

Legislation against Usury

1071. SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry had issued guidelines in 1975 to all States and Union Territories for enacting suitable legislation against usury; if so, specific details thereof and the enactments made by States;

(b) whether Patna High Court, Supreme Court and other High Courts have decided in favour of mortgaged ornaments, utensils etc. to be returned by the money lenders to the poor debtors; if so, legal and administrative steps to enforce the same; and

(c) whether any updated and more effective guidelines are proposed to be issued; if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA) : (a) Although Debt Relief is a State subject, the Government of India had issued guidelines to the State Governments and Union Territories asking them to enact suitable legislation giving relief to the rural poor by liquidating the non-institutional debts of landless labourers, rural artisans & marginal farmers whose annual household income from all sources did not exceed Rs. 2400/- per annum; and scaling down the non-institutional debts of small farmers. State-wise details regarding the enactments made by the State Governments and Union Territories are indicated in the statement laid on the table of the House. (Placed in library. See No. LT 8493/84).

(b) Yes, Sir, Patna High Court and other courts have decided that the definition of debt includes ornaments and utensils and that the provisions of the Debt Relief Act apply to them. Follow up action to enforce the decision is to be taken up by the State Governments.

(c) At the moment, there is no proposal to issue fresh guidelines. All the State Governments and Union Terri-

tories have, however, been recently requested to review the existing debt relief measures and also to tone up institutional agencies in order to minimise the dependence of weaker sections in rural areas on non-institutional sources of credit.

Silting in D.V.C. Reservoirs

1072. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of IRRIGATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the heavy silting in and consequent reduction of capacity of the D.V.C. reservoirs;

(b) if so, whether Government have contemplated and remedial measures;

(c) if so, the details thereof and when will such measures be executed; and

(d) if not, whether Government will do so without any further delay in view of the repeated flood caused by the D.V.C. discharges ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION ((SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) The Sedimentation Surveys carried out for Maithon and Panchet Hill Reservoirs of D.V.C. in 1971 indicated that the average annual loss of live storage was 0.6% in Maithon Reservoir and about 1% in the case of Panchet Reservoir. The average annual loss in flood storage was found to be negligible in the case of Maithon whereas in the case of Panchet Hill Reservoir, the loss in the capacity was 0.09%.

(b) to (d) Catchment Treatment measures are being implemented in identified priority treatable areas under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Soil Conservation in the Catchment of River of Valley Projects by the Ministry of Agriculture. The measures would help check accelerated erosion in the catchment resulting from degradation and further deterioration.