

Tobacco Cultivation

*433. PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to encourage tobacco cultivation in new areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof State-wise;

(c) whether any study with regard to the potential for tobacco cultivation in Madhya Pradesh has been conducted;

(d) if so, the details and outcome thereof; and

(e) the funds allocated for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) There is no such proposal.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) and (d). Preliminary exploratory trials on production of Burley tobacco were conducted in Jagdalpur, Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh and the results were promising with respect to quality parameters. Studies are still continuing.

(e) Tobacco Board allocated Rupees One lakh each year in 1992-93 and 1993-94 for this purpose. However, no separate funds were allocated for Madhya Pradesh.

Forest Cover

*434. SHRI RAJESH KUMAR: SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether satellite survey using remote sensing device has estimated the actual forest cover at 64 million hectares as against the recorded forest area of 75 million hectares;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps, the Government propose to take to make the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 more effective with a view to arrest the decline in the forest cover?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As per "The State of Forest Report 1993", the recorded forest area in the country is 77.008 million hectares and the actual forest cover is 64.0107 million hectares.

(b) The recorded forest area is the area which has been recorded as forest in Government records whereas the forest cover as mentioned in "The State of Forest Report 1993" is the actual area, irrespective of its legal status, under forest with crown density of 10% and above including mangrove forest.

(c) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was amended in 1988 and the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981 thereunder were amended in 1992. All effort is being made to implement these effectively.