

The Delegation arrived at Delhi on 23 November, 1988 evening. They are now seated in the Special Box. We wish them a happy and fruitful stay in our country. We also convey our warm greetings and very best wishes through them to His Excellency the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Council, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Supreme People's Council, and the friendly people of PDR Yeman.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Coconut Research

*184. SHRI V. S. KRISHNA IYER : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent for coconut research; and

(b) practical application of the research findings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV) : (a) and (b). A Statement is give below:-

STATEMENT

(a) Sir, an amount of Rs. 1245.16 lakhs was spent during the VI Plan, while Rs. 917.94 lakhs have been utilised during the first three years (Upto 1987-88) fo the VII Plan for research on plantation crops, bulk of which was spent on coconut.

(b) The Practical application of the research findings have been in respect of improved varieties and hybrids. efficient management practices, control of common diseases and pests, rejuvenation of root-wilt disease affected palms, and development of

use of improved post harvest devices and equipment.

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER : As all of us are aware, coconut is a very important cash crop. But unfortunately, it has not received the attention it deserves. Every part of coconut is useful to the community right from the root to the top, including its leaf. And coconut as such is used for cooking. Also, one seventh of the oil production in the country is from coconut. When such an important crop is there, I am very sorry to note that research made so far has not been able to control the dreaded disease which is attacked. Whenever a disease is attacked, the whole coconut grown in that area will be destroyed. My understanding is that the research is made but the amount provided so far is meagre. It is there is your statement that on amount of Rs 124516. lakhs was spent during the Sixth Plan. Even that is not for coconut alone. Coconut is also used for other purposes.

I understand that there is only one coconut research centre in Kerala at Kasargod. It is absolutely necessary that there should be research centres for coconut development in maidan areas because most of the coconut is gown in maidan areas in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It is very necessary. There is particularly a very congenial atmosphere in Karnataka for the development of coconut. May I know what steps the Government is going to take to develop, particularly the research in coconut and whether Government propose to establish a centre in Karnataka, where all the infrastructure is available for research centre for the coconut?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : I do not think that the Hon. Member is correct in his assessment that much is not being done for the development of coconut. On the contrary, sufficient provision has been made and steps have been taken to develop it. Hon. Member said about some disease. No doubt there are disease but research is going on. We have established as he will be pleased to know, in different parts of the

country the research centres. There is one at Kasargod in Kerala and then at Kayamkulam, and then one in Goa also. Other one is at Lakshadweep. There is one Coconut Germ Plasm Centre at Citighat in Andaman. Not only that. But all-India coordinated research projects on palm is going on at eleven centres in the whole of the country and that includes Andhra Pradesh, Andaman, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka in Arsekare and then another in Maharashtra, then in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu and at four places... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI P.M. SAYEED : All the places except in Lakshadweep.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : There is one at Citighat in Lakshadweep. (*Interruptions*) I do not find that much work is being done in Lakshadweep. About the main disease that is affecting the coconut is the root wilt disease and research is going on... (*Interruptions*)

SHRIT. BASHEER : How long will it go?

SHRI SHYAMLAL YADAV : Efforts are going on since 1976. No doubt, we have been able to find out the microplasma like organism (MLO) which is the main virus in the disease. Some efforts are being made. I think this research is going on the different parts of the country at our institutes to find out some method. Certain methods have been suggested for eradication of the disease.

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER: Most of the places which the Hon. Minister has mentioned are on the coastal areas. Of course, the research is concentrated on the coconut growth in coastal areas. There are a number of areas in dryland also where it is possible to grow coconut. We have been doing it in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. I would like to know specifically whether in any Maidan area you propose to have a full fledged research station.

Another point which I want the Minister to clarify is that the Karnataka Government

has sent a proposal for the development of coconut. This is a project costing Rs. 36 crores spent over a period of five years. May I know at what stage that proposal stands now?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : The Hon. Member will appreciate that coconut is mostly grown in the coastal states. They are the major coconut producing states. The figures that I have got show that mostly in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Kerala is the largest grower—Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal—the yield in West Bengal is almost the highest—and Karnataka, coconut is grown. We have coconut growing areas in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep also. I may inform the Hon. Member that we have got a centre which is working on coconut growth in Lakshadweep.

Regarding the proposal received from the Karnataka Government, I think that is being processed.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : What about my constituency? I will give you the sweetest coconut... (*Interruptions*)...

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Research should be oriented in two ways—firstly to increase productivity; that is OK. But the most important problem is that 50% of the coconut trees in Kerala which is the largest producer are affected by the Root wilt disease. This disease is not seen in any other State... (*Interruptions*). For the last fifty years this disease is there. If you find out, over these years only a meagre amount is spent on the research. If this disease is not checked, it will affect all the States. It is being gradually spread. The loss to the Kerala State alone in a year is more than Rs 400 crores by this particular disease.

I would like to know specifically from the Minister whether there is any specific research going on this particular disease and whether the cause of this disease has been found, if so what is being done to ensure that the disease is eradicated.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : As I told earlier, we have been able to identify and confirm the involvement of microplasma like organism which is called MLO. That is a type of virus which affects the trees and causes the Rootwilt disease. That thing has been isolated.

Now research is going on to find out an effective medicine or insecticide which can cure this. There are certain ways in which we can remove the plants affecting the areas. We have to make effort for eradication of 13 million diseased palms in the early stages or advanced stages in Kerala. The steps suggested are:

(c) Varietal reaction to disease: The disease incidence was lower and the cumulative under yield higher in hybrid chowghat crange Dwarf.

b) Organic recycling and (c) Management Practices, etc. These are very necessary in order to reduce the incidence of disease. For that we have to provide irrigation during January to May along with fertilisers etc. to improve...

PROF. P.J.KURIEN : Have you got the medicine so far?

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : As I have said earlier research is going on but it has not been possible to get an effective medicine so far.

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL : I have one of the largest coconut plantations in India. Unfortunately during the last sixty years this disease has affected in Kerala but no remedy has been found out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Sir, allow half-an-hour discussion on this.

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL : During the last 60 years they have not been able to find any remedy. Can they collaborate research with foreign countries so that quick remedy can be found? Secondly there is no fund for irrigation facilities to

coconut trees and coconut trees need irrigation. Further long-term and sufficient loans are not available to the farmers. There is also lack of superior quality seedlings.

SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV : So, far as first part about finding of some medicines is concerned as I have said earlier research is going on and we have not been able to find an effective medicine. Virus has been isolated and even outside nowhere effective medicine has been found out. Efforts are being made. As far as irrigation and loans facilities are concerned I would to say that irrigation facilities are provided and what ever facilities are there the State Government can augment them. As far as loan is concerned there is no dearth of loan. I have myself visited many places near Mysore where loans are being distributed by the nationalised and cooperative banks for coconut growers. As regards seedlings and seed-nuts there is demand of 150 lakh per year and as supply is concerned we are trying to provide ordinary seedlings and seednuts but also hybrid seednuts and seedlings are being provided to the tune of 3 lakh per year.

Import of Seeds Under OGL

*187. **SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA :** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to permit the import of seeds including hybrids of oilseeds, pulses and course grains under Open General Licence in order to secure for the farmers high quality seeds available anywhere in the world to maximise their yield and farm income;

(b) the steps taken to procure such high quality seeds;

(c) whether any company has approached Government in this regard and if so, the names of those companies and the companies which have been permitted to import seeds and how these imported seeds will be distributed amongst farmers; and