

(d) No Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) Rubber is not considered a forestry species under the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act.

#### World Bank

4239. SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether many States in the country are defaulter of the World Bank as per the research report of Reserve Bank of India; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of States and amount of default ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

#### Production of Coco

4240. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total production of coco in the country during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether the Government propose to introduce any comprehensive plans for enhancing and production of coco in Kerala; and

(c) if so the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The total state-wise production of coco has been as under :-

S.No.	State	Production of tonnes		
		1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
1.	Kerala	5323	5262	4291
2.	Karnataka	1464	1397	1422
3.	Tamil Nadu	34	42	-
Total		6821	6701	5713

(b) and (c) For enhancing production and productivity of coco in the country, a comprehensive Central Sector Scheme for Development of Coco in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh is being implemented during the 8th plan period with an outlay of Rs. 3.00 crores. Under this scheme, the following programmes are being implemented in Kerala during 8th Plan with an outlay of Rs. 1.22 crores :-

(i) Establishment and maintenance of demonstration plots to encourage scientific manuring and plant protection;

(ii) Assistance for setting up of irrigation units;

(iii) Establishment of demonstration plots of high yielding clones in farmers fields;

(iv) Production and distribution of coco grafts;

(v) Rejuvenation of unproductive coco gardens; and

(vi) Financial assistance to coco producers for organising marketing and processing of cocoa beans.

#### SC/ST Employees of I.T.P.O.

4241. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any complaint has been received by India Trade Promotion Organisation, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, regarding violation of procedure for maintenance of roster and fixation of seniority of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe employees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Complaints have been received relating to violation of procedure for maintenance of roster, irregularities in appointment of SC/ST candidates and promotion of SC/ST employees and non-submission of the report of the consultant appointed to look into the problems of SC/ST employees in ITPO.

(c) The Government has asked the ITPO to look into the allegations sensed in the complaints ITPO has replied as follows :

(i) The appointments that the reservation rosters are not maintained is not true.

(ii) The appointments in ITPO are made under the provisions of prescribed recruitment rules with due regard to the recruitment policy of the Government for SC & ST categories and availability of suitable candidates.

(iii) The seniority of employees of various categories including SC/ST employees has been fixed as

per recruitment rules in vogue.

- (iv) The Consultant appointed to look into various matters relating to SC/ST employees in ITPO has already submitted his reports which are being considered as and when occasion arises.

#### Problems of exporters and importers

4242. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether according to the World Bank's study deficiencies in transport, ports, power and telecommunication are the basic impediments in the growth of export competitiveness of the country;

(b) whether according to the Asian Development Bank, obsolete equipment, poor management and low labour productivity are the other problems faced by the exporters-importers of the country;

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) the action the Government propose to take to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) The world Bank in its country Economic Memorandum 1996 has indicated that deficiencies in transport, ports, power and telecommunications are a major handicap for India's growth and export competitiveness

(b) The Asian Development Bank has not commented that obsolete equipment, poor management and low labour productivity as the problems faced by the exporters-importers of the country.

(c) and (d) Government of India on its own has, however, taken a number of steps to improve the efficiency in transport, port, power & telecommunication sectors. The steps like providing a number of fiscal incentives extended to these sectors, tax holidays, exemption from income tax on the income of dedicated infrastructure funds, formation of new Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC), resources for the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), private sector entry in these fields, proposal for creation of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) etc. are some of the steps taken by the Government in this direction.

#### Merger of Banks

4243. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there is any proposal to merge various

smaller banks and to set up a bigger bank in order to compete with global banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to start functioning ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) There is no such proposal under the consideration of the Government at present.

(b) Does not arise.

[Translation]

#### Recruitment of Handicapped and Women in PSUs

4244. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the number of handicapped and women recruited in the public sector undertakings during each of the last three years, till date; and

(b) the schemes formulated and the target fixed for recruitment of such people in each undertaking during the years 1997 and 1998 ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) As per the information available from 194 public sector undertakings, 257 handicapped persons and 6,393 women were recruited in public sector undertakings during the period of three years from 1994 to 1996.

(b) As far as handicapped persons are concerned, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act was passed by Parliament which is an important step in the empowerment of persons with disabilities through creation of equal opportunities and protection of their rights. With the enactment of this law, the reservation to physically handicapped persons which was provided only in Group 'C' and 'D' posts has now been extended to identified Group 'A' and 'B' posts filled through Direct Recruitment. Instructions have been issued to the effect that not less than 3% for persons or class of persons with disability of which 1% each shall be reserved for persons suffering from (i) blindness or low vision (ii) hearing impairment (iii) locomotor disability or cerebral palsy, in the posts identified for each disability.

As far as women are concerned, no specific reservation has been provided in employment matters and they are considered on merit for various positions in public sector undertakings.