

(b) whether the said Committee, after examining the catering services had recommended that the catering services need radical changes;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the measures his Ministry is considering to take to bring improvement there in view of the incidents of passengers falling ill frequently due to contaminated food; and

(e) the measures being taken to maintain the standard of food in the prestigious trains like Rajdhani and Shatabdi?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Committee has pointed out certain deficiencies and has made suggestions which include engagement of professionally qualified staff, understanding the concept of Mass Food Production, observation of Food Production Safety Norms, garbage disposal system, standardization of recipes, staff training programme in hygiene, regular cleaning of kitchen and pest control schedule etc. with a view of effect improvement in the catering services of Indian Railways. The matter is sub judice.

(d) and (e) No contaminated food is supplied to the passengers of Indian Railways. Improvement in catering services is an ongoing process. This includes maintenance of hygiene, standard and quality of food services, introduction of good quality packaging, use of biodegradable material, revision of menus, procurement of raw material from approved sources etc. Regular/surprise checks are conducted by the railway administration and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to monitor the catering services and remedial action is taken. Besides, regular meetings are conducted with the licensees who are supplying food in prestigious trains like Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains. Steps like intensive quality inspection, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification, Food Audit etc. have been initiated by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC).

#### **Exploitation of Indian Ocean and EEZ for Tuna fishing**

3967. DR. M.A. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

[14 May, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

(a) the steps taken by Government to help entrepreneurs exploit the Indian Ocean and our EEZ for Tuna fishing;

(b) whether Government propose to extend financial subsidies to develop the new Tuna sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether it is a fact that hundreds of foreign trawlers fish in the Indian Ocean for valuable Tuna fishes,

(e) if so, whether Government have been slow to help entrepreneurs develop the art and technique of Tuna fishing;

(f) the obstacles being faced by entrepreneurs in sustaining Tuna fishing; and

(g) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to solve their problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Government has taken following steps to encourage Indian entrepreneurs to operate Deep Sea Fishing vessels for Tuna fishing in Indian EEZ

(i) an Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee has been set up to develop Deep Sea Fishing including tuna fishing.

(ii) Indian entrepreneurs are being issued with Letters of Permission for Tuna fishing in the Indian EEZ.

(iii) Overseas crew/technicians trained in tuna fishing are permitted to be engaged in the vessels.

(iv) Government organizations have been equipped for conducting tuna resource assessment and development of trained manpower by acquiring modern Tuna fishing vessels.

(v) Entrepreneurs are encouraged to diversify existing small and medium trawlers for Tuna fishing.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Development of Marine Fisheries, financial assistance is provided to entrepreneurs for conversion of existing trawlers for resource specific fishing.

The subsidy is 50% of the cost of conversion with a ceiling of Rs. 15 lakh per vessels. A scheme has been launched by Marine Product Development Authority also for diversifying small trawlers into monofilament long lining.

(d) and (e) A large number of tuna long liners and tuna purse-seiners belonging to several distant water fishing nations are fishing in Indian ocean for tuna. However, no foreign flag tuna-fishing vessel is permitted to fish within our Exclusive Economic Zone. Indian entrepreneurs have been slow in extending their operation into international waters for harvesting tuna, despite the technology and policy framework having been put in place by the Government.

(f) and (g) Institutional finance, trained manpower and shore-based infrastructure are the main obstacles coming in the way of developing tuna fishing. The Government is permitting drawal of duty free fuel, subsidy for conversion and permission for mid-sea-transshipment of catches to save the entrepreneurs from waiting in the ports. Other operational difficulties as and when brought up by the Industry are addressed by the Inter Ministerial Empowered Committee.

**Seeds Developed by Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa**

†3968. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the advanced variety of seeds and their types developed, so far, through research carried out by the Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa, Samastipur in Bihar for the prosperity and progress of agriculture and related sector;

(b) the results achieved, so far, in the development of agriculture and its related areas after the development of such seeds and their types; and

(c) the maximum potential of agricultural production including foodgrains production in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Rajendra Agricultural University, Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar has developed high yielding varieties of seeds in several food crops, pulses, oilseeds, vegetable and fruit crops, spices,

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.