

wheat irradiated was unfit for human consumption on account of its causing chromosomal changes;

(b) whether some countries such as Australia, Sweden and many States in USA have stopped permission for use of irradiation for food;

(c) if so, whether the Government have any proposal to stop such technology in food;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the various angles of this new and debateable technology has been cleared by the Committee in the Ministry of Environment and Forests on use of nuclear material from consumer angle; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND DEPARTMENT OF SPACE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI) : (a) The research carried out at the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad, was reported to suggest that freshly irradiated wheat induced polyploid (chromosomal change) cells. However, this could not be confirmed/accepted on the basis of scientific experiments carried out in various laboratories in the world including the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai. Further, the Ministry of Health, Government of India, had set up a two-man Committee in 1975 to look into the discrepancies between the data of the NIN, Hyderabad, and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, on the safety of irradiated wheat for human consumption. This Committee concluded that NIN data suggesting that irradiated wheat induces polyploid cells was imprecise. Subsequently, the Food and Drug Administration of the United States and also the World Health Organisation (WHO) have concluded that irradiated food materials do not produce chromosomal changes in the organism and are also safe for human consumption.

(b) Australia and Sweden have presently no regulation for promoting food irradiation. All the States in USA permit food irradiation. Currently 37 countries have accepted this technology. USA has recently started using this technology in several products.

(c) and (d). No, Sir. India has no plans to stop food irradiation as it is a safe and beneficial technology. The Government has approved irradiation technology for onion, potatoes and spices.

(e) and (f). Food irradiation technology involves only the irradiation sources and the irradiated food. The clearance for irradiation sources from the point of view of Health and Safety is given by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Government of India and the clearance for food irradiation is provided by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health has already cleared the irradiation of onion, potatoes and spices for human consumption.

Production of Salt

645. SHRI S.S.R. RAJENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the demand for Indian salt is increasing year after year in the countries like Japan, Philippines, Singapore, etc.;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to increase production of salt in Tuticorin area in Tamil Nadu where exists huge potentiality of salt production;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (DR. C. SILVERA) : (a) Export of salt to Japan is increasing year after year. However, no definite trend is available from other countries.

(b) to (d). Production of salt in Tuticorin area has almost reached its optimum potential. Tuticorin area is catering to the requirements of entire southern States and partially requirements of the States of Orissa and West Bengal. Therefore much exportable surplus is not available in Tuticorin. On an average about 1 to 1.5 lakh tonnes is exported from Tuticorin.

Doubling of Railway Line

646. SHRI A. CHARLES : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether any time bound programme has been chalked out by the Government for completing doubling of the Railway line from Trivandrum to Kochuveli;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the work is progressing as per the schedule?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH KALMADI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work will be completed by Dec. '97.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Gauge Conversion in Gujarat

647. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether some proposals are pending with the Government for conversion of Narrow Gauge line into Metre-Gauge in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Rajkot/Veraval Metre-Gauge Railway line is also included in these proposals; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and when these are likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH KALMADI) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Rajkot - Veraval MG line is being converted to BG. The work at a cost of Rs. 100 crores is already sanctioned and is being taken up.

Closure of Offices

648. SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether too many successive holidays create many difficulties for the public;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to have only the Independence Day and Republic Day as holidays; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA) : (a) While too many successive holidays may create some difficulties for the public, such occasions are very rare and these arise out of totally unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the Government.

(b) and (c). No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

[*Translation*]

Anganwadi Workers

649. SHRI KRISHAN DUTT SULTANPURI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of workers working in the Anganwadi Centres in the country;

(b) the wages being paid to them by the Government;

(c) whether the Government are taking any steps to increase their wages; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT) (KUMARI VIMLA VERMA) : (a) As on 31.12.1995, there are 3,20,298 Anganwadi Workers and equal number of Helpers in 3,20,298 Anganwadi Centres under ICDS Scheme in the country.

(b) The Anganwadi Workers and Helpers are not paid any wages. They are only given an Honorarium for the part-time voluntary effort put in by them in implementing the ICDS Scheme. The honorarium paid to Anganwadi Workers category-wise and Helpers is as follows :

Category	Amount of Honorarium per month
(A) Anganwadi Workers	
1. Non-Matriculate	Rs. 350
2. Non-matriculate with 5 years' honorary work	Rs. 375
3. Non-matriculate with 10 years honorary work	Rs. 400