

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:190
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2006
BOOST TO R D IN PLANTATION SECTOR
Sidhu Shri Navjot Singh;Thomas Shri P.C.

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

- (a) the details of research and development activities being undertaken for the promotion of plantation sector;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to involve private sector in research and development activities of plantation sector;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of other steps being taken for the promotion of the ailing plantation sector?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY(SHRI KAMAL NATH)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.190 FOR ANSWER ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2006 REGARDING 'BOOST TO R&D IN PLANTATION SECTOR'

(a) :The research and development activities being undertaken in the plantation sector are geared towards increasing production and productivity, post harvest processing and quality improvement in a developmental framework. The R&D activities being undertaken in the tea sector include all aspects of tea cultivation and processing. The main research and development thrust in the coffee sector is on developing planting materials with high degree of tolerance to major pests and diseases (white stem borer and leaf rust respectively). In rubber, the thrust is to develop appropriate technology for improving rubber crop production and productivity. One of the important areas of research is the development of rubber varieties which are capable of giving higher yield. Research in spices is mainly centered around basic and applied research and field adaptation trials for evaluation and validation of technologies.

Some priority areas in R&D for all commodities include the development of superior clones, improved location specific planting material, control of pests and diseases, studies on quality parameters and integrated nutrient management etc.

(b) & (c):The private sector is already involved in the research. It is closely associated with tea research in India which is carried out essentially by tea research institutions set up by the tea industry. The tea industry in North India is serviced by the Tea Research Association (TRA) from its Tocklai Experimental Station located at Jorhat in Assam. Similarly, the South India tea industry is serviced by the UPASI Tea Research Foundation with its main research station located at Anamalais in Tamil Nadu. Spices Board is having a programme for product development and research to tap the medicinal, cosmetic, therapeutical / nutraceutical values of spices which includes validation of the above properties through modern science, using clinical trails and patenting. The research activities are undertaken by exporters/private research organizations.

(d): A number of steps have been taken by the Government to help the plantation sector. These include:-

1. Withdrawal of additional excise duty of Re.1 per kg in the Union Budget for 2005-06.
2. Grant of subsidy for production of orthodox tea with an estimated outlay of Rs.65 crore.
3. Meeting the actual deficits of the two Research & Development Institutions viz. Tea Research Association (TRA) at Tocklai (Assam) and United Planters' Association for Southern India - Tea Research Foundation (UPASI-TRF), Tamil Nadu for a period of five years with effect from 2004-05 subject to the maximum of 80% of the expenditure on already agreed items of expenditure, with an estimated outlay of Rs.28 crore.
4. The Government is examining ways and means of introducing a programme for massive replantation and rejuvenation of old tea bushes covering an area of 2,12,606 hectares as per detailed mapping done with an estimated total cost of Rs 4761 crores over the next 15 years. In the Union Budget for 2006-07, Government has announced a levelized contribution every year to the fund.
5. A one time 'Special Coffee Package' was approved by the Government of India in May 2005 to provide relief to coffee growers.