

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5006
ANSWERED ON:07.05.2012
SPECIAL FUND FOR TEA INDUSTRY
Mahato Shri Narahari;Roy Shri Nripendra Nath

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any special fund has been set up for promotion of tea industry;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any complaint over the quality of Indian tea has been registered by any international organisation;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken in this regard;
- (e) whether the quality of tea produced particularly in South India has gone down; and
- (f) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the steps taken by the Government to improve quality of tea?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA)

(a) & (b): Yes Madam. A Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) was set up in January, 2007 under the aegis of the Tea Board with an estimated outlay of Rs.567.10 crores (capital infusion of Rs.91.00 crores in SPTF plus subsidy of Rs.476.10 crores) for extending financial assistance in the shape of loan and subsidy to the tea gardens for undertaking uprooting and replanting/replacement planting and rejuvenation of old and senile plantations. The pattern of assistance under the scheme is to provide 50% of the unit cost as long term loan, 25% of the unit cost as subsidy and the remaining 25% as borrower's contribution. The scheme was to be implemented till the end of the 11th Plan, i.e., during the remaining period of 2006-07 and during the 11th Plan. The physical achievement under the scheme during the 11th Plan, viz., 2007-08 to 2011-12 was that an area of 25144.22 ha. and 6604.85 ha. was covered under replantation and rejuvenation respectively.

(c) & (d): The Tea Board has not received any complaint over the quality of Indian Teas from any international organization.

(e) & (f): South Indian Tea plantations are faced with acute shortage of labour. To overcome this problem, almost all the tea gardens have resorted to mechanical plucking. Since fineness of hand plucking is difficult to be replicated in the case of harvesting machines, there is some dilution in the quality of made tea when compared to teas made out of hand plucking. Several Research & Development initiatives have been made for improving the plucking efficiency of the machines. Towards this end, the Tea Board has extended financial support to the R&D Institutions for refinement of the mechanical plucking machines so that the quality is not compromised.