

(e) Reservation for the physically handicapped in Groups 'C' & 'D' posts has been in force since 1977. Section 33 of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 which came into force w.e.f. 1.1.1996 also provides for 3% reservation for the physically handicapped, which was found adequate at the time of the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

[English]

Funds to West Bengal

2150. SHRI LAKSHMAN CHANDRA SETH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have allocated funds, other than Calamity Relief Fund to the Government of West Bengal for relief towards tornado-hit areas; and

(b) if so, the total amount sanctioned and released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Cotton Production in Non-Transitional States

2151. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken by the Government to grow cotton in the non-transitional States particularly in the State of Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total black cotton soil areas in that State; and

(d) the result of the soil testing and growing cotton there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) The Government of India is assisting States including non-

traditional Cotton State of Orissa for growing cotton. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Intensive Cotton Development Programme, assistance is given to the State of Orissa for the transfer of technology through demonstration on production, integrated pest management and training of farmers as well as supply of critical inputs like seeds, plant protection equipment, sprinkler sets etc.

Besides, the Cotton Corporation of India in the Ministry of Textiles is also encouraging the cultivation of cotton in non-traditional areas like Sundarban in West Bengal, Orissa, Jammu Division in Jammu and Kashmir through supply of seed, training of farmers, marketing of cotton produce etc.

(c) The total black cotton soil in the State is 9.6 lakh hectares.

(d) The soil pH is neutral to alkaline having free calcium carbonate in the profiles. The soil is rich in calcium but deficient in Phosphorus, Potassium, Zinc and Boron. Besides, black soil, major portion of cotton is grown on loamy soils.

Production of Tobacco

2152. SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of tobacco produced in the country particularly in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh during the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether the land area for tobacco production has been increased during the above period; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) to (c) The area under tobacco has been increasing during the last three years. A statement giving State-wise area and production of tobacco for the last three years is attached.

Statement

STATE	AREA (Thousand Hectares)			PRODUCTION (Thousand Tonnes)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra Pradesh	130.5	136.2	164.4	164.5	170.3	183.3
Assam	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.9	0.8	0.8