

Software Industry:

1675. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

- (a) the performance of software industry in the country during the last three years;
- (b) the private and public sector companies involved in the production and export of software at present;
- (c) whether there is a vast scope to promote the export of software;
- (d) if so, the possibilities explored in that regard; and
- (e) the programmes drawn for 1996-97 financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YODINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) The performance of the software industry for the last three years is given below :-

Year	(Rs. in crores)	
	Domestic	Export
1993-94	695	1,020
1994-95	1,070	1,474
1995-96	1,690	2,650 (estimated)

(b) There are about 250 major software exporting companies, including 3 from the public sector.

(c) to (e). The Government has initiated the following steps to boost software exports :-

- To provide High Speed Data Communication Infrastructure facility to software exports, the Department of Electronics has established 7 Software Technology Parks (STPs) at Bangalore, Pune, Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Thiruvantapuram, Noida and Hyderabad. The Government is also encouraging State Governments to set up STPs.
- State Government of West Bengal and Rajasthan have set up STPs at Calcutta and Jaipur respectively. State Government of Punjab and Goa have also initiated steps to set up STPs in their respective States.
- Strengthening of manpower Development Programme both in terms of quantity and quality to meet the growing requirements of the Software industry. In the past, the Department of Electronics (DOE) has supported 254 institutions for Degree/Diploma Level courses in Computers.

In order to bring standardisation in the quality of education in the non-formal sector, DOE is implementing a voluntary scheme, namely, Department of Electronics Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC) under which institutions in the non-formal sector (both private and public) on meeting specified norms and criteria are given accreditation for conducting specified levels of computer courses - 'O' (Foundation), 'A' (Advanced Diploma), 'B' (Graduate) and 'C' (Post-Graduate).

- Promote Computerisation in the country which would provide a base for building of skills and for demonstration of capabilities
- Legal protection of software through the Copy Right Act.
- Launching of Export promotion Campaigns

The programmes drawn for the 1996-97 are as follows:-

- Capacity Augmentation by increasing the bandwidth of the existing High Speed Data Communication Channels at the STPs set up by the DOE to meet the growing requirements of the exporting units.
- Organise Software Export Promotion Seminars/Conferences in USA alongwith the Software Industry Association and Indian Mission abroad.
- Participate in the international exhibitions - Comdex Fall 96 and CeBIT 97.
- Organise Seminars for creation of awareness on use of legal software and Intellectual Property Rights protection of software, alongwith Software Industry Association.

Contamination of Ground Water

1676. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "FATAL THIRST : 1 M. DRINK TOXIC WATER" appearing in 'The Economic times', New Delhi dated July 1, 1996;

(b) if so, whether drinking water in the seven districts in West Bengal contains more arsenic a litre than the safe limit prescribed by the World Health Organisation;

(c) if so, whether any long-term or short term plan has been formulated to eradicate this worst arsenic contamination of ground water in these 7 districts, particularly the 24-Parganas (South), which is poverty-ridden and does not have any industry;