

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Government have received many representations from the Members of Parliament namely Shri J. Chitharanjan, Shri Vayalar Ravi, Shri V.V. Raghavan, Shri P.C. Chacko, Shri P.C. Thomas and also a group of Members of Parliament from Kerala and organisations like M/s Arimpur Panchayat, Kera Karshaka Samithy, Thrissur, Kerala and India Coconut Growers Association, Tumkur, Karnataka for fixing the minimum support price (MSP) of copra at substantially higher levels.

(c) The Government have announced the MSP for copra of fair Average Quality (FAQ) at Rs. 3100 per quintal for milling copra and Rs. 3325 per quintal for Ball copra for the 1999 season on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of the State Governments and Central ministries as well as other relevant factors. The MSPs announced for the 1999 season are higher by Rs. 200 per quintal for both grades of copra over their respective MSPs announced for the last year.

Reopening of Stillwell Road

1111. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE:
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Assam has proposed to reopen the Stillwell Road linking Assam with Myanmar and China, which has been lying unused since World War II; and

(b) if so, the decision taken thereon, indicating the regulations to be enforced with opening of the Road to check illegal trade and exodus of infiltrants through this route?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Information is being collected from the Government of Assam.

[*Translation*]

Centrally Sponsored Schemes

1112. SHRI PRABHASH CHANDRA TIWARI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study regarding effective implementation of various Centrally sponsored schemes in Bihar has been conducted by Planning Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps taken by the Union Government to implement these schemes effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A statement is attached.

Statement

Study regarding effective Implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Bihar

Education

As far as education sector is concerned, a Study was conducted by Programme Evaluation Organisation (NFE) on the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of non-formal education in six States of the country including Bihar. The study covered only three districts of Bihar i.e. Patna, Madhepura and Purbi Champaran. Some of the important findings of the study relating to Bihar are as under:

2. The percentage growth in number of non-formal centres from 1992-93 to 1996-97 was nearly 30%. As against the requirement 3.68 lakh centres in the State, at the rate of 20 children per centre, actually existing centres were only 38,000. The enrolment rate for children of 6-14 years of age in Bihar was 60.9. During 1992-97, the State has released 92% of its share for the NFE, and utilised 100% of its share. About 49.7% and 48.1% learners belonged to SC and OBC community respectively. Only 13.7% working children were enrolled in the centres of which 36.5% were dropping out. Based on the above findings, certain modifications were suggested and communicated to the Deptt. of Education.

Environment & Forests

3. No Study has been conducted to evaluate the effective implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes like Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, Phase-II, and National River Conservation Plan. However, in the meeting held on 12.07.1997, it was decided that the Chief Ministers

of the participating States might take meeting with their officials including from those Municipalities on implementation, operation and maintenance of assets created under these schemes. It was also decided that Central funding would be released after satisfactory operation and maintenance of completed works. A team of senior officers selected by Secretary, Environment & Forests was also sent to Bihar for boosting the implementation and monitoring of projects under Ganga Action Plan. The Union Minister of Environment & Forests and Secretary, Deptt. of Environment & Forests had written to the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of Bihar respectively for forming High Level Political Committees at the State level and Town Level Citizens Committees for ensuring successful implementation of the Ganga Action Plan. The Standing Committee of Rivers Conservation Authority in its meeting held 09-09-98 directed the Chairman, Central Pollution Board to take necessary action under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 against the defaulting local bodies/Departments in Bihar.

Health

4. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has been paying special attention to monitor the progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the State, like Tuberculosis, Blindness Control Programme and Leprosy Eradication Programme. Efforts are also under way to improve performance of the existing manpower through training programmes aimed at skill upgradation as well as programme orientation.

[English]

Rise in Poverty

1113. SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL:
SHRI D.S. AHIRE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether concern has been expressed over rising trend of poverty in India; and

(b) if so, the factors responsible for increasing poverty in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF

STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) It is not true that poverty has been increasing in India. The Planning Commission estimates poverty at National and State level from quinquennial consumer expenditure data obtained from the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Using the two latest estimates of poverty for the years 1987-88 and 1993-94, it is found that the incidence of poverty at national level has gone down from 38.86 per cent in 1987-88 to 35.97 per cent in 1993-94. For a somewhat longer period, the incidence of poverty is observed to reduce from 44.48 per cent in 1983 to 35.97 per cent in 1993-94. There is a continuous effort through the planning and development strategy to reduce the number and percentage of poor in the total population in the country.

Production of Groundnut

1114. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the annual production of groundnut in the country during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(b) the action taken or proposed to be taken by Union Government to increase the production of groundnut particularly in the Gujarat State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) State-wise total production of groundnut during the last 3 years is given in the statement attached.

(b) A Centrally Sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) is in implementation in 23 States including Gujarat covering 381 selected districts for increasing the production of oilseeds including groundnut in the country. Under the programme various incentives by way of subsidies are being provided on critical inputs like production and distribution of seed, minikits, rhizobium culture, gypsum/pyrite, improved farm implements, plant protection equipments, sprinkler sets etc. In addition, frontline and general demonstrations are organised on farmer's field to transfer the production technology.