

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is a proposal to include Rajasthan in this scheme and solve the problem of pollution particularly in Pali, Balotra and Jodhpur by granting aid to Anti-Pollution Boards.

SHRI KAMAL NATH : I have no knowledge of this proposal.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: You need a notice.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KAMAL NATH : Yes, a prior notice should be given in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 552 and 562 will be taken together.

[*English*]

Greening of Wastelands

*552. **SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE:** Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to involve the private sector in the greening of wastelands; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

An important objective of the National Forest Policy, adopted in 1988, is to increase substantially the forest/tree cover in the country through massive afforestation and social forestry programmes, especially on all denud-

ed, degraded and unproductive lands. The Policy also lays down that individuals and institutions should be motivated and facilitated to undertake tree-farming on their own lands; and that, as far as possible, forest-based industries should raise the needed raw material preferably by establishing a direct relationship with the individuals who can grow the raw material by supporting them with inputs like credit, technical advice, harvesting and transport services, etc.

2. In pursuance of the Policy provisions, action has been initiated on the following lines:--

- (i) Promoting farm forestry/agro-forestry on people's own lands with a view to meeting the domestic as well as the industrial and urban requirements.
- (ii) Setting up decentralised people's nurseries in order to provide self-employment in rural areas and to make available quality seedlings of species desired by people locally.
- (iii) Advising the State Governments to review and relax appropriately the existing restrictions on felling and transport of trees grown on private lands.
- (iv) Setting up of Tree Growers' and Farm Forestry Cooperatives in States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Karnataka.
- (v) Facilitating the flow of institutional credit for undertaking afforestation and tree-planting activities on private lands.
- (vi) Setting up of the National Fund for Afforestation (contributions to which attract tax relief) in order to provide a mechanism to enable people to participate in the national effort of afforestation and wastelands development.

- (vii) Allowing village communities to share in the usufruct of degraded forest lands that they agree to protect and develop.
- (viii) Providing financial assistance to Voluntary Agencies to undertake afforestation and wastelands development activities on private and public lands.

[*Translation*]

National Wasteland Development Board

*562. SHRI ARJUN SINGH YADAV:

SHRI VISHWANATH SHARMA:

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

- (a) whether the National Wasteland Development Board has failed in its programmes relating to plantation, development of nurseries and people's participation in afforestation;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the schemes proposed to be started for afforestation of wasteland and participation of public with a view to check the felling of trees and soil erosion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) Statement I is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT I

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The National Wastelands Development Board was established in 1985 with the mandate of undertaking wastelands development through a massive programme for afforestation and tree

planting with people's participation. The Board is also the nodal agency at the Central level to coordinate and monitor the progress of afforestation/tree planting activities under point no. 16 of the 20-Point Programme.

During the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), the total area coverage under afforestation and tree planting activities in the country was 8.8 million hectares, against target of 8.6 million hectares. The yearwise targets and achievements are given in Statement II below. In all the earlier Plan periods from 1950 to 1985, the total coverage was 8.2 million hectares.

With a view to encourage public participation, the National Wastelands Development Board initiated the Decentralised People's Nurseries Scheme during 1986-87. During the Seventh Five Year Plan, the nurseries produced 140 crore seedlings against a target of 106 crore seedlings. The Board also initiated the Grants-in-Aid Scheme in 1985 to provide financial assistance to Voluntary Agencies to take up afforestation and wastelands development activities. During the Seventh Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 16.30 crores was released under the scheme to Voluntary Agencies for taking up 336 projects in different parts of the country.

The Wastelands Development Programme is aimed at checking land degradation, putting wastelands to sustainable use, increasing biomass availability, specially fuelwood and fodder, and promoting people's participation. Under the programme, the following schemes are being implemented by the National Wastelands Development Board:—

- (1) Integrated Wastelands Development Projects Scheme.
- (2) Fuelwood/Fodder Projects Scheme.
- (3) Decentralised People's Nurseries Scheme.