

Governments, where the implementation has been tardy. We are taking up with them at my level with the Chief Ministers and the Secretary is taking up with the Chief Secretaries. This is a suggestion and I will be too happy if this suggestion were to be accepted.

Mushroom Cultivation in States under Centrally Sponsored Scheme

*370. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Mushroom cultivation has been taken up in some States under centrally sponsored scheme ;

(b) if so, the names of the States where such scheme has been launched ;

(c) whether Government have a proposal to extend Mushroom cultivation to some more States in 1985-86 ; and

(d) if so, the name of the States identified and funds earmarked for Mushroom cultivation in 1985-86 ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (S. BUTA SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). There is no proposal for any Centrally Sponsored Scheme for extension of mushroom cultivation in the States. However, a project has been prepared for assistance from Netherlands Government for promotion of mushroom cultivation in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Karnataka. The proposed assistance from Netherlands Government is for an amount of 37.50 lakh Dutch Guilders (about Rs. 1.25 crores) with the States' contribution of Rs. 1.44 crores for a period of four years.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Mushrooms are rich in food value as

they provide certain nutrients like proteins minerals and vitamins. In view of this mushroom cultivation should be encouraged. No extensive cultivation has so far been made and some times we find that even in some mushroom-growing States the production of mushroom falls steep. However, the hon. Minister has replied that a project has been prepared with the help of the Netherlands Government in four States. It has not been extended to other States. In some areas like Chora Nagpur Plateau in Bihar, and Gonasika and Samlipur Foothills of Orissa and Midnapore and other areas of West Bengal there is tremendous scope for mushroom cultivation. I would like to know, what the strategy of the Government is to encourage cultivation of mushrooms, at least from the laboratory to the farm. Is there any model demonstration and training centre for large scale operations ? Is there any high technology mushroom production centre in the country ? If so, may I know with the help of these, whether the production has gone up in the last five years ?

S. BUTA SINGH : The hon. lady Member has raised a very important question. There is no doubt that mushroom is a highly skilled cultivation... (*Interruptions*). I am going to tell the hon. House the main constraints in growing mushroom. They are : Inadequate knowledge of mushroom cultivation among the cultivators ; insufficient supply of compost to the growers. It requires heavy investment on equipment, buildings, transport, etc ; lack of infrastructure for handling and transporting of mushroom to distant markets ; cost of cultivation of mushroom is very high due to composting and low productivity. Therefore, the demand for this is confined to comparatively well off sections of society.

As Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad was saying, it goes only to a few hotels...

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD : I said that there was skill required in eating and not growing.

S. BUTA SINGH : A part of it is also exported.

The hon. lady Member wanted to know the research aspect of it, what has been done and what is being proposed for increasing the mushroom cultivation in the country.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The growth of ruling party is like that.

S. BUTA SINGH : But it is most scientific.

A national centre has been started in 1983 in Solan. This covers survey and collection of naturally grown mushroom species because we have to develop species which are grown in given climatic conditions. The types to be identified are edible ones and non-edible ones ; to work out and standardise technology on all aspects of cultivation, production and post-harvest handling ; to screen and evaluate high yielding strains of paddy straw mushrooms to train scientists, growers in mushroom cultivation.

The hon. lady Member wanted to know the progress made so far. We have a collection of over 80 strains of mushroom during the last five years. These have been picked up from these areas where these are grown naturally. These are also being studied and screened for their edible qualities and other characters. Attempts are also being made to intensify cultivation of another very important precious mushroom called *guchhi*. This prized strain for export is found growing in natural conditions in Jammu & Kashmir...

SHRI G.G. SWELL : Instead of reading it here, he could send the papers to us for reading.

S. BUTA SINGH : These are the results drawn from the research. They are not grown in Meghalaya. Therefore, this has to be mentioned.

There has been a static growth of mushroom in the country. With the coming up of this national project at Solan I am sure the technology will be

distributed to all the centres. I am sorry to say that mushroom could not be grown in almost all the States. It is to be grown in the States which are ideally suited climatically. We are trying to increase the cultivation of mushroom both with the research of our own scientists and with the cooperation of Netherland Government.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : It is good that after the technology is found out it will be distributed to other parts of the country. There is no doubt that this is a profitable business. I would like to know, since mushroom cultivation can be taken up profitably in small households and can ensure a good deal of profit to the cultivators, whether poor cultivators in and around urban consuming centres are being encouraged to grow mushroom as part of the poverty eradication programme. If so, what are the technical and financial assistance given to them ; and if not, whether the Central Government would accord priority to this programme under the income generating scheme like the Prime Minister's massive programme for development of agriculture and irrigation.

S. BUTA SINGH : We are giving more importance to the coarse grains and pulses which are consumed by the rural people of India. Mushroom is, as I told you, a highly skilled crop. It cannot be grown by each and every farmer especially the small and marginal farmers who form about 74 per cent of our farming community. But this does not mean that we are not doing anything. Mushroom growth is picking up. We have a national centre at Solan and there is a sub-centre at Shillong. My hon. friend was very keen to know about this. We are trying to decentralise research on mushroom growth in almost all parts of the country where it can be grown

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Amal Datta will grow in his field.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Sir, if I could grow enough mushroom I don't need to do anything else.

MR. SPEAKER : Is it ?

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm that after efforts of decades we are today growing about a thousand tonnes of mushroom in this country whereas in a various foreign countries, particularly China, which has taken up scientific mushroom growth about 4 or 5 years ago, they are already growing about hundred thousand tonnes of mushroom of which more than sixty per cent is exported. There is, therefore, a very large export market for mushroom. In India where we have got temperate climate like the sub-Himalayan region we have got an enormous territory where we can grow much more than a hundred thousand tonnes of mushroom provided the laboratories do not confine their activities within their own campuses but go out to teach the people how to grow mushroom and also the Government arranges for marketing of the same. Will the Government take the necessary steps to do so ?

S. BUTA SINGH : Yes Sir ; I have given the answer to the main question. The hon. Member wanted to know the total production. The total production is 1,120 tonnes out of which about 50 tonnes are exported. It is true, as compared to other countries like China, we are very behind. So far as the distribution of research at various centres is concerned, as I told you, 5 States have already been included and we will include as many of the States as possible. The States are not showing enough interest because it is a highly skilled crop and individual farmers will have to be induced : It requires a heavy dose of investment.

So far as research in concerned, we are as good as any other country including China.

Farmers Agro-Service Centres

*371. SHRI LAKSHMAN MALICK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the main objectives of the centrally sponsored scheme for establishment of farmers agro-service centres for custom hiring and popularisation of improved animal drawn implements launched in 1983-84 ;

(b) whether it is a fact that in most of the States, the scheme was either started late or has not been implemented at all ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (S. BUTA SINGH) : (a) to (c). A Statement is given below.

Statement

(a) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched in December, 1983 with the objective of making available the facility of improved animal drawn agricultural implements and hand tools to the small and marginal farmers, particularly in dry land areas. The three integrated components of the scheme are :

- (i) Establishment of farmers' agro-service centres for custom hiring ;
- (ii) Demonstrations ; and
- (iii) Distribution of improved agricultural implements and hand tools at subsidised rates.

(b) & (c). All the three components of the scheme referred to in (a) above were to be implemented in 9 States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. In the remaining 13 States, only the third component i.e. distribution of improved agricultural implements and hand tools at subsidised rates was to be implemented.

18 States and one Union Territory have begun implementing the project, as detailed in the attached statement. The