

RAJYA SABHA

***SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Tuesday, December 20, 2022/ Agrahayana 29, 1944 (Saka)

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Falling Index of Industrial Production and Declining Economic Parameters in the Country

SHRI A. A. RAHIM: I am speaking here on behalf of entire job aspirants in the country. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has slumped to a 26-month low at minus 4 per cent in October on the back of a contraction in manufacturing and consumer goods. It means that the industrial sector is facing a major crisis. These statistics are clear indicator of unemployment and much of these jobs would be considered as under-employment. I request the Government to control unemployment and under-employment in the country.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

***This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.**

2. Rising incidents of Acid Attacks in the Country due to Easy Availability of Corrosive Substances

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: I want to raise the issue of acid attacks. A drop of acid can cause irreparable damage and can transform a face or a body into a heap of bones and flesh charred beyond recognition. It is a heinous crime driven by the most malicious intents. Most cases of acid attacks are against such young women of marriageable age, who refuse a proposal for marriage or who refuse to enter into a relationship or withdraw from a relationship. Despite the existence of laws, the crime of acid attacks continues unabated. There is high prevalence of illegal sale of acid. In the recent incident in Delhi, the accused had allegedly procured the substances through an online platform. These acids are available on various online platforms for a meagre amount. I request the Government to strictly implement the regulations regarding sale of acid.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

3. Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University

SHRI RAJMANI PATEL: An advertisement was issued for the post of Vice-Chancellor in Allahabad University, in which 10 years' experience of Professorship was sought. Professor Sangeeta Srivastava has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University but she does not have 10 years of experience. Vice Chancellors of Sardar Patel University, Gujarat and Uttarakhand University have been removed for not having 10 years of experience, but the Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University has not been removed. Professor Sangeeta Srivastava is the wife of High Court Justice Vikram Nath. For this reason, she was not removed despite being ineligible. The students of Allahabad University are continuously agitating for this and for the restoration of the student union. She should be immediately removed from the post of Vice-Chancellor and the cases against the students should be withdrawn and the student union should be restored.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Need to establish Medical colleges in Tribal Aspirational Districts

DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI: At present, there is not a single government medical college in the tribal-dominated districts of Madhya Pradesh, due to which they are not getting the benefits of modern treatment. People of this region are affected by some serious genetic diseases, sickle cell etc. and they have to go to other metros for treatment. If new government medical colleges are opened in these tribal districts, it will be beneficial for the general public.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Need to Address the Delay in Disbursal of Funds under various Central Schemes

MS. DOLA SEN: There is an urgent need for intervention from the Union Government for the disbursal of funds under the MGNREGA, the PM Awas Yojana and the PM Gram Sadak Yojana. The Central Government wants proportionate contribution from the State Governments for these schemes, so why not name them as Pradhan Mantri Mukhya Mantri Yojana and Central State Scheme.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

6. Need to Highlight Start-Up Revolution Generating Employment for the Youth of the Country

SHRIMATI SANGEETA YADAV: Start-ups are a renaissance of innovation and entrepreneurship. This is a new thinking of the youth, which says that we will not ask for employment, we will give employment. Start-up is a platform which acts as a catalyst for youth entrepreneurship. It is also a challenge, which helps entrepreneurs to do their best and solve a problem. According to the National Sample Survey, 14 per cent of businesses in India are run by women entrepreneurs.

(Shrimati Vandana Chavan, Dr. Amar Patnaik, Shri Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar, Shri Sujeet Kumar and Dr. Sasmit Patra associated.)

7. Persons affected due to Delay in Rewa-Sidhi-Singrauli Railway Line Project

SHRI AJAY PRATAP SINGH: Land acquisition work for the construction of railway line in Rewa-Sidhi-Singrauli is going on at a very slow pace. The construction of the railway line has been going on for 12 years, but the work of land acquisition has not been completed 100 per cent in even a single village till now. I request the Government to appoint a Commissioner level officer and get it monitored. Jobs should be given to those, whose lands were taken before 11.11.2019.

(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Dr. Fauzia Khan and Dr. Amar Patnaik associated.)

GOVERNMENT BILLS

#(i) The Appropriation (No. 5) Bill, 2022 - Contd.

#(ii) The Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 2022 - Contd.

DR. AMEE YAJNIK: Through the Appropriation Bills (No.4) and (No.5), approval of Parliament is sought for an amount of Rs. 4,35,938 crores as additional expenditure. This is a huge amount. Out of this amount, Rs. 3,25,000 crore is only for revenue expenditure. It indicates a gross miscalculation of expenditure and lack of planning. If we look at the MNREGA scheme, it seems to have been under allocated. Today at the rural level, we have not recovered from Covid-19 pandemic. It has become difficult for the women, who lost their jobs during pandemic either in the corporate sector or in MNGREGA, to re-enter the workforce in comparison to men. I request the Finance Minister to consider this issue and give importance to gender budgeting in MGNREGA. Ensure re-entry of women into the workforce. Women losing their jobs had to face domestic violence during the pandemic and they could not get any help by way of counselling or economic help or in the form of food security. MGNREGA helped many Indian citizens who were left stranded by the sudden

Discussed Together.

imposition of the unplanned Covid-19 lockdown. Instead of enhancing its implementation amidst the pandemic, the Government has pushed this lifeline for rural India into a crisis. Not allocating enough funds for MGNREGA resulted in the continuation of distress in rural India and increased demand. Therefore, MGNREGA needs more allocation of funds and proper planning. With the economic slowdown that hit India even before the pandemic and the subsequent Covid-19 lockdown wiping out the jobs, the number of people dependent on MGNREGA increased drastically. Around 14% demand for work under the scheme left unmet. Not only the Government failed to provide employment to all those in need, it also failed to give them employment allowance as mandated by the Scheme. It should also be taken into consideration. Then, there are the problems like child wasting, child stunting, and malnourishment in children. I am sure the Government knows what investments are required for this. But there seems to be a problem of policy implementation and lack of political will. To deal with these issues, the Food Security Act of 2013 was brought in. We should not forget about the distribution of foodgrains under the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana which provides this 5 kg of food. That is free of cost per month to 80 crore beneficiaries. But the beneficiaries, listed on the portal, are as per the 2011 Census. Thereafter, no Census has been conducted. That needs to be taken care of.

MSME sector, which provides employment to nearly 11 crore people, is very important for the growth of our country's economy. It needs immediate attention and allocation of funds. I would request the Finance minister to incentivise this sector. A number of portals in relation to MSME sector are made but related digital platform and access to that digital platform are not there. We need to create awareness among people about it and give training to them. This House does not have any issue on Supplementary funds, but the priorities of the Government should be clear. Now I want to talk about gender budgeting which also includes provisions to deal with violence against women. The allocation for this head must be multi-fold. Concerns related to the safety of girls are the main reason why they are not sent to far off schools and they have to drop out. This issue must be resolved. Unless and until we give women the education, they would not be able to empower themselves or take part in decision-making processes. Women need funds, education and awareness to

become empowered and this empowerment will make them safe. Another issue is Digital India. Today, there are portals for every Government programme or scheme. But digital access and cyber security is not there. Regarding education of children in totality, I am pained to see that more than 3 crore children have never been to any school. Government should ensure that the Anganwadis are furnished and children are able to attend primary schools. I would request the hon. Minister to look into this fund allocation and ensure children's education and empowerment.

SHRI ARUN SINGH: In these appropriation bills related to supplementary grants, the highest demands have been made for the farmers and the poor. Amount has been sought for fertilizer subsidy. The Government has always taken measures for the development of farmers and to increase their income. It started Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Earlier, compensation was given for 50 percent loss of the crop, but this limit was reduced to 33 percent. The minimum support price was raised to one and a half times. For those, who did not have bank accounts, Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan accounts were opened. Fertilizer companies were closing down continuously. The government restarted them and now the production of urea and fertilizers has started in the country itself. International prices of fertilizers have increased, but the Government has increased the subsidy so that the farmers get fertilizers at old prices. India's economy remained fairly stable during the Covid crisis. Compared to other countries, the rate of inflation here was also very low. It has been the policy of the Government to spend more on infrastructure investment than on consumption. By doing this, the circulation of money increases three to four times. India's per capita income has increased by 57 percent in the last eight years and this is a great achievement. Production has increased through the productivity-linked scheme of the Government. During UPA's time, 12 kilometer highway was built daily, today it is 38 kilometer. There has also been a decline in NPAs. The economic condition of the whole country is progressing very fast. According to a report of Morgan Stanley, India will become the third largest economy by 2030.

MS. DOLA SEN: The Agricultural Expenditure Ratio (AER) of the country has fallen from 4.2 per cent to 2.8 per cent in the last few years and the expenditure on food storage has also fallen from 5 per cent to 3.6 per cent

during the same period. Agricultural research and sustainable agriculture expenditure is also becoming very low. The customs duty imposed on Govindobhog rice in our state should be removed. Disinvestment of about 70 thousand crores is going on in 2022-23. There is 100 percent foreign direct investment in the coal sector and 74 percent in the defense sector. All public sector enterprises are being sold. Jute industry is an agro-based industry but now it is also being brought into the open market. This will not only cause problems to the jute farmers and workers, but will also harm the environment. 55,603 MSMEs have withdrawn themselves from Udyam Portal. The biggest unemployment after independence is now. The North-East Industrial Development Scheme was not renewed. The Centre has stopped funding in the BRGF scheme.

SHRI S. KALYANASUNDARAM: *

DR. K. KESHAVA RAO: Today, we have about 75 Grants and 6 Appropriations, working out to Rs. 4.35 lakh crores. In a Budget of Rs. 400 lakh crores, 10 percent is coming under Supplementary. I want the hon. Finance Minister to revisit the figures. Ten per cent coming as supplementary demands is not appropriate. I would talk on the issue of deficit which is 6.17 per cent now. The price of petrol has increased from Rs. 40 per litre in 2014 to Rs. 90 per litre now. Diesel has also the same story. Everything has become costly. The rate of unemployment is the highest in the last forty-five years. Since I am talking about inflation, you have not talked about how you are going to cover up this Rs. 4.5 lakh crores or Rs. 3.25 lakh crores. Will it be through additional taxation or borrowings or anything else? I am also concerned about the share that States are getting. The share of cesses and surcharges in gross tax revenue has increased from 8.16 per cent in 2011-12 to 28.08 percent in 2021-22. The States urged the Union Government to bring them into divisible pool and share them with States. If the Centre shares the entire cess and surcharge for 2021-22, as part of divisible pool, the States would get an additional Rs. 1,53, 533 lakh crores. The BJP led NDA Government increased the number of cesses and surcharges to 24 by 2019-20. However, many of them subsumed after the introduction of the

* Synopsis of speech delivered by Hon'ble Member in Tamil will be published separately as supplement.

GST, and, currently, 9 cesses and surcharges are being levied by the Centre. How the States are managing their own finances, you know this. About this, I can only refer you back to Public Accounts Committee Report, which had warned you earlier also. The Committee reaffirmed the necessity for meticulous examination of the Budget proposal, rigorous monitoring of expenditure, and strict adherence to the financial laws. Even after that, our fiscal system severely lacks sufficient planning and effective monitoring mechanism, making it impossible for our nation to establish a disciplined Budget system. I welcome this only because you are depending more on the subsidies. Despite your total rejection and despite your total step-motherly attitude of closing all the funds to the State, we are today doing very well.

PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: I would like to say something about minimum wages. You gave so many concessions of worth of lakhs, I have no problem with that, but the minimum wage is still fixed at Rs. 178. Is it fair in this country? I just want to see what is your blue print regarding employment? Young nation needs employment. Our pending issues are non-receipt of grant for mechanization of agriculture, National Siltation Policy, construction of high dam in the Kosi River in Nepal and increasing ceiling for the number of beneficiaries under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.

DR. JOHN BRITTAS: The cumulative impact of demonetisation could be the loss of about Rs.50 lakh crore in revenue at current prices. Any sensible administrator after committing a mistake will introspect, apologize, put things in correct perspective and most importantly, create a game-plan for retrieval. But, they did just the opposite. If there is stagnation, the Government spending should have gone up and the interest rates should have come down. This should have been the twin objectives of this Government. They did the contrary, the Government expenditure came down. The country is passing through very critical times. We have to discuss on pertinent issues which affect the country. We need people-centric policies.

SHRI ABDUL WAHAB: A prominent sportsperson from Kerala is the President of the Indian Olympic Association. We all welcome this. But you have given ten times more sports facilities to Gujarat than Kerala. If you invest in education, it will give manifold results for you or the country. But you are reducing educational and allied funding. Whatever is happening in

the field of skill development is commendable. The solution for unemployment is skill development of the people. You have to invest more so that our kids study here and have job here itself. So, I request to give more funds for skill development. I talked about Ujjwala Yojana. It is a wonderful project. We also implemented it. But now, funds are not enough.

SHRI KUMAR KETKAR: We have to understand what benefit is given to which classes by supplementaries or by the original Budget. When we discuss unemployment, farmers, we are also discussing the class politics. The price rise or unemployment is not in the upper classes but the people below, those who are not even given chance to work because the economy is down, and neither farming sector nor the industrial sector is growing. At present, the farming sector is being deprived of their essentials including the fertilizer subsidies. If the working population cannot be accommodated in agriculture, they will be looking for industry. Economy has a direct relationship with crime and with entire destabilization of social structure and destabilization of the families. We all know that highest contribution comes from Maharashtra towards direct taxes and GST but so far thousands of crores of Maharashtra have not been given. In fact, it is not federalism. Unemployment and farming, are interrelated and industry and economy are interrelated, and education, industry and economy are interrelated. But, unfortunately, the Budget and the Appropriation Bill does not give adequate allocation to education, farmers and industry. No mention is made about unemployment and price rise. CMI has clearly said that it is the highest ever unemployment in the country. Unemployment affects the economy because productive workers, denied to contribute to the economy. Agricultural unemployment, agricultural crisis and economic crisis and political crisis are interrelated. The tribals are being completely ignored, their rights are completely ignored. Appropriation Bill shows that economy is not properly managed. If such tendency grows, I am sure the crisis will further increase. Unemployment can affect the agriculture in long run. Therefore, we have to understand that economic mismanagement can create a multiple-level crisis. It is necessary that the Appropriation Bill or the original Budget takes care of the socio-political issues.

SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY: This Government is the government of the poor, labourers, common people and farmers. The

government started 'Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samridhi Yojana' and today the society is seeing the daughter as Lakshmi. The Government has started 'Pradhan Mantri Mudra Loan Yojana', through which today the youth is doing their employment by making their investment. Today, if we send one rupee through 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana', then that one rupee directly reaches the public's account. Not only this, the poor who have Jan Dhan account, if any kind of accident happens, they are given accident insurance up to one lakh rupees. Along with this, there is so much benefit that the money deposited in the bank account comes immediately and with this the poor labourer can do his work. Be it any subsidy, be it from Government of India or State Government, if the benefit of any scheme goes through subsidy, then today it goes through 'Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana'. When the crisis of Corona hit this country, the government did the work of putting smiles on the faces of the poor by giving five kilograms of food grains free of cost to 80 crore people and free vaccination was done. The Government provided toilets in every house. With the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana', work has been done to provide a roof to the poor of the villages and cities. We have Tirth Canal here, which provides irrigation to North Bihar. Its condition is dilapidated. Attention should also be paid to those canals, so that the welfare of the farmers can be done.

SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI: The demand for funds is being raised again in the Appropriation Bill. The reason for this is being attributed to the Ukraine war and Covid. But it seems more like an attempt to hide the failures. Key indicators of the economy include GDP, employment, industrial production, and public and private investment. But the performance of all these is not good. Many international organizations have indicated about the disappointing situation. Unemployment is increasing. Industrial production has decreased significantly. Rural unemployment is at high level. Government jobs are being cut. The India-China trade deficit has widened significantly.

SHRI G. C. CHANDRASHEKHAR: The Government had promised to double farmers' income by 2022. But, unfortunately, the problems of farmers have become double. We have several schemes for farmers. But many of them are not even benefitting fifty per cent of farmers. On the one side, the states are suffering, the common man and the farmers

are suffering, but on the other side, the banks wrote off 10 lakh crores of rupees.

DR. ANIL AGRAWAL: Today India is the fifth largest economy in the world and will be the third largest economy in the coming times. Hon'ble Modi ji is continuously working for the welfare of the poor. When 80 crore people were in crisis, food grains were provided under the world's biggest 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana' and it is being given even today. A question was raised that the Indian rupee is weakening against the dollar. I would like to tell that the Indian currency is getting stronger than the currency of several countries. The Wholesale Price Index has remained at 5.8 per cent, while it used to be in double digits under the previous governments. Non-performing assets have been brought down to around 7.2 per cent. Fertilizer is being given at the same price as it was three years ago. On the other hand, the income of the farmer has increased and the price of his crop has become better. Today Kisan trains are being run, so that they could sell their goods anywhere.

SHRI JOSE K. MANI: The Government had an ambitious target of doubling the farmers' income by the year 2022. As per the World Inequality Report, India is now among the most unequal countries in the world. The top one per cent of the population hold more than one-fifth of the national income. Rubber farmers of Kerala are facing the issue of minimum support price which is directly affecting the economy of the state. I request the Government that the import duty be passed on to the rubber farmers, so that they get Minimum Support Price of Rs. 250 per Kilogram. The NITI Aayog has suggested to close down the Rubber Board. As a result of this, the rubber production will go down, which, in turn, will affect the economy of Kerala.

DR. ANIL SUKHDEORAO BONDE: I am supporting this Bill because the amount of supplementary demand has been sought for the welfare of the farmers, soldiers and the poor. Hon'ble Prime Minister performed the duty of giving food grains to the poor. In this bill, funds have been sought to extend it from October to December. If the Government did

not give subsidy then how would the farmer be able to buy fertilizers. Due to this, the production cost of the farmers was likely to increase ten fold. Subsidy was given so that the cost of fertilizers does not increase. This Government has done many things for the welfare of the farmers of the country. I would like to give a suggestion to the Government that the Wainganga-Panganga project should be completed to provide irrigation benefits to the farmers of western Vidarbha as this project can increase agricultural production to the tune of 18,799 crore rupees. The project can generate 20 lakh jobs and create water storage in 38 villages. The benefit cost ratio of the project is 1.74. Through 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations, farmers can get cheap inputs and they can directly connect with the market. I request the Government that NDRF norms that were set in 2015 should be doubled.

SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR: The total Budget allocation was Rs.39.45 lakh crore and you are further demanding grants of Rs.4.36 lakh crore. Out of which Rs.1.9 lakh crore are for the fertilizer subsidy. I want to know whether the additional demands for grants are within the purview of budgetary principles. It seems that the PAC has already expressed its displeasure and made specific recommendations in order to adhere to the strict compliance of financial rules. Unemployment is the biggest challenge that we are facing today. Another issue of concern is price rise. Central Government is implementing as many as 40 Central schemes in the State of Andhra Pradesh and it has allocated funds to the state for their implementation. But unfortunately, diversion of funds of all programmes and schemes misappropriation of funds meant for Central schemes is rampant in the state. Polavaram Irrigation Project is the lifeline of the state which is running far behind schedule and there is no time-frame for its completion. I request the Government to approve the revised cost estimate of Rs.55,548 crore as recommended by Technical Advisory Committee.

SHRIMATI KANTA KARDAM: The budget of our government is going to accelerate the pace of development. This, in turn, will give a boost

to public investment and creation of modern infrastructure. In my state Uttar Pradesh, our government has set up a Sports University which will encourage the youth of the state to excel in sports. The government has also established Maa Shakumbhari University in Saharanpur in the name of Shakumbhari Devi. The government has worked towards improving the condition of the primary schools so that the poor children may study and aim to move forward in life. Today, the work of connecting the entire country with national highways from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Kutch to the Northeast is being done. With the continuous expansion of National Highways, it is becoming easier to reach from one place to another in the country. During the last eight years, the Central Government has laid emphasis on Garib Kalyan Yojana, rural development, cleanliness, clean water, pollution free environment and climate and on all- round development. Under the 'Ujjwala Yojana', our government provided nine and a half crore gas connections to the rural and urban poor so that the poor may be given relief. Apart from this, the minimum wage of laborers has been increased from Rs 178 to Rs 220 under 'MNREGA scheme'.

SHRI AJAY PRATAP SINGH: Just now an honorable Member said about the common man that the policies of the government help the corporates and not the common man. On this, I want to say that whether it is Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Deendayal Kaushal Vikas Yojana through which skill training is imparted, or NRLM scheme under which self-help groups are formed and women are trained to become self-reliant, or whether it is Ayushman health card - the benefit of all these is not being given to the corporates but to the common man. But I have to say one thing forcefully that our government takes care of the corporates as well, because corporates are also citizens of this country and their capital contributes to the development of this country and they create jobs for the people. Our government maintains a balance between the corporates and the common man. Another hon'ble Member said here that the Central Government is doing injustice to the States. I want to say on this that when

a meeting of the GST Council takes place, then the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of Kerala also attend this meeting and all decisions are taken unanimously in such meetings.

SHRI G.K. VASAN: We are all well aware that the finances of the country are well-managed through implementation of a mixed progressive and welfare-oriented policies by the Government. We all understand that the Indian economy is the fifth largest economy in the world and we are sure to become the third largest economy in the years to come. This is the result of the serious financial sector reforms and also these reforms have contributed to the growth of roads, telecom sector, information technology, etc. India is basically a farming nation. Crop insurance, bank accounts for farmers, doubling of farming communities' income are the best things given to farmers by the Government. During COVID times, we were able to manage our economy and even help other countries.

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P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in

***Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.