

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Friday, February 09, 2018/ Magha 20, 1939 (Saka)

DISPENSING WITH QUESTION HOUR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Accepting the suggestion made by Shri Derek O'Brien and some other Members to do away with question hour and take up discussion on the Union Budget, 2018-19 today, I am doing away with the Question Hour and starting the debate on Budget.

THE UNION BUDGET, 2018-19

General Discussion - Contd.

SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR, Continuing his unfinished speech dated 08.02.2018, said: This Budget deceives the farmer, youth and every citizen of the country. This Budget has misled the people of the country. Government has said that we will provide one and half time MSP of the cost of farmers. They have announced this to mislead the farmers. They have promised MSP because everywhere in the country they are being opposed. They said that they have brought Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme for the farmers. Nothing can be more deceitful with the farmers than this. Similarly, they have brought the 'Health Scheme'. This will benefit big insurance companies and common man will not get even 5 rupees. You said that

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

we have constructed 6 crore toilets under Clean India Mission and have given more funds for that. But what is their condition? You provide 12 thousand rupees for constructing a toilet. Can a toilet be constructed for 12 thousand rupees? Do not construct 6 crore toilets, construct only 3 crores but please provide 25 thousand rupees. Now, I want to say something on petroleum products. I want to ask that when this is 140 dollar a barrel, even then we are getting it for 75/- rupees and today, when it is 68 dollar a barrel, even then we are getting it for 75/- rupees. What kind of arithmetic is this? Second thing I would like to say about 'Ujjwala Scheme'. I accept that many people have got gas cylinders but what is the use of that cylinder? Hon'ble Finance Minister may please tell that next time how many times it has been refilled? They have got it against 1600/- rupees but these people were not told that they will have to return this money later on gradually with every gas cylinder. I wanted to speak about national highways. Hon'ble Minister had laid the foundation stone of national highway 31 nearly one and a half year ago in our area but one and half year has passed since then and no work has been done there. Hon'ble Prime Minister talks about rural electrification again and again and says that we have brought electricity in 18 thousand villages. I would like to know that what work has been done under it since this 'Deen Dayal Upadhyay scheme' has come. Only meters are being installed under 'Deen Dayal Upadhyay scheme'. I had asked a question to the Hon'ble Finance Minister regarding NPA that what action the Government was taking regarding NPAs against big industrialists? I would like to know about Jan Dhan Scheme also. Entire Government is claiming that we have opened 31 crore accounts under Jan Dhan and 71 crore rupees have come in those accounts. I want to know it from the Finance Minister that how many rupees were deposited in these Jan Dhan Accounts after 8th November, 2016 and how many rupees have been deposited by Government in those accounts?

#SHRI S. MUTHUKARUPPAN: (Spoke in Tamil.)

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: The Railway Minister has to answer some of my questions. I challenge this figure of 94 for operating ratio. The figure is in excess of 100 per cent. The Railway Line from Howrah to Dankuni was to be repaired. Why has the Depreciation Reserve Fund been reduced from Rs.5,000 crore to Rs.500 crore? CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) was 6 percent in 2014. Why has it been reduced to 2 percent during last three and half years. In some of the BJP ruled states budget allotment was plus but in non-BJP ruled states it was even in minus. You have promised a certain length of new railway lines, Gauge conversion and doubling but completed only 50 per cent. Railways is on the Union List. Why then is the Railways asking the State Governments to bear the cost of infrastructure? The State Governments must not bear. It is a Central subject. To build one kilometre of Bullet Train its costs rupees 180 crores. While dedicated freight corridor costs Rs. 23 crores. Why the decision to make the bullet train first and not take up the dedicated freight corridor has been taken? What is the policy of this Government on commercial viability? Will they not take into account social responsibility? 1,25,000 safety jobs are vacant in the Indian Railways. How many bio-toilets in the Indian Railways you have started? When you give zero allocation to a project, does that mean the project is over? We need to know that because there are many projects across the States which have zero allocation. In Bengal, it is only eleven per cent of the total allocation. I would request all the States not to be cheated by this feku federalism. Please do not do to the Air India, what you have already done to the Indian Railways. We told you in July not to implement GST but forcibly you wanted to do GST. You did the GST. Now, what is the situation? The Finance Minister kept a provision of Rs. 55,000 crores of money to be compensated to the States. Figure of compensation is Rs. 80,000. Where from you will bring remaining Rs. 25,000 crores? The next point is on e-way bill. Now, all the truck operators are getting very

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

upset because the e-way bill concept is not working. The only way to do this is by following the full e-way system. Higher the GST number, worse it will be and the lower it is, better it would be. The system is not ready for GST. I have asked the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister, with the help of the Railway Minister, to answer my questions and I have given you some points. You have to show real development and get re-elected on your work.

SHRI C.P. NARAYANAN: Every State is being burdened with expenditure of various departments. The allocation for SC/ST is going down very steeply affecting various programmes, which have to be implemented in their favour. We claim that we are a country which has got the maximum number of young population. But unless we educate, feed and keep them in good health this youth will become a burden on us. The Right to Education Act, has become very ineffective because every year budget allocation for the education is proportionately decreasing. Regarding agriculture, the money is given by the various banks but it is shown as given in the budget to the people. The allocation for agriculture in the Budget is getting decreased year after year. The farmers' suicides are increasing in various parts of the country. A complete reversal of the policies of the Government regarding the Budget allocation is necessary.

SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN: In the Budget, there is always a hope that 6 per cent of the GDP is used for the education sector. However, it never happens. The Nationalist Congress Party was very emphatic that the Right to Education should have a backward and forward extension. The merging of primary and secondary education is one of the biggest highlights of the budget and, therefore, I would like to congratulate the Government. Though this holistic approach has been taken, there are different outlays for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. The Government has announced the Eklavya Model Residential School and budget talks about setting up of this chain of schools; on the other side, it cuts allocations of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. So far as the higher education is concerned the total budgetary allocation for IITs, IIMs and the UGC has been

decreased in 2018-19. Actually, education spending of the present Government is decreasing every year which is very alarming. The Government has laid stress on the use of technology in schools but a study has revealed that only 62 per cent of all schools have electricity connections. In fact, the budget for Digital India, e-learning has come down. It is also a fact that on the one side, we see the use of technology and, on the other we see that today one million teachers' posts are lying vacant and teachers' training programmes have not taken off, therefore, this needs to be looked into. Sir, it is very important that teachers know about provisions of the POCSO. The budgetary allocation for health is merely five per cent higher than the last year. Sir, the situation in the Observation Homes is very poor, therefore, they need our attention. Climate change has also not been addressed by the Finance Minister.

SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Firstly, I congratulate the Finance Minister for making provisions for the salaries and allowances of the MPs. The farmers have a huge contribution on their part in building the nation and only because of them we are self-reliant in terms of grains. But, the farmer's economic condition is not good due to costly fertilisers, seeds, and diesels today. Farming is no longer a profitable occupation. In addition, crops are damaged by the unseasonal rain. The farmer does not get the fair price of his crop. The government has promised 1.5 times support price for the farmers' production cost. I would like to know to whether the same support price has been given for the Rabi crops. This Government's decision to extend loan on cheaper rate to the landless farmer is a good one. I want to know from the government, whether the landless farmers will get credit cards? There is water crisis in Haryana due to continuously declining groundwater level and the farmer is in distress as the state has not been able to get SYL water. So, I appeal to Central Government to solve the problem for the farmers of the state. I thank the Finance Minister who has announced to modernize the 600 railway stations and demand that keeping in mind the religious and historical importance of Kurukshetra, facility of an international standard be provided at that railway station too.

SHRI D. RAJA: A budget is the reflection of Government's thinking, but I find this Government suffers from ideological and philosophical hypocrisy. The Government's Economic Survey talks about the IT sector but this sector is confronting governance challenges. Your Budget reflects that you are building crony capitalism, corporate capitalism in this country. I want to know about the Government's approach towards revenue generation. The Government has reduced corporate tax to 25 per cent for companies which have a total turnover of Rs. 250 crores. I think it is a profit to the corporate houses. Sir, there are companies and industries, which do not invest in job creating activities, but still the Government continues to dole them out of concessions. This Government talks about disinvestment of public sector undertakings. Sir, it means privatization. You talk about developing infrastructure, but you are going for privatization of Railways and Air India, So, I think this Government's approach is very flawed. I want to ask you about FDI in Defence production. How does it strengthen the national sovereignty? You are closing down all our Defence units. You are privatizing education and healthcare. You are not investing enough money on public health and public education. The Government has done nothing about employment. The problem of economic inequality is prevalent in the country. Allocation to SC/ST is not as per the directives of the erstwhile Planning Commission and the accepted norm. This Budget is not a growth-oriented budget and it is anti-poor.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: The farmer's condition is very miserable today, as neither farmer is getting fair price for his produce, nor getting the fertilizers and seeds at the cheaper prices. There is no allocation in this budget for providing fertilizers and seeds at the cheaper rate and to increase irrigation facilities. The finance minister should make it clear what will be the base point for determining the cost of the crop. The Government should work towards increasing the growth rate of agriculture. The New Health plan is a very good plan but, the problem is that private nursing homes will submit fake bills and will get full advantage of it in connivance with the insurance companies, So we need to be cautious in this regard. If it is possible, transfer this money directly to the intended beneficiary's account.

Finance Minister should give some clarifications about the enhanced fiscal deficit. Why the benefit of falling prices of petrol and diesel at the global market is not being extended to the public? Currently, the crude oil price are rising too much. It will not stop the price-rise. The government has done something in this regard; however it is to be seen that to what extent consumer will be benefitted. Why exports are declining? It will result in numerous problems. 6 thousand entrepreneurs have left the country after suffering a lot. If the entrepreneurs leave the country, then who will offer the jobs? Steps should be taken in this regard. Now cess has been imposed, the Finance Minister should give explanation about its impact. The people have to borrow to pay the GST. Some facility should be provided for the same. We welcome the increase in the salary of High Court Judges; however you should also bring reforms in the Judiciary, no reforms are being done in that field. NJAC was constituted, thereafter no progress have been made in this regard. In the Rail Budget, the operational cost of the railways has been pegged at 95 per cent. Only 5 per cent cushion is there for improving the railways, to create infrastructure and to do the rest of the work. New rail lines are required to be laid. Now a days, people prefer travelling by Air, because they are not getting the facilities in railway, the food in trains and at platform, at both places is bad. However, these are the basic things, and related to the policy. Freight has also declined. Why Railway's profit is declining and why the number of passengers are declining? Budget provision should be made for implementing the recommendations made by the Kakodkar committee on Rail safety.

SHRI SANJAY SETH: This budget seems to be very pessimistic, the most important declaration in this budget is related to the health insurance of five lakhs each for ten crores people. The Hon. Minister has divided the budget into two parts, first to promote the health centres, so that the people can get the health facilities in the nearby centres. Secondly, providing a facility of 5 lakh rupees insurance to the ten crores of people. In this budget, the health budget has been increased by a meagre 1,250 crores of rupees. The education cess, which was at 3 per cent hitherto, has been increased to 4 per cent. It is like taking from the people and giving them back, nothing

else. The health centres which are being run today, all are not maintained well, no staff, no medical equipment are available there. The centres are already existing and being run, and they should be run appropriately. Two years ago, a provision of one lakh for health insurance was made in the budget, however, not more than 30,000 rupees insurance is being provided till date. It is stated in the budget speech that under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna one crore houses will be built. It has been said that 93 lakhs have already been constructed, whereas in reality only 21 lakhs houses have been built. The common men are being misguided. It has been mentioned that land rate will be fixed as per the circle rates. Get the survey done in any city, there you will find that the circle rates are higher than the land rates. Now, if a poor man or anyone else, buys the home, then he /she will have to give higher stamp-duty and higher income tax, it is not justified.

SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: In the case of Union Territories with a Legislature, like Puducherry, normally the entire gap between their budgetary requirement and their resources is met by the Government of India. Union Territory of Puducherry has implemented the Seventh Central Pay Commission recommendations. The Government of India has not given even a single rupee to Puducherry for implementing the recommendations. The Union Territory's resources have been affected considerably by various factors like GST, ban on bar licence on highways and ban in the real estate sector. The expenditure has increased. The Union Territory of Puducherry is not able to carry out development programmes since the entire receipts are being used for committed expenditure. Long pending demand of the Union Territory of Puducherry for a railway link from Tindivanam to Cuddalore via Puducherry should be met. Similarly, I appeal to link Peralam with Karaikal. I welcome the welfare schemes announced by the hon. Finance Minister and I also appeal to him to consider my demands favourably.

SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: I feel that this is the most challenging Budget for the hon. Finance Minister since this Government came to power. It is because oil prices have hardened, cushion of soft oil prices with which you could pursue giving money to the social sector, have no longer exists. There is an acute farm distress in the country. There is an under-utilised capacity in manufacturing and the power sectors which are not creating fresh jobs. Finance Minister has to maintain fiscal discipline so that FDI keeps coming to India. Finance Minister has taken a holistic view by pumping in money to the rural sector. 65 per cent of India's population was dependent on the farm, 49 per cent of the jobs were created in the agriculture sector. Yet we are not giving adequate prices to the farmers for their produce. The poor farmers are suffering. The Finance Minister has kept his promise that the farmer will get 150 per cent of his cost. The Finance Minister has said that the farmer will get just deal. We have raised the hopes of the farmer of this country. They are expecting a new deal, a big deal. Please, do not let down the farmer of India because if you do, you will see the kind of despair, suicides and frustration that this country has never seen before. How does a farmer get so poor and eventually commit suicide? He does not get adequate price for his produce, then he bears the healthcare cost, and then he carries the marriage expenses. This Budget has taken care of the first two. Adequate farm prices and by making sure that the poor in this country will be treated by the Government up to 5 lakhs per family. I hope something should be done that we curtail expenses on marriages in this country and some kind of a social campaign needs to be unleashed. The jobs have to be created. The Finance Minister said that we will pump money into the farm sector, six lakh crore is going into the infrastructure sector, And also he has tweaked the labour laws; fixed term contracts concept has been introduced, it will ensure that industry starts to hire more people. The way the BJP, the NDA has followed economic policies, I am convinced that we will see double digit growth very soon and the proof of that is the way FDI is coming into India. They know that this country is growing and this country is following the right economic policies. We need the FDI investment. When there is a

demand, only then factory starts working into full capacity. The Finance Minister is creating the demand. I am convinced that going forward, this country will soon see double-digit growth and I congratulate the Finance Minister for that.

DR. K. KESHAVA RAO: The Prime Minister goes on record to say on the floor of the House that bifurcation was done unscientifically. I could not understand what he means by that. What are they trying to say about Telangana? I am with them, as far as their demand is concerned, but, today, they say that something wrong had been done in the Act. I would like to say that they should understand that the Parliament has not done anything wrong. They are casting aspersions on the Parliament which has passed this Act. This Parliament has passed this Act, not one House, but both the Houses. We have been expatriated for sixty years. We did not bother because all that we wanted was a State. Now, it is a reality. Today, you come and compare. We did not have water. We were divided. My own State was divided into three parts. There was no hue and cry. The question today is there are only two rivers. Two-third of these rivers flows in Telangana. Total capital investment is in Telangana. Eighty-three per cent capital investment is in Telangana. But only eighteen per cent water is used here. I am not opposing you. You should get more, what is wrong if the Centre gives you more money? We are still subject to exploitation. According to the statement made by the Finance Minister, about Rs. 13,000 crore have been released. But not a single paisa except Rs. 2,000 crore came to Telangana. You set up thirteen institutions but not even a single has been given to us. It is my money. Nobody is giving me something out of charity. If all of us feel that something wrong has been done to Andhra, let the Government sit and sort it out. We have been demanding a coach factory in Kazipet since 40 years. As per Constitution every State shall have one High Court but we don't have yet. You have no sympathy for us. I would say in the Budget, you had a good opportunity, which you have missed.

SHRI SHAMSHER SINGH MANHAS: After independence congress ruled for 55 years. In Jammu and Kashmir there is a lack of basic amenities like electricity, water, roads and pucca houses. People reside in one room accommodation made from woods. Congress did not think in this direction. Not only Jammu and Kashmir but the whole country is passing through the same condition. Hon'ble Finance Minister has introduced the Budget in order to provide them facilities so that this country could move ahead. People residing in hilly areas have no means of livelihood. It is very difficult for them to raise five lakh rupees for their treatment that is why government has brought health insurance scheme for them. We are trying our best with full honesty to bring the benefit of these schemes upto the lowest level. Farming is very difficult in hilly areas. Every work has to be performed there manually. Why nothing has been done for their livelihood so far? There should be veterinary hospital for animals but not even veterinary dispensary is available there. You have expectations from us, we will meet them. We are ready to work towards health, education, agriculture, youths, unemployment. Schemes have been formulated under Border Area Development Scheme in order to provide facilities to the people residing there.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Initially Andhra Pradesh and Telengana were the same state but today they are fighting with each other. Why has Andhra Pradesh not been given a special category status? Under the PMGSY you have provided tokenism. This government is very cruel. They exaggerate in the Budget only for show purpose. In view of the ensuing elections, you have brought the Budget for farmers in haste. You are not aware of their difficulties. Sometime there is a drought and sometime they do not get good rate of their crops because of bumper crop. You have mentioned to increase the MSP. But wherefrom the money will be raised? There is no Budget allocation for this. Again and again you put the burden of expenditure on state governments and our state governments cannot bear these expenditures. Once you have given relief to the industrial sector, please extend it to farmers also. Farmers are committing suicide. The condition of tenant farmers is very bad but there is no

provision for them in the Budget. Government has provided nothing to women farmers. Required amount has not been allocated under PMRPRY scheme. Fiscal target has come down to 3.2 per cent. 4 out of 42 food parks are functional at present. Even the Nirbhaya Fund for women has been curtailed.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: We have been a forerunner in implementing the social welfare schemes, first ever in the country. I am thankful to the Government for reducing the GST for the food products in the hotels from 18 per cent to 5 per cent and exempting tractors from commercial vehicles and retaining them as agricultural part. Because of demonetization the social security scheme in the informal sector has suffered a lot. Less amount has been allocated under Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan than the required allocation. 52 per cent less amount than the demanded has been allocated to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government should seriously consider on these issues. I do not know how all the welfare schemes given in the Budget would be implemented. Many sectors are suffering because of shortcomings in the GST implementation. GST Council is sitting again and again to reconsider GST rates. Above all, the agricultural sector, the educational sector is neglected, the employment issue has not been tackled the way it should have been tackled.

DR. VIKAS MAHATME: It is a very important budget as it has restored faith of every Indian and now India can march ahead in the coming years. More than 50 crore people are going to be benefitted from 'Ayushman Bharat', the largest scheme in the world. We have taken the first step in the direction of introducing universal health care in the country. Government is going to set up 1.5 lakh wellness centres in the country in which primary health centres is also to be included. There will not be any difficulty if this scheme is implemented through 4 public sector insurance companies. No scheme regarding health can successfully run in India without taking help from private practitioners. Introduction of 'Jan Aushadhi yojna' by the Government has led to reduction in prices of 70 to 80 per cent medicines. Schemes like 'Ayushman Bharat' and 'Namo Care' will

provide jobs to paramedics. Hence, this Budget will instil confidence among Indians. We are moving towards building a new India and we will build a new India.

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