

South Korea. Here in our country also manual labour is easily available. Then why is India occupying the 18th position whereas small countries like Taiwan and South Korea are able to compete with other countries? What is the difficulty ?

SHRI P.R.DAS MUNSI : The hon. Member has raised a very interesting question. As I had stated in the beginning, our capacity to begin manufacture of machine tools is primarily of '50s, '60s and even of '70s to obstitute the import content of the domestic industry. Therefore, the export orientation to keep international market having upgrade technology was not there. Now, after the liberalisation of policy, even we are importing under OGL certain kind of very upgraded technologies which provide strength to augment our strength to suit international market in our machine tools; and we ope that we will improve further. As I have stated, we have improved already 64 percent as compared to 1985 figures.

Export of Sea Food

*971. **PROF. K.V. THOMAS:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of sea food exported during the last three years; and

(b) the steps taken for promotion of sea food export ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI) : (a) The quantity of sea food exports during the last three years were :

1984-85	—	86187 tonnes
1985-86	—	83651 tonnes
1986-87	—	85843 tonnes

(b) Steps taken for promotion of sea food export include promotion of prawn farming for augmenting production of

cultured prawns, encouragement of production of value-added items like IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) shrimps, setting up of prawn hatcheries and measures for exploitation of deep sea fishery resources.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Kerala is a pioneering State in sea food export. At one stage, about 10 years back, they had the monopoly in sea product export, but for the last five years, this industry is facing a crisis due to many factors. One is, there is although competition from abroad, from countries like Thailand. Second is, there is a question about the quality of our sea food. Very often it contains germs. Third is, the industry is not getting proper backing from our banks. Due to these factors, in Cochin, which is the headquarters of the major sea food industries, they are closing one after another. This is a grave situation.

My question to the hon. Minister is, what concrete steps are taken to save this industry.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: First of all, I like to inform the hon. Member that it is not a fact that our marine products exports and sea food exports are in a worse situation now. On the contrary, it is very encouraging and getting a lot of foreign exchange for the country. I like to inform him that in this year's export performance one of the leading sectors of ours was the marine products sector where we are earning the highest amount of foreign exchange, higher than expected. I will give the figure to the hon. Member and he can understand the position. The total exports on marine products, as the hon. Member stated, ten years ago it was a monopoly — if not ten years, nine years ago — and we exported marine products worth Rs. 240 crores and we have exported this year products worth Rs. 470 crores so far, and I am sure when the final figures come, it will be more than that. It is not a fact that we are not improving and much more measures have been adopted

by the Marine Products Development Corporation.

I also like to inform the hon. Member that we are trying to have a farm hatchery in Orissa at Gopalpur, we are having a hatchery in Andhra Pradesh.

AN HON. MEMBER: In Kerala ?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: Already there is one in Kerala. We are setting up one in West Bengal, that is precisely for sweet water prawn hatchery programme. And apart from that we are providing a subsidy for the fishermen for output purchases, 25 percent from the State Governments. These are the steps we have taken and these are yielding results. I am very confident that India will make a break through very soon.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: I am sorry that the Minister has not properly studied the situation, because it is a very important problem. We should not look at this problem only from the amount earned, because the quantity of sea foods exported has increased. Ten years back the price was Rs. 1000 and now it is Rs. 2000 or even more. So, it is not the quantity of foreign exchange that we have earned. But it is the quantity of sea food that we have exported. That is important. That is why, I tell you, we have got the major sea food export companies in Cochin and they are all, one after the other, closing down. There is a grave situation. If the situation continues like this, after five or ten years there will not be any sea food export company in our country. That is the situation. It is not what the amount we have earned but the quantity of sea food that we have exported.

Coming back to the second question, the problem is, we are not getting enough sea food material which are of export quality. For example, prawns, Enough prawns are not available in our Arabian Sea. We have to find out how this can be cultured. Even countries like Thailand

which have started this industry at a later stage are competing with us. They have got good hatcheries. So, what concrete steps is the Government taking for culturing these prawns in the backwaters of Kerala ?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : I do share the concern of the hon. Member, not only for Kerala but for the entire marine products of the country. It is a fact that in terms of quantity there is not significant improvement. In some cases, there is a decline which come to 1000 tonnes or 2000 tonnes. But the fact remains that the competition is very high and that to among the neighbouring countries. But the actual position is, that we have taken a very modern and scientific outlook of improving prawn farms which is the main and major sector of our marine products exports. First comes the prawn, and then second comes shrimp and then the third is frozen fish. Then come the other things.

Now, the modern practice is, I would like to inform the hon. Member that we have taken a big step as to how we can improve this position so that prawn can land properly. Prawn seed farm begins right from the sea. We have developed those farms and our attempt is to make the prawn seed available to the village farmers in a planned manner. Micro-level surveys are undertaken in this regard for identification and preparation of projects for prawn farming. And many more modern things have started like individually quickly frozen shrimp. The shrimps are collected together. In a block these are sold. In weights of 5 kgs. and all that they sell it. But now there is a demand for value added exports. Each individual prawn/shrimp is to be frozen, properly packed and then sold in the market. We have taken a major step in this regard.

In regard to prawn farming, the impetus during the Seventh Plan is to establish hatcheries in other States where it is not there. I do hope after implementing all these programmes, by the end of the Seventh Plan, we will have much more

good results than are existing now. As for Kerala, I would like to inform the hon. Member that I am going there on 21st of this month to study the Kerala situation in particular as to what the problems are there.

SHRI K.S. RAO: Andhra Pradesh is not lagging behind. It has got thousands of kms of sea coast and vast areas in Kolleru and other lakes. It is a fact that not much has been done to develop those places on a scientific basis though the potential is multi-fold in earning foreign exchange. In this regard I wish to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister that the people residing in those areas must be given more priority in taking them to training institutes, and giving them enough coaching in this modern technology and in loaning also instead of giving it to people who are totally unaware or totally new to this area. I understand that the fish which is coming in hundreds of tonnes along with tiger prawns is being thrown out because it is not exported at all. I understand that there is also a technology for processing that fish. I wish to know whether the Government has made any thinking in starting a factory to process the fish that is coming along with the prawn and export it.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI: I do share the concern of the hon. Member so far as Andhra Pradesh is concerned. As I stated earlier, Andhra Pradesh is one of the States where our prawn hatchery will be there. The State Government has identified two sites. One of it is Kakinada. MPDA is taking a quick decision as to whether the hatchery will be there. In regard to other fish I am not concerned as to which fish comes along with prawn. But the actual items which we can export other than prawn are lobster, fillets, squids. If these are there, we will certainly take care. So far as export is concerned, others will not help us. I will consider the suggestion of the hon. Member while setting up the hatchery in Andhra Pradesh.

Concession in Air Fare to Tourists Travelling to Ladakh

*974. SHRI P. NAMGYAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to remove the existing discrimination to tourists visiting Ladakh by giving 30 per cent concession on the return leg of the basic air fare as for travel to Srinagar, and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (MUFTI MOHD. SYED): (a) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to introduce any concession in air fare to Leh (Ladakh).

(b) The operational costs in case of air services to Leh are higher, as the carrying capacity of the aircraft is reduced due to operational reasons and there are higher incidences of cancellation of air services due to geographical situation of Ladakh.

SHRI P. NAMGYAL : My question is specific. It is like this: Whether Government propose to remove the existing discrimination to tourists visiting Ladakh by giving 30 per cent concession on the return leg of the basic air fare as for travel to Srinagar. The Government admits the existence of discrimination and it does not want to remove it. The question is whether it is not a fact that thousands of foreign tourists visit Ladakh by passing Srinagar for various reasons and lakhs of home tourists visit Vaishno devi shrine in Jammu every year. Will the Government consider removing this discrimination against Jammu & Ladakh region and provide 30 per cent concession on the return leg of the basic airfare to all categories of tourists visiting Jammu & Ladakh and bring all the three regions on the same lines ?

MUFTI MOHD. SYED: Sir, just as the Civil Aviation Ministry has given thirty per