

of freesale sugar reflected a moderate downward trend. This is considered necessary to enable the factories to pay remunerative prices to cane growers and to keep up the production of sugar.

Agriculture Research and Development

*56. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether expenditure on Agriculture Research and Development is very low in India in comparison to the other developing countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any special steps are being taken by the Government to promote the Agriculture Research and Development; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The current expenditure on agricultural research in India is not very low. It is about 0.3 percent of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) as compared to around 0.3 to 0.75 percent in the developing countries. However, a norm of 1% of agricultural GDP is suggested to be the minimum research investment target. Higher allocations to meet the target have not been possible on account of resource constraints.

(c) and (d) The Government has taken steps to increase the Plan outlay for R&D from Rs. 85 crore in IV Five Year Plan to Rs. 1300 crore in VIII Five Year Plan. Further, keeping in view the recommendations of the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture as well as the realistic resource requirements for agricultural R&D, the IX Plan Working Group of DARE/ICAR has recommended to the Planning Commission that the investment in agricultural research should be raised to at least 1 per cent of Agricultural GDP during the IX Five Year Plan.

[English]

Investigation by NHRC

*57. SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY :
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission has investigated the charges of starvation deaths in Orissa;

(b) if so, the findings thereof; and

(c) the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b)

A Team of officers of the National Human Rights Commission had undertaken a preliminary visit to Orissa on 12-14 December, 1996 for collection of facts about the reported starvation deaths. Government have not received any report from the commission in this regard so far.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Atrocities on Girls

*58. SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :
KUMARI UMABHARATI :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that NCC girls of Jammu and Kashmir returning to their homes after performing in the Republic Day Celebrations in Delhi, were molested in the running train near Meerut on January 30, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted into the incident;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the number of persons arrested in this connection; and

(e) the action taken against them ?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (e) According to information received from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, on 30.1.1997, a group of 25 artistes comprising of 5 men and 20 women from Jammu & Kashmir was going back by Shalimar Express after participating in the Republic Day celebrations. There was an altercation over seating in the compartment between some women artistes and daily passengers who reportedly misbehaved with the artistes. 2 BSF jawans and 1 GRP jawan also sustained injuries during the incident while trying to intervene.

2. A case under sections 147/323/332/353/354/308 IPC and 145 Railways Act has been registered in GRP Meerut. Twelve accused persons have so far been arrested. Three other accused persons have surrendered. Action against two persons named in the FIR was taken under the National Security Act and they have been served externment notices by the District Magistrate.

Naxalite Activities

*59. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH :
DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :