

introduced in agriculture alongwith the increase registered in agriculture yield as a result thereof;

(b) the name of the laboratories, research centres and agriculture universities imparting training in Tissue culture and the number of students getting training in these institutions; and

(c) the benefits of Tissue Culture in comparison to the General techniques of cultivation alongwith its comparative cost?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Plant Tissue Culture technique has been used for generating novel varieties in different crop plants like oil seed brassicas, bengal gram, moong bean, groundnut etc. Regeneration protocol is also available for wheat varieties and indica rice. As a result, plants with high yield, with better nutritional value, disease-free and of superior quality have been obtained. The complete regeneration protocol has been perfected for production of horticultural and plantation crops such as Banana, Citrus, Potato, Sugarcane, Coffee and Pepper. The Department of Biotechnology has set up two Tissue Culture Pilot Plant Units for large scale production of elite tree species including agro-forestry. Nearly 40 lakh plantlets have been produced and planted over an area of 3,500 ha. Five times increase in yield and returns have been reported from tissue culture raised plants as compared to conventionally raised plants.

(b) A number of Universities/Research Institutions all over the country are engaged in Plant Tissue Culture activities. The Department of Biotechnology has supported M.Sc. Agricultural Biotechnology at 3 Universities — Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat; Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore and G.B Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. The students are provided training in plant tissue culture techniques. Nearly 30 students are admitted each year. Approx 300 students have been trained so far. In addition the Centres for Plant Molecular Biology and the Micropropagation Technology Parks set up by DBT also offer training on plant tissue culture.

(c) Plant Tissue Culture techniques help in producing large quantities of elite planting material which are true-to-type. The multiplication rate is much faster than the conventional technique. In addition, disease-free planting material is produced and it helps in overcoming fertilization barriers through somatic hybridization and embryo rescue techniques. Plant tissue culture technology is a good tool supplement to the conventional techniques.

Forestry Development in Karnataka

2813. SHRI VIJAY SANKESHWAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the financial grants provided to the Karnataka State for Forestry development during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98, project-wise;

(b) whether the utilisation of grants has been found to

be satisfactory;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the action proposed by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) The central assistance to the Government of Karnataka under the major schemes of afforestation, in which grants are given to the State Governments, in the period 1995-96 to 1997-98 is as follows:

Scheme	Central Assistance Released		
	(Rs in lakhs)		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Integration Afforestation and Eco-Development Projects Scheme	372.90	229.98	143.72
Area Oriented Fuelwood and Fodder Projects Scheme	214.98	245.39	195.31
Conservation and Development of Non-Timber Forest Produce including Medicinal Plants Association of Scheduled Tribes and Rural Poor in Regeneration of the Degraded Forests on usufruct sharing basis.	35.02	30.00	43.00
	24.88	11.41	5.70

The evaluations done so far of the projects of the Eighth Plan Period have found the utilisation of grants to be satisfactory.

Installation of Telephone Towers

2814. SHRI T. GOVINDAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any request from the Kerala Government for the installation of telephone towers in the State during the last three years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in the regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF