

matter and that the Government is still applying its mind on that

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: There is no confusion in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister did not say that there is confusion in Maharashtra. It could be somewhere else.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE: The State of Maharashtra is at present under Shiv Sena-BJP rule. But before this, it was under the Congress Party rule and the attitude of the Congress Government towards Konkan issue was no different. Konkan has always been a backward region and today when we are asking for a Statutory Development Board, efforts are being made to put hurdles in the way of development of Konkan by putting forward the demand for Vidarbha State. There are Development Boards for Vidarbha, Marathwada and the rest of Maharashtra as a result of which these areas have greatly benefited. But Konkan is still nursing a dream for its development. The people of Konkan are restive and I want to know what this Government has done to the proposal of the State legislature...

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please ask the question now. You cannot make speeches. If everybody makes speeches, we have to do away with the Question Hour.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE: In the context of the proposal sent by the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, I want to know from the Home Minister of the United Front Government as to whether he proposes to take immediate steps to set up a Development Board for Konkan?

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, I have again to repeat what I had said earlier.

MR. SPEAKER: I know that the next question will also be repeated and again the same answer has to be repeated. You can repeat it now.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The hon. Members need not have any apprehension that there is any objection or resistance from the Central Government towards setting up of a separate Development Board only for the Konkan region. This will be favourably considered, in spite of some objections which are being raised and which you are seeing for yourself. I hope that we will be able to initiate the process as soon as possible.

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, some questions have been asked and replies have been given. After my asking the question, I know that I will get the same reply. The only thing I would like to find out is—in the case of Konkan, after passing the resolution in the Maharashtra State Assembly, a strong unanimous recommendation was sent to the Centre—why has the Centre not taken this particular proposal into account? Is there any specific reason? He said, in 1980, someone had filed a writ petition in the High Court and because of that they have been thinking it over. After having that writ petition, this Government has taken the decision of forming various district development boards. In the case of Konkan, if at all any amendment is required in the Constitution, why has that amendment not been moved? After the parliamentary elections, after this Eleventh Lok Sabha has been constituted, a number of amendments have been introduced here. Why this particular amendment, despite having the recommendation from the State of Maharashtra, has not been undertaken?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, as far as I am aware, I may be wrong, there is no special reason for this. What is being hinted is that there is some kind of a discrimination against the Konkan region. I am not aware of any such deliberate policy or attitude on the part of the Central Government. The hon. Members referred to the two resolutions which were unanimously passed by the Maharashtra Assembly and asked as to why no action has been taken on that. How can I reply to that question? We were not here at that time.

The unanimous resolutions of Assemblies are very important, no doubt. But they are not always found acceptable to many people. For example, the Uttar Pradesh Assembly had three times passed unanimous resolutions in favour of a separate State of Uttarakhand. In spite of that, it became a controversial question until we decided to go ahead with it. In the case of Konkan, I do not think that there is any special reason for opposing the demand for a Development Board. It should be there. That is my own opinion also. I hope that now, in view of the general feelings which are being expressed here, we will be able to start the process as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: It is good enough.

[Translation]

Demand/Production of Fruits and Vegetables

524. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS:

SHRI D. P. YADAV:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a great demand of fruits and vegetables in the country, particularly in the urban areas;

(b) if so, whether the production of fruits and vegetables is far below than the requirement;

(c) if so, the reasons for this low production;

(d) whether the Government have formulated schemes aimed at increasing the production of fruits and vegetables, payment of reasonable prices to the growers and to ensure the availability of adequate quantity of fruits and vegetables in the market for the consumers at fair prices; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Demand of fruits and vegetables particularly in urban areas is on the rise. The production of fruits have gone up from 28.63 million tonnes in 1991-92 to 39.47 million tonnes in 1993-94 and of vegetables from 58.53 million tonnes in 1991-92 to 65.09 million tonnes in 1993-94. The produce is mainly consumed domestically particularly in the urban areas.

(b) and (c) The production of fruits and vegetables overall is adequate to meet the requirement as the average annual rate of growth of production of fruits and vegetables is quite high at 6.3 and 8.0% respectively from 1981-82 to 1993-94. The production per hectare, however, is low, the reasons for which are as under:—

- (i) Old plantation.
- (ii) Lack of availability of improved planting material.
- (iii) Inadequate extension facilities.
- (iv) Weak post-harvest and marketing infrastructure leads to annual loss of about 25% of the produce.
- (v) Poor adoption of improved technology and pest management measures.

(d) and (e) The following schemes are being implemented during the VIII Plan period to increase the production of fruits and vegetables and marketing facilities:—

1. Integrated development of tropical, arid & temperate zone fruits.
2. Production & supply of vegetable seeds.

3. Development of root and tuber crops.

4. Development of mushroom.

5. Use of plastics in agriculture.

6. Development of bee keeping for improving crop productivity.

7. Schemes under National Horticulture Board:—

(i) Integrated Project on Management of post harvest infrastructure of fruits and vegetables.

(ii) Development of marketing of horticulture produce through participation in soft loan.

(iii) Establishment of nutritional garden in rural areas.

(iv) Market information service of horticultural crops.

(v) Transfer of technology through training and visits of horticulture growers.

In addition, market intervention scheme is in operation to ensure that growers of these commodities receive reasonable prices in case of glut in the market and in order to assure the availability of fruits and vegetables to consumers at fair prices, government organise sale through NAFED, state agencies and NDDB.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the demand for fruits and vegetables in the country has risen to a great extent. According to the answer of the hon. Minister, it is found that under the Integrated Development of Tropical, Arid and Temperate Zone Fruits Programme, there was an investment of Rs. 4.720 lakh from 1992 to 1996. But till 1996, only Rs. 3,015 lakh could be spent and the rest Rs. 1,705 lakh could not be spent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what the reasons for not utilising this money are.

Number two is, according to the present per day consumption recommended by the Dietary Alliance of ICMR, the demand for fruits is 40 million tonnes and the demand for vegetables is 95 million tonnes. How is the Government going to meet this demand? I would like to know from the hon. Minister that since heavy demand is there, what programmes they have got to meet the demand.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Yes. It is a fact that the funds released or provided are not utilised. It happened in the past. I have now started a new monitoring system scheme-wise and so I think it will improve. But the situation, as the hon. Member has said, stands that a proper utilisation of funds has not been done.

As regards the second question, there is some shortage of vegetables. The vegetables required are 95.6

million tonnes, according to the estimate that the hon. Member has given. We are having 65 million tonnes. Schemes are there. I have mentioned that if we can improve it, it is possible not only to fulfill but even to have more vegetables for export also. Similarly, for fruits also, it is manageable. But we want to improve it and there are schemes. If the State Governments fully cooperate, and if hon. Members also help us. I am ready to give more schemes so that more fruits and vegetables are available.

SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS: The Government has allotted Rs. 190 lakh in 1996-97 for vegetable development. But actually till now Rs. 103 lakh is released. What are the problems that the rest Rs. 87 lakh could not be released to different States?

Number two is, why is Orissa not allotted Rs. 6.25 lakh this year?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: It is because the utilisation certificate is not coming. So, it is held up. The moment it comes, I am ready to release it.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: Sir, it is a matter of satisfaction that India occupies an important place today in the export of fruits. The small farmers living in the villages do want to grow fruits and vegetables, but they face the problem of selling them. In many areas, cities are far from the villages and by the time they take their product to the market, it either rots or they are paid inadequate price with the result that these farmers are discouraged. I would, therefore, like to ask the hon. Minister whether in order to encourage the production of fruits and vegetables, the Government would make arrangements to purchase them from the farmer at the places of production at reasonable rates and make the available to the consumers at reduced prices?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: If the Government starts purchasing and selling Vegetables, you can imagine what would happen ... (Interruptions)

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: My question is that when the small farmer goes to the market... (Interruptions) there are no arrangements for him for marketing.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Listen to the answer, please

... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: Please do not avoid the question by taking it in a light vein, understand the spirit behind it.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Let the Minister answer

... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: The position is that the small farmers are not getting the market for their products now-a-days.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? Sit down, please, let the Minister answer first. He has not completed his answer.

[Translation]

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: When you have raised the question, please hear the answer also.

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: You are taking it jokularly... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Do you want a reply or not...

[English]

I will not allow the Minister to answer. If you do not want to get the answer, I will not allow the Minister to reply.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, sit down please. No answer is required. If the Member is not interested in getting the answer, Why should you answer?

[Translation]

SHRI SHIV RAJ SINGH: Please reply by understanding the basic idea behind the question.

[English]

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: You allowed him... (Interruptions)... It is an important question ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, if any Member of Parliament, after asking the question, interrupts the answer of the Minister, I will not allow the Minister to answer.

[Translation]

SHRI BHERULAL MENNA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to part (c) of the question in which a query has been made as to the reasons of low production of fruits and vegetables. The population of the cities is continuously increasing and houses have been constructed on lands which once grow vegetables. The vegetables can now generally be grown in far off villages only. I do not say that the Government should purchase Vegetables, but I do say that the Government should make means of transport available in villages so that the producers may bring and sell their vegetables and fruits in the cities or the purchaser may go there to purchase them. That would encourage production of vegetables. I want to know whether the Government would provide transport facilities in the villages.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: You have asked a very good question. At that time, you did not hear what I was saying. There is a National Horticulture Board which gives loans at 4% interest for growing fruits and

vegetables. It can give advance credit. Some amount is still left with it. We can also provide allowance for transport. (Interruptions). We can provide all these facilities. The farmers can organise themselves into cooperatives. All what I wanted to say was that it would not be a good thing for the Government to do it. I did not say that in a light vein. We are prepared to help you. In the area which the hon. Minister has in mind, he may have a cooperative formed there and send the scheme to us. We have got the money, the entire amount has not been utilised. Even if a scheme is given to us before the end of the current Plan period, we can give the money that we have. There is no problem from our side.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Do the Government propose to set up some Board for construction of roads in those areas during the year 1996-97 where cooperatives are already functioning for marketing fruits and vegetables so that the production of fruits and vegetables may get an impetus and the producers may get a reasonable return?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: We do not have money for building roads but, as I have said, we can assist in cold storage, transport, improved seeds etc. Whatever cooperative scheme you send, we will consider that sympathetically.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Is it necessary to forward the scheme through State Government or can it be sent direct to your Ministry?

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Well, it will have to be sent through the State Government.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR: Then, nothing will happen.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: State Governments also have powers. Both the Centre and the states function under the Constitution. However, the National Horticulture Board is also advancing funds directly. So, you can also bring it into the picture. Both arrangements are there, but don't say that you do not need State Government.

SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI: Sir, the hon. Minister has in his reply enumerated the reasons for low production. In part (iv) of his reply, he has said that 25 per cent produce is lost every year due to weak post-harvest and marketing infrastructure. I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that a fruit called 'Kinu', which is a variety of 'Malta', was produced in large quantity in Ganga Nagar, Hanumangarh and Bikaner areas. Many people cultivated large orchards of this fruit, but they had to destroy their crops and their orchards due to continuous lack of marketing facility and had to suffer heavy losses. Therefore, I want to know from the Government whether it would provide all necessary

marketing facilities so that the old orchards may be revived again.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: We are prepared to consider this. But you may please send me specific proposals. We are prepared to extend specific assistance.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH: The hon. Minister has said that the present production of fruits and vegetables is not adequate and we have to increase it. My submission is that the biggest problem in increasing the production of fruits and vegetables is costly seeds. The seeds of high breed varieties of fruits and vegetables are very costly. I want to know from the hon. Minister what efforts are being made to make high breed varieties of seeds available at reasonable rates.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the question of making them available at cheaper rates is concerned, we will have to see what category of people are purchasing them. If the people belonging to very poor category are taking them, we are considering in what way we can supply these seeds cheaper to them. But, for the present, we cannot give you any assurance that we will make them cheaper. This is under our consideration, but if your contention is that everybody including the rich should get it free, it is not possible.

[English]

Railway Users' Consultative Committees

*525 PROF. P. RASA SINGH RAWAT:
DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the measures being taken to increase participation of commuters in the functioning of Railways;

(b) the system prescribed for setting up of the Railway Users' Consultative Committees at the Station, Division and Zonal levels indicating the number of members therein;

(c) whether any system exists to monitor the implementation of the suggestions given by the consultative committee of Members of Parliament convened at the Division, Zonal level and Ministry of Railways levels; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) In order to ensure increasing participation of commuters and other railway users in sustaining and