

protected by the village community. Permission to cut and carry grass free of cost should be given so that stall feeding is promoted.

- (x) No agriculture should be permitted on the forest land.
- (xi) Along with trees for fuel, fodder and timber, the village community may be permitted to plant such fruit trees as would fit in with the overall scheme of afforestation, such as aonla, Imli, mango, mahua etc. as well as shrubs, legumes and grasses which would meet local needs, help soil and water conservation, and enrich the degraded soils/land. Even indigenous medicinal plants may be grown according to the requirement and preference of beneficiaries.
- (xii) Cutting of trees should not be permitted before they are ripe for harvesting. The forest department also should not cut the trees on the forest land being protected by the village communities except in the manner prescribed in the Working Scheme. In case of emergency needs, the village communities should be taken into confidence.
- (xiii) The benefit of people's participation should go to the village communities and not to commercial or other interests which may try to derive benefit in their names. The selection of beneficiaries should therefore, be done from only those families which are willing to participate through their personal efforts.
- (xiv) The Forest Department should closely supervise the works. If the beneficiaries and/or the Voluntary /NGO fail or neglect to protect the area from grazing, encroachment or do not perform the operations prescribed in the Working Scheme in a satisfactory manner, the usufructory benefits

should be withdrawn without paying compensation to anyone for any work that might have been done prior to it. Suitable provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this purpose should be incorporated.

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/-  
(Mahesh Prasad)

**Secretary to the Government of India.**  
**Recommendation by scope to disband the MTNL or merge with DOT**

429. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that SCOPE has recently recommended that there should be no attempt to disband the MTNL and/or merge it with DOT, as this would be retrograde step; and

(b) whether the SCOPE (Standing Committee on Public Enterprises) spelt out that only an organisational structure such as MTNL, could satisfactorily deliver high technology consumer services while making a profit, and any other alternative may warrant Government's budgetary support?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PARKASH): (a) and (b) SCOPE might have made such suggestions to the High Level Committee set up by the Government to suggest restructuring of the Department of Telecom. Report of the Committee is awaited.

**ECO-System of the Gulf**

430. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reports that eco-system of the Gulf is at an end that the shores have been irredeemably damaged due to the oil slick;