

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Union Government to mitigate the difference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) The estimates of income in rural and urban areas worked out by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) in terms of Net Domestic Product (NDP) for the years 1970-71, 1980-81 and 1990-91 (Provisional) are as follows:

*Per Capita Net Domestic Product*

		(Rs./Year at current prices)		
		1970-71	1980-81	1990-91(P)
1.	Rural	529	1245	3510
2.	Urban	1294	2888	9579
3.	Urban -Rural Disparity (2)/(1)	2.4	2.3	2.7

The per capita income between urban and rural areas at current prices had shown a narrowing of the disparity from 2.4 times in 1970-71 to 2.3 times in 1980-81. However, the corresponding ratio in the provisional estimate for 1990-91 is 2.7.

(c) The reduction in urban-rural disparities, particularly in income and consumption is targeted to be achieved through a greater focus on agriculture and other rural activities. One of the important objectives of the Ninth Plan is to give priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to provide adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty.

[English]

**Attacks on Christians**

310. SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU :  
SHRI JAYARAMA I.M. SHETTY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "MEA steps in late to control international damage" appearing in the Statesman dated January 13, 1999;

(b) if so, whether attacks on Christians in the country are damaging the image of the Government in the world particularly Christians of Indian origin in abroad; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) India's tradition of religious tolerance and secularism in the framework of a pluralistic society is well recognised. The Government of India has emphasised India's strong and continuing commitment to maintaining this tradition. Attention has also been drawn to the statements of the President and Prime Minister of India condemning the recent incidents, the universal public condemnation in India of such occurrences, as well as Government's prompt action in fully investigating and proceeding under the law against all such acts of violence. Foreign Governments, public opinion and international media have been fully sensitised to the above facts. Our Missions and Posts abroad have been duly involved in this effort. These measures have helped to reassure the international community of Government's seriousness of purpose. Understanding has been shown for India's position, and in particular of the fact that these incidents are essentially aberrations due to the actions of criminal elements.

**Strategy to Improve Foodgrain Production**

311. SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE :  
SHRI S. S. OWAISI :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether ASSOCHAM has suggested multi-pronged strategy for increasing the production of foodgrain; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry have in their document entitled "Strategic Plan for Indian Agriculture Sector, July, 1998" analysed various issues concerning Indian Agriculture including measures to reach the target of 500 million tonnes of foodgrains production by 2020. The suggestions include modifications in land lease norms, harnessing of ground water resources, making available bank finance for minor irrigation projects, greater involvement of private sector and contract farming. The suggestions made by the Chamber will be considered while formulating strategies for the development of the agriculture sector in the Country.

**Interest of Coconut Farmers**

312. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether coconut farmers are the worst sufferers due to fall in price, disease to trees and lack of proper manure and irrigation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to safeguard the interest of the coconut farmers?