

(a) the details of programmes being chalked out to bring down the birth rate in the country;

(b) whether the Government has fixed any target to bring down the birth rate for every thousand population during the next five years;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have directed the State Governments of impart advice to people for controlling the birth rates; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA):

(a) The Family Welfare Programme provides counselling and medical services for better health of mothers and children to influence people's reproductive behaviour. It also provides information and services for different method of contraception, to bring down the Birth Rate in the country.

(b) and (c) No demographic goals have been fixed so far for the IX Plan.

(d) and (e) The Family Welfare Programme includes motivating the people to accept family planning methods appropriate to them. Such counselling is done in the PHCs and rural sub-Centres through doctors and health workers as well as through media and NGOs.

#### Geo-Synthetics

\*506. SHRI AYYANNA PATRUDU : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the geo-synthetics, the new construction material is being successfully used for various civil engineering works including construction of roads in U.S. and other countries;

(b) whether India has started its research and technology in the field of geo-synthetics;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken for setting up of geo-synthetic manufacturing industries in India especially in hill areas & natural disaster prone areas ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. Considerable research has been carried out by various Institutions in India. Geo-synthetics has been used in construction of reinforced soil wall, drains, overlay and erosion prevention measures, etc. in limited cases because of its high costs.

(d) Setting up of manufacturing units in private sector depends upon market economy and demand for the material. There is no proposal on the part of the Government to start any such unit.

#### Linking of Rivers

\*507. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO :  
SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether a high-level 9-Member National Commission has been constituted to link all big and small rivers of the country;

(b) if so, the composition and terms of reference;

(c) whether the experts and scientists have also been included in the proposed National Commission;

(d) by the what time the Government have asked them to submit their report;

(e) whether the Government have also conducted a survey to use the contaminated ground water in various States;

(f) whether the Government are committed for development of ground and surface water resources and whether any amount has been earmarked for these projects; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and the provision of funds made therefore alongwith names of rivers to be taken up for inter linking ?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) A National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development Plan was set up by the Ministry of Water Resources vide O.M. No.2/11/96-BM/645-661, dt. 13.9.1996 with Dr. G.V.K. Rao as the Chairman. However, he resigned on health grounds. Subsequently Shri C.H. Hanumantha Rao was appointed as the Chairman vide O.M. No.2/11/96-BM/965-985, dt. 22.11.1996. He also expressed his inability to continue on account of other preoccupations. Thereafter, Dr. S.R. Hashim, Member, Planning Commission was appointed as the Chairman of the Commission vide O.M. No.2/11/96-BM/182-206, dt. 14.2.1997.

The present Composition of the Commission is as under :-

1. Dr. S.R. Hashim : Chairman  
Member,  
Planning Commission