farmers with larger landholdings ... (Time-bell rings)

Sir, I have got time. Please give me just two minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; you are reading.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: I am just concluding.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now you stop.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: There is a saying in Marathi, 'इथे शेतकरी कर्जातच जन्मतो आणी कर्जातच मरण पावतो', which means farmer takes birth in debt and dies in the same condition.

Agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy. To make it an economically viable activity, the quality of assets in the hands of farmers must improve. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Avinashji, ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Sir, I am just concluding in one minute. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: See, reading a prepared speech is not allowed. That is why I was trying to stop you and you are not stopping also.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Sir, finally, let me just ... (Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A Member should prepare and come. Somebody will write a speech and ... (Interruptions)...

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: I would just like to mention here, as it seems to be the case, to reduce landowning farmers to industrial labourers or employees etc. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

SHRI AVINASH PANDE: I will just conclude it, Sir. However, if we are looking to develop our economy in a manner which substantially improves the quality of life of our farmers and help them in creating and preserving wealth while living in their own homes, on their own farms and land, then I am sorry to say that this Bill and the approach of the Government in rejuvenating the rural economy does little to address their problems. Thank you so much, Sir.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I rise to oppose this Bill. Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) were started by the Government in 1975. Then, the Act was enacted in 1976 with a view to exclusively serving the rural India and the agricultural economy. Today, the RRBs are being sponsored by nationalised banks along with Central and State Governments. Therefore, the RRBs are 100 per cent in public sector today. RRBs are effectively helping the rural economy despite all difficulties and constraints. There are about 50 RRBs with about 15,000 branches in India. RRBs have to be strengthened further in the given situation and the emerging situation in the country. When Government talks about financial inclusion, RRBs have to be strengthened because they work in rural areas. Recently, Prime Minister Mr. Modi observed that the banks should be sympathetic to the poor farmers. But his Government is bringing a Bill to allow 49 per cent private capital in RRBs. It is your Government. On the one hand, you talk about financial inclusion, on the other hand, you bring private players into the banking sector! In RRBs, you are going to allow 49 per cent private capital. Sir, this is double standard. This is a very disastrous move and Government should think over it. My suggestion to you is that you should not dilute the capital in RRBs. Rather, RRBs should be merged with the sponsor nationalised banks. If RRBs are a problem, you will have to merge them. That is the demand of trade unions also. That is the demand of Employees' Union also. RRBs must be merged with the sponsor nationalised banks. Allowing 10 per cent shareholders to have one Director is going to be disastrous and it is going to adversely impact the lending policy, credit policy of RRBs. So, I urge upon the Government that good sense should prevail upon you. You will have to defer this Bill and this is not the way to help our rural economy, to help our poor people living in rural areas. So, I urge upon the Government to give a thought, a sympathetic thought, to the conditions, to the plight of farmers, to poor people living in rural areas and defer this Bill. You may have any intention but, finally, this will end up handing over RRBs to private players, which is not in the interest of the country, not in the interest of the economy. That is my point, Sir. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT; THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION; AND THE MINISTER OF

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): Sir, he is making very brief, crisp and relevant points.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, I agree with you.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Though I do not agree with him on other issues, but, both of us agree with him on this issue.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Even then, he is not ready to agree with you.

SHRI D. RAJA: It is democracy, Sir.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Agree to disagree is democracy.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, it is our duty in the democracy. ... (Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Mandaviya.

श्री मनसुख एल. मांडविया (गुजरात) : उपसभापित महोदय, देश में बसे हुए छः लाख गांव, गांवों में बसने वाले किसान, गांवों में रहने वाले गरीब, गांवों में रहने वाले मजदूर, युवा और महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण के साथ जुड़ी हुई ये बैंक एवं उनकी आकांक्षाओं की पूर्ति करने के लिए और उन्हें आर्थिक सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए पूरक बनने वाली रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स की स्ट्रेंथिनंग के लिए जो अमेंडमेंट बिल लाया गया है, मैं इसका समर्थन करने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूं।

महोदय, यह सही है कि गांवों में बदलते समय में, जब विश्व एक कुटुम्ब बन गया है, तब इलैक्ट्रॉनिक और प्रिंट मीडिया के माध्यम से विश्व में होने वाली घटना सब जगह पता चल जाती है। जिस प्रकार विश्व के लोग रहते हैं, उसी प्रकार हमारे देश के गांवों के लोग भी रहना चाहते हैं। हमारे गांवों के लोगों को भी विकास करना है। उनकी भी आशा एवं आकांक्षाएं हैं और उनकी आकांक्षा एवं महत्वाकांक्षाओं की पूर्ति के लिए, उन्हें पूंजी चाहिए और उन्हें ऋण चाहिए। वह ऋण उन्हें कहां से मिलेगा? उन्हें ऋण देने के लिए ही ये रूरल बैंक्स बने हुए हैं। ये रूरल बैंक्स जो गांवों में काम करते हैं, जैसे किसान हैं, उन्हें अपने रबी एवं खरीफ की फसल की बुवाई के लिए ऋण की आवश्यकता होती है, क्योंकि उन्हें अपनी खेती के लिए खाद खरीदनी पड़ती है, केमीकल्स, पैस्टीसाइट्स, फर्टीलाइजर्स की आवश्यकता होती है, वे बाजार से खरीदने पड़ते हैं। उन्हें अपनी खेती के काम के लिए, फार्मिंग के लिए ट्रैक्टर की आवश्यकता होती है और छोटे-मोटे अनेक प्रकार के इक्विपमेंट की आवश्यकता होती है। उनके पास सुविधा हो या न हो, लेकिन जब वे रूरल बैंक्स के पास जाते हैं और उनसे वे ऋण लेते हैं, तो उन्हें अपनी आर्थिक स्थिति स्ट्रेंथन करने के लिए इन बैंकों से बहुत मदद मिलती है। इसी प्रकार से गांवों में रहने वाले सामान्य लोग हैं, उन्हें अपने विकास के लिए पैसा चाहिए, तो वह आर्थिक सहायता प्राप्त करने के लिए इन्हीं बैंकों के पास जाएगा। जैसे कोई युवा पढ़कर आया, उसे अपना कोई छोटा सा उद्योग लगाना है या कोई धंधा करना है, तो उसके लिए धन की आवश्यकता होगी और धन प्राप्त करने

[श्री मनस्ख एल. मांडविया]

के लिए वह कहां जाएगा, वह इन्हीं रीजनल रूरल बैंकों के पास जाएगा। इस प्रकार वे लोग इन ग्रामीण बैंकों से ऋण लेकर अपना छोटा-मोटा धंधा करेंगे। गांव के किसी व्यक्ति को टैक्सी खरीदनी है और टैक्सी खरीद कर शहर से गांव तक पैसेंजरों को लाना-ले जाना है। इससे उसकी रोजी-रोटी चलती है। इससे उसे अपना विकास करने में ताकत मिलती है और इससे उसकी आय भी बढ़ती है। इसी प्रकार से गांवों के युवाओं के साथ-साथ महिलाओं पर भी इसका असर पड़ता है।

महोदय, हमारे गुजरात में मैंने देखा है कि महिलाओं के दो लाख सैल्फ हैल्प ग्रुप्स हैं। उनके माध्यम से महिला सशक्तिकरण का काम हो रहा है। महिला सशक्तिकरण के काम में महिलाओं की ये क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंक बहुत मदद करते हैं। ग्रामीण बैंक महिलाओं को ऋण देते हैं। महिलाएं इकट्ठी होती हैं और सैल्फ हैल्प ग्रुप के माध्यम से छोटा-मोटा धंधा कर के अपनी आर्थिक स्थिति बेहतर करती हैं।

महोदय, लिज्जत पापड़ देश में पॉपुलर पापड़ है। आज उसमें 5,000 ग्रामीण महिलाएं कार्य कर रही हैं। इस लिज्जत पापड़ के सैल्फ हैल्प ग्रुप की जो शुरुआत हुई थी वह 5,000 रुपए ग्रामीण बैंक से ऋण लेकर हुई थी और आज वह ग्रप 5000 महिलाओं का सशक्तीकरण कर रहा है। उससे आज 5,000 महिलाओं की रोजी-रोटी चल रही है। इसी प्रकार से इन ग्रामीण बैंकों से सामान्य महिलाओं की उनके सशक्तिकरण में भी मदद हो सकती है। इसी तरह गांवों में बसने वाले छोटे-मोटे कारपेंटर और गांवों में बसने वाले अन्य लोग अपनी-अपनी आकांक्षाओं की पूर्ति के लिए ऋण लेने कहां जाएंगे, सिर्फ अपने नजदीक की बैंक में ही जाएंगे। उनके नजदीक वाली बैंक, ग्रामीण बैंक होती है। इससे ग्रामीण बैंक भी स्ट्रेंग्थन होंगी। वे भी सक्षम होंगी, क्योंकि अब ऋण लेने हेतू लोगों की लाइन लगी है। पब्लिक में भी अवेयरनैस आई है। गांवों के लोग भी विकास के रास्ते पर चल पड़े हैं। वे विकास के रास्ते पर चलें और जब वे बैंक में जाएंगे और यदि ऋण नहीं मिलेगा, तो उससे उनकी स्ट्रेंथनिंग नहीं होगी। उनके विकास में बाधा आएगी। इसलिए सरकार ने जो निर्णय लिया है, वह बहुत अच्छा निर्णय है। श्री नरेन्द्र भाई मोदी के नेतृत्व में चलने वाली भारत सरकार जन-धन योजना के माध्यम से गरीबों का भला कर रही है। जन-धन योजना का यहां जिक्र भी बहुत किया गया। जन-धन योजना में खाता कौन खोलेगा? इसमें गरीब, गरीब किसान, सामान्य व्यक्ति अपना खाता खोलेंगे। उसमें उनकी रोज़गारी तो सुनिश्चित होगी ही, उनके पैसे भी वहां रख सकते हैं, लेकिन सबसे ज्यादा अच्छा काम उससे यह होगा कि उनके लिए भारत सरकार की योजना, राज्य सरकार की योजना, जो उनके लिए बनी है, जो इंसेंटिव उनको मिलना है, उसकी सब्सिडी उनको मिलनी है, तो काम छोटा नहीं है। "जन-धन योजना" के माध्यम से जो खाता खुला है, वहां डायरेक्ट उसको मिले, जैसे कि बजट ही अलग है, बिचौलिए अलग हैं, उसमें से बिल्कुल डिलीट हो जाए, वैसे ही गांवों में बसने वाले किसान, गांवों में बसने वाले पशुपालक को ऋण चाहिए। वे एक-दो गाय-भैंस पाल लें, उनके दूध की आवक से, उनके मिल्क की इनकम से उनका घर चलता है। उसकी इनकम से उनके बच्चों की पढ़ाई होती है, उसकी इनकम से उनका घर-व्यवहार अच्छी तरह से चल सके, इसके लिए ग्रामीण बैंक उसको बहुत मदद कर सकता है। मैंने गुजरात में देखा, आपने भी अमूल का मॉडल देखा होगा। ...(समय की घंटी)... अमूल मॉडल, जो सारे विश्व में पॉपुलर है, तो अमूल मॉडल को strengthen करने के लिए गांवों के बहुत लोगों ने ग्रामीण बैंक में जाकर छोटा-मोटा ऋण लेकर, दो-चार पशुओं को रखकर अपने जीवन

को सुनिश्चित किया है, इसलिए रूरल बैंकों को strengthen करने वाला जो यह बिल आया है, इसका मैं बहुत समर्थन करता हूं, धन्यवाद।

DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014 wholeheartedly. Now all the 56 RRBs have been facing difficulties—due to inadequate capital and their performance has also been deteriorating. To safeguard the RRBs, our Hon. Finance Minister—has taken a good step through this Bill. So, I can call this Bill as caretaker of the RRB. The NABARD, the regulating body for rural banks has said that agricultural credit disbursement by RRB has been short of the target. The Bill which amends the Regional Rural Banks Act is an attempt to save Regional Rural Banks from collapse by increasing private investment in these banks. However, I wish to point out some concerns. We are not for privatisation. But anyhow to safeguard RRBs we welcome this.

Sir, the Bill allows RRBs to raise capital from private sources. Although private shareholding may ensure financial stability, but we fear that would distract RRBs from their objective of strengthening the rural economy. The All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association has questioned the need for private investment, and it fears that it will push RRBs towards privatisation. If this is not the intent of the Government, then, it should make it clear and assuage their concerns.

Sir, Regional Rural Banks have been suffering for a long time. Since their inception, successive Governments have appointed so many committees, but their recommendations were ignored. These banks could have done better had Sponsor Banks played a pro-active role in guiding them, and State Governments provided a conducive banking environment. Sponsor Banks often open branches in areas where RRBs operate. That is the problem. This creates a conflict of interest as Sponsor Banks approach the same group of customers which RRBs have been serving since their inception. This leads to unhealthy competition. Sponsor Banks also do not share the profit generated through loan interest which affects RRB's financial conditions. These issues have not been addressed in this Bill. So, the Finance Minister should consider this also.

Sir, under the current model, another problem lies in the fact that the deposit mobilised in the rural areas are not coming back as investment. RRBs can show the road ahead in this regard by channelising the investments into the rural areas. Sir, to address this, the All India Regional Rural Bank Employees Association has been repeatedly demanding the formation of a National Rural Bank of India by a merger of all the RRBs. This is very interesting and it should be taken care of.

[Dr. K.P. Ramalingam]

The other concern is regarding the salary structure of the RRB staff. Among banking institutions within the country, each RRB employee handles 885 accounts, as against the national average of 464 accounts per employee in the banking industry. Yet, the salary structure of the RRB staff is not motivating enough. This too needs to be considered. The structure of remuneration for the RRB staff was said to correspond to the salary structure of comparable district-level functionaries of the concerned State Governments. Since banking is a subject in the Union List, the entire problem could have been avoided if the Central Government had created a rural service cadre exclusively for the RRB. It was only in 2010 that the Government introduced a revised pay structure for the employees of the Regional Rural Banks on par with PSU banks. The employees are still struggling to have pension parity with their counterparts in PSU banks.

Sir, along with these, we also need to address the issue of shortage of staff. Various States of the country are facing severe staff shortage in the rural banking sector. In most cases, in rural areas, it is just an Officer and a Clerk who manage the branch; just two people manage the branch. Through rural banks the benefits of all the schemes, be it MNREGA, *Aajeevika* or other schemes, reach the rural population of the country. (*Timebell rings*) Sir, I would take just one more minute.

Therefore, it is important that planning manpower in the rural banks is considered a priority by the Government. Further, there must be enough focus on training the staff so that they could impart financial knowledge to the farmers and the villagers.

Sir, I welcome this Bill while expressing these concerns of mine. The Finance Minister may consider these. Thank you.

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, at the outset, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on this Bill today.

Sir, this Bill in itself is not very complete. I would like to prove my point by reading out the first paragraph of the original Act of 1976. It says, "An Act to provide for the incorporation, regulation and winding up of Regional Rural Banks...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You may read it, but you have just three minutes.

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Sir, I would finish on time. I always finish on time.

"... with a view to developing the rural economy by providing, for the purpose of development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities in

the rural areas, credit and other facilities, particularly to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs, and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto".

Sir, through you, I had sought a clarification which I am yet to receive from the hon. Finance Minister, Shri Jayant Sinha. I had put my Starred Question No. 78 dated the 3rd March, 2015. There was a supplementary question put to him and it was: "Is there any attempt to withdraw or restrict the functioning of Regional Rural Banks in West Bengal?" His reply was, "Sir, to the best of my knowledge, there is no such restriction that is being contemplated or is being put into reality." However, in the answer to the same question, he replies, "As per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines, general permission has been granted to domestic Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) (other than Regional Rural Banks) to open branches (i) in Tier 2 to Tier 6 centres...". Sir, these are dual standards. I am yet to get some clear-cut answer on this. Why I say that this Bill is incomplete is because when I was searching for some material, I did not find any wide consultation or any Standing Committee recommendation saying that this Bill has gone through all aspects of Regional Rural Banks. Sir, the share capital is not the only problem these Regional Rural Banks are facing. We need to know why, since 1990, they are down from 196 to just 56 banks. Why is it that after 44 years of bank nationalization, 38 years of establishment of RRBs, 43 per cent of rural credit is still financed by non-institutional agencies like landlords, moneylenders, traders and commission agents?

Sir, the *Jan Dhan Yojana* was launched and it was claimed to be a big success by the Government. However, less than five of the 56 RRBs were participating in the *Jan Dhan Yojana*. And still, after this Jan Dhan Yojana, 35,000 unbanked villages in West Bengal remain. This is as per the 2015 figures.

Sir, I don't know if money is the only problem with the RRBs, because I see that they have earned Rs. 15,000 crores in the last four or five years. Their recovery rates are much better than that of the nationalized banks. But, on the other hand, what worries me is that this concept of small loans is evaporating from these RRBs. Sir, the RBI compilation data shows that RRBs are now sanctioning loans above ₹ 100 crores in a lot of cases whereas earlier it used to be ₹ 5 lakhs per account. This average is steadily increasing and it is an alarming trend. Sir, although this point has been repeated, yet, I have to repeat it. If only two people are managing a branch, it has to be the security personnel managing the branch. I don't think they can afford any more people.

Quickly, I will come to the problems that I want to raise through this Bill, and I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister, through you, to them. The State

[Shri Vivek Gupta]

Government has been made a separate entity by the Central Government. I think the Regional Rural Bank was a very good initiative by the Central Government in partnership with the State Government, and I would appreciate if the limit of 51 per cent was read as 67 per cent or 76 per cent by taking the State Government's shareholding also into consideration rather than in isolation.

Lastly, Sir, I would like the Government to look at other features which are available with various banks and consider them as well.

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, first of all, I want to thank all the hon. Members of this House who have spoken at length and spoken very intelligently on the matters that we are discussing today. I will list them quickly. Shri Rajeev Gowda, Shri Ashok Ganguly, Shri Ajay Sancheti, Shri Vishambar Nishad, Shri Harivansh, Shri Muthukaruppan, Shri Rajpal Singh Saini, Shri Tapan Kumar Sen, Shri Dilip Tirkey, Shrimati Gundu Sudharani, Shri Anil Desai, Shri Avinash Pande, Shri D. Raja, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Shri K.P. Ramalingam and Shri Vivek Gupta. So, I thank them all for a very good set of points and comments. There are many, many good suggestions in what the hon. Members have proposed. And through the work that we continue to do in the financial sector, we will, certainly, take those suggestions to heart and we will try and implement as many of them as we can.

Shri Rajeev Gowda started by saying that the Regional Rural Banks are like a diamond in the rough. He had made a very metaphorical speech because he then spoke a lot about the family, the sons of the soil, the stepmother and so on. I think he got his metaphors scrambled up a little bit unfortunately.

SHRI DEREK OBRIEN (West Bengal): You both went to the same University.

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: Well, we all didn't get the same grades. Sir, I wouldn't call it a diamond in the rough but I would, in fact, call it a jewel in the crown. And I think, a part of what all the hon. Members have said was that the Regional Rural Banks have done wonderfully well for India and, obviously, for rural areas. We know that, as of now, 38 per cent of all the rural branches, actually, are from Regional Rural Banks and 75 per cent of their branches are, in fact, in rural areas. And one thing which is very notable, because many of them highlighted it in their speeches, is that the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana which is the flagship programme of ours and which has been extraordinarily successful, — of course, everybody will realize now that across the world people are looking to it as a model, as a template, for financial inclusion — two

crores, out of the fourteen crores of accounts of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, have been opened by Regional Rural Banks. So, they are very much a jewel in the crown and they, certainly, are not diamond in the rough. We, therefore, have to see what we can do to strengthen this very important aspect of our rural financial system. क्योंकि मैं ग्रामीण क्षेत्र से आता हूं, मैं भी ग्रामीण क्षेत्र का जनप्रतिनिधि हूं। जब हम दौरे करते हैं, जब हम गांवों में जाते हैं, लोगों से बात करते हैं, उनकी मांगें सूनते हैं, उनकी शिकायतें सूनते हैं, उनके दर्द के बारे में जानते हैं, यह आप सब लोगों को मालूम है और दोनों सदनों में बहुत दिन से चर्चा चल रही है कि इस समय ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में जो हालत है, जो माहौल है, वह दयनीय माहौल है। हमारी सरकार पूरा प्रयत्न कर रही है। माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने कहा है कि हमारी सरकार गरीबों की सरकार है, गरीबों को समर्पित सरकार है, इसलिए खासकर, विशेष रूप से, हम लोगों को ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के लिए financial inclusion अच्छी तरीके से पहुंचाना है। जैसा मैंने कहा कि एक 'jewel in the crown' हमारे रीजनल रूरल बैंकस हैं, पर वे पूरे क्राउन नहीं, पूरा ताज नहीं, एक हिस्सा हैं। हम लोग इस समय रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स के साथ-साथ बहुत कुछ कर रहे हैं, क्योंकि हम प्रधान मंत्री जन-धन योजना पर तो काम कर ही रहे हैं। आपको मालूम है कि रिजर्व बैंक ऑफ इंडिया ने अभी स्माल बैंक्स और पेमेंट बैंक्स की लाइसेंसिंग के लिए एप्लीकेशन्स मांगी थीं और 41 पेमेंट बैंक्स के लिए एप्लीकेशन्स आई हैं तथा 30 के आसपास स्माल बैंक्स की लाइसेंसिंग के लिए एप्लीकेशन्स आई हैं। हम लोग मोबाइल बैंकिंग की कोशिश कर रहे हैं। हम लोग चाह रहे हैं कि बिजनेस कॉरेसपोंडेंट से और मोबाइल बैंकिंग से दूर देहात में और हर गांव में हम जितने लोगों को मोबाइल बैंकिंग की सुविधा पहुंचा सकते हैं, उन लोगों को financial inclusion दिलवा सकते हैं, हम लोग इस प्रयास में, इस कोशिश में लगे हुए हैं। इस समय हमारे ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में financial inclusion के जो सब प्रयास चल रहे हैं, उनमें रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स भी बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हैं और हमें उनको और मजबूत बनाना है। अगर हमें उनको मजबूत बनाना है, आप सब दिग्गज लोग हैं, आपको मालूम है कि अगर हमें banking sector में बढ़ोतरी देनी है, अगर हमें banking sector को बढ़ाना है, तो capital की भी जरूरत पड़ती है। अगर capital की जरूरत पड़ती है, तो हमें देखना चाहिए कि वह capital आ कहां से रहा है। कुछ माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा है कि उनको इसकी बहुत फिक्र है कि यह एक बैक डोर प्राइवेटाइजेशन होने की कोशिश हो रही है, तो में उनको बताना चाहूंगा कि जो हम लोगों ने दिया है, वह एक flexibility दी है। आप में से कई लोग राज्यों से हैं और आप लोगों की यह कोशिश है कि आप लोग राज्य स्तर से इन रीजनल रूरल बैंक्स को और मजबूत बनाएं। हमारी यह कोशिश है कि आज के समय जो shareholding structure है यानी 50 प्रतिशत जो केन्द्र सरकार से आ रहा है, 35 प्रतिशत sponsor banks से आ रहा है और 15 प्रतिशत इस समय स्टेट से आ रहा है। हम इस पर flexibility दे रहे हैं। अगर कोई राज्य अपना ज्यादा shareholding बढ़ाना चाहते हैं, ज्यादा कैपिटल देना चाहते हैं, क्योंकि वे विशेष रूप से जो उनके ग्रामीण बैंक्स हैं, वे उनके साथ काम करना चाहते हैं या जैसे आप कह रहे थे कि कोई public initiatives आप लोगों को ले जाना है, तो आप वह कर सकते हैं। हम वह flexibility दे रहे हैं। हम लोग amendments लाए हैं, वे flexibility के तहत लाए हैं, जिसमें आप लोग अगर चाहें, तो आप इस प्रकार उनको एक दिशा दे सकते हैं। यह भी हो सकता है कि कोई private players भी आएं, परन्तु उसके लिए भी बहुत सारे safeguards हैं। पहली बात तो यह है कि हम लोग कह रहे हैं कि किसी भी हालत में 51 per cent से हम लोगों की shareholding sponsor banks और केन्द्र सरकार से नीचे नहीं गिरेगी। [Shri Jayant Sinha]

हम 51 per cent तो कंट्रोल रख ही रहे हैं। साथ-साथ अगर हम जो कुछ भी करेंगे, वह हम State Governments के साथ राज्य सरकारों के consultation में करेंगे और आप से बातचीत होगी। उस consultation के बाद अगर हम समझते हैं कि यह capital अगर प्राइवेट सेक्टर से आ रही है और यह लाभदायक है, तो फिर जरूर आएगी। अगर आप लोग इसके विरोध में हैं, फिर उस पर चर्चा होगी। यह एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण safeguard है। मैं अंत में यह कहना चाहता हूं कि आज हम सब लोग public sector banks से हैं, हम उनको मानते हैं। वे हमारे लिए इस समय एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहे हैं। जो हमारे public sector banks हैं, वहां भी हमारी shareholding कम हुई है, शेयर बाजार में उनकी लिस्टिंग हुई है और हमने अपनी नीतियों के अनुसार यह भी कहा है कि हम लोग 52 per cent अपने public sector banks में shareholding दिलवा सकते हैं। अगर public sector banks में 52 per cent तक हम लोग जाने के लिए तैयार हैं, we have to have an open mind about bringing down the shareholding in the Regional Rural Banks as well because, as I said before, they are a jewel in the crown. They are very important part of the fast-evolving rural financial system and the rural financial landscape, we have to give them the resources and we have to give them the capability so that they can survive.

Sir, I will make a final point and then I will ask the hon. Members to support the Bill which is about the sponsor bank. Many hon. Members spoke about the sponsor banks. Shri Gowda said that it might be better to cut these banks loose from the sponsor banks. Actually, if you look at what we are getting in terms of advice and recommendations back from the rural banks, it is that they very much benefit from having the sponsor banks as really their guidance therein, their advisers and to be able to provide them the talent which is rare and difficult, particularly as I said, the financial landscape is evolving so quickly and because the systems and technology expertise that is required right now is so scarce. It is, therefore, a very good idea to ensure that the expertise and the capabilities that are in our sponsoring banks right now are available to the Regional Rural Banks so that they can also rapidly adapt to this changing landscape and be able to put in place the most advanced technologies, the most convenient technologies because as I said, we want to make sure that we want to bring financial inclusion into every village and into every area of India. So, I think the idea of having the sponsor banks continue — of course, they have a shareholding of 35 per cent right now — so that the share holding can continue we believe is also a very good thing to do. So, with that, I will end my reply and I will ask Members to support this Bill which, as I said, will continue to strengthen this very vital part of our financial landscape and will really propel them to be able to provide the financial services that we so sorely need. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is that the Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think, if I heard wrong, I think the record should be corrected. For public sector banks you said that, 'we are ready to go up to 52 per cent.' What does that mean?

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: To be very clear, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, what I said was we will continue to maintain, at least, 52 per cent ownership of the public sector banks in the hands of the Government. It means, we will allow other equity only 48 per cent.

MR. DEPUY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

That the Bill further to amend the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

MR. DPEUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up clause 4 of the Bill. There is one Amendment (No. 4) by Shri Tapan Kumar Sen and Dr. T.N. Seema. Are you moving?

Clause 4 — Amendment of Section 6

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Yes, Sir. I move:

(6) That at page 2, for lines 14 to 20, the following be substituted, namely:

"Provided that the enhanced capital shall be provided by the Central Government, the State Government and the Sponsor Bank in the same proportion of their existing shareholding."

The question was put and the motion was negatived.

Clause 4 was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up clause 5. There are three Amendments (No. 3) by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy. Not present. Amendments (Nos. 7 and 8) by Shri Tapan Kumar Sen and Dr. T.N. Seema. Are you moving, Mr. Tapan Kumar Sen?

Clause 5 - Amendment of Section 9

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Yes, Sir. I move:

- (7) That at page 2, lines 36 to 46 be deleted.
- (8) That at page 3, lines 1 to 7 be deleted.

The questions were put and the motions were negatived.

Clause 5 was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now take up clause 6. There are two Amendments (Nos. 4 and 5) by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy. He is not present.

Clause 6 was added to the Bill.

Clause 7 was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up clause 1. There is one Amendment (No. 2) by the Minister.

Clause 1 — Short Title and commencement

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: Sir, I move:

(2) That at page 1, line 2, for the figure "2014", the figure "2015" be substituted.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We shall, now, take up the Enacting Formula. There is one Amendment (No. 1) by the Minister.

The Enacting Formula

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: Sir, I move:

1. That at page 1, line 1, for the word "Sixty-fifth", the word "Sixty-sixth" be substituted.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

The Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.

The Title was added to the Bill.

SHRI JAYANT SINHA: Sir, I beg to move:

That the Bill, as amended, be passed.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.