

increased their stake by issue of further shares at a premium below the market price.

Section 81 (1A) of the Companies Act, 1956 empowers a Company to issue further shares to any person (whether any existing shareholder or other person) in any manner whatsoever if a special resolution to that effect is passed by the company in general meeting. Under the extant provisions, preferential allotment can be made to any person including a segment of existing shareholders on such price as may be approved by the shareholders in the general meeting.

Mud Housing Technology

2968. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that mud housing technology can solve the housing shortage problem;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether any research is being conducted to improve the low cost construction technology; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI P.K. THUNGON): (a) The Government is aware that the efficient

use of mud is a cost effective option for house construction.

(b) Institutions like Housing & Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO), Central Buildings Research Institute (CBRI), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, and Building Materials & Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) in the public sector and several voluntary organisations have been promoting mud building technologies in various forms and regions. Government has been extending its support to their efforts through schemes like Research Grants, Building Centres, Experimental Housing Scheme etc.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. Central Building Research Institute, Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC), some Regional Research Laboratories of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and several Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) like Centre for Application of Science and Technology to Rural Areas, Bangalore (ASTRA), Development Alternatives, New Delhi, are engaged in research and development of low-cost construction technologies including, mud technology, with a view to promote such proven cost-effective technologies, Government has set up BMTPC.

In the area of mud housing technology, different R&D groups are working on for improving traditional methods (like Adobe, rammed earth wattle and daub) as well as for developing new techniques which include compacted and stabilised mud blocks, pneumatically rammed earth, etc. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) have formulated specifications for soil based blocks.