

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4696
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2005
SICK TEA GARDENS
Barman Shri Hiten;Oram Shri Jual

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of tea gardens fell sick during each of the last three years and thereafter till date;
- (b) the reasons of their sickness;
- (c) whether the Government has any proposal to revive any of these gardens;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has prepared any blue print to improve the Tea Industry of India; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY(SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN)

(a): 43 tea gardens were closed at the end of 2002; 51 gardens were closed by end 2003 and 32 gardens by end 2004.

(b) to (d): In order to address the problems of the closed tea gardens in the country, the Government of India had appointed three Expert Committees in January 2003 to make an in-depth study of the closed tea gardens in the States of West Bengal, Kerala, Assam & Tripura. The main causes for sickness/closure as identified by the Committees include inherent weakness of the gardens due to low productivity, poor garden management and excessive reliance on bank debt with negligible fresh equity infusion. Based on the findings of the Expert Committees, the Central Government and the Tea Board have facilitated discussions between the managements of the closed tea gardens and their bankers.

(e)&(f): A stakeholders` conference on challenges before Indian tea industry was held in New Delhi on 16th & 17th September, 2004. During this conference, a whole range of issues on tea relating to production, productivity, research, reforms, marketing, taxation and legislations covering land and labour laws etc were discussed. The most important recommendation that emerged at the conference pertains to the rejuvenation and re-plantation of tea bushes. Government has constituted a Tea Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.