

Title : Need to review the functioning of Department of Agriculture in Andman & Nicobar Islands.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS): I would like to draw the attention of this House that the Department of Agriculture which is responsible for the welfare of the farming community in A & N Islands through production and productivity, improvement of the crops etc. However, it is not satisfactory doing its job. Unfortunately, the Department failed miserably in all sectors like crop husbandry, soil and water conservation and minor irrigation. Since, March 2004. the Department has failed to procure and supply agriculture inputs like fertilizers, seeds, plant protection chemicals etc., which has created scarcity of inputs throughout the Islands and thus caused low production. This has led to reduction in income of the farmers and adversely affected consumers due to high prices of agriculture produce specially vegetables.

Considering the potential of horticultural crops of these Islands, Government of India as per the recommendations of Island Development Authority approved high value agriculture programme for an estimated lay out of Rs. 50.06 crores. The Department of Agriculture is responsible for these programmes through, High Value Agriculture Development Agency. Many farmers have taken up the programme as per the guidance of the Field Officers involving PRIS. Not a single farmer is benefited out of this scheme so far. Moreover, many farmers have invested on the advise of Field Officers with the hope of getting assistance as per Government of India's norms.

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\* Treated as laid on the Table.

To mitigate this grievance, non-timber forest produce like medicinal, aromatic and dye plants development was proposed by the Sekhar Singh Commission. Accordingly, A & N Medicinal Plants Board was created under the Chairmanship of the Lt. Governor for promoting cultivation, collection, processing and marketing etc. The Government of India has funded for the same but the Islanders are not benefited.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government of India to look into the grievances of the farmers from these Islands.