

farm and aquatic animals to address both the work and income security of a majority of the population and the food and trade security of the nation in an ecologically sustainable manner.

The NPF is being operationalised and adapted to suit the local needs. The State Governments convert national goals into local action points by preparing operational plans for implementing this policy, taking into account the agroclimatic and other local conditions.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted to monitor implementation of NPF, 2007. Based on Action Points contained in NPF, 201 further steps have been identified, out of which a substantial number of points have already been implemented

Production of prawns

3085. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian prawns have very good market in USA and European countries;

(b) whether production of prawns has come down from 1.25 lakh metric tonnes in 2004-05 to about 60,000 metric tonnes in 2008-09 and Andhra Pradesh aquaculture farmers are the worst hit;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a new variety of prawn called Litopenius Vanami is gaining markets in USA and European countries; and

(d) if so, how his Ministry is planning to help aquaculture hatcheries in the country, particularly Andhra Pradesh, to produce more Vanami variety of prawns to help revival of prawn culture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. Indian prawns/shrimps have a good market in the United States of America and the European Union countries.

(b) No, Sir. The total prawn production in the country was 375122 metric tonnes in 2004 and 400462 metric tonnes in 2008. The production of prawn in Andhra Pradesh increased from 31994 tonnes in 2006, to 35732 tonnes in 2007 and 42306 tonnes in 2008.

(c) Yes, Sir, The other species of shrimp, Litopenaeus Vannamei has been gaining markets in USA and European countries for last few years.

(d) The following steps have been taken to facilitate production of seed of Litopenaeus vannamei and its culture:—

- Necessary guidelines for safeguard and regulation of operation of hatcheries have been notified under the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005.
- Global suppliers of specific pathogen free (SPF) brood stock of L. Vannamei have been identified and shortlisted for supply to Indian hatcheries.
- Initially 24 eligible hatcheries including 15 from Andhra Pradesh have been permitted to import SPF L. Vannamei brood stock and produce seed from the approved suppliers.

- Guidelines, for regulating the method of operation of aquatic quarantine for the import of L. Vannamei into India have been notified under Livestock Importation Act, 2001.
- An aquatic quarantine facility has been set up in Chennai exclusively for the imported SPF brood stock of L. Vannamei.
- Awareness programmes are carried out to sensitize the farmers on the need for bio-security requirements and on good management practices.

Impoverished condition of agriculturists

3086. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) while globalization and economic liberalization have enabled a better life style for a section of population, why a large segment especially in rural areas mainly agriculturists have been impoverished;

(b) the special efforts made in the wake of such a situation; and

(c) despite the land mark effect of Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) the economic impact on rural India is still not substantial and marked and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) A positive off shoot of liberalization has been that more industries to cater to the need of agriculture sector as well have come up-leading to better competition and availability of inputs. However, a major problem confronting the rural areas in general and farm households in particular is the lack of employment opportunities. The agriculture sector in India has long been characterized by underemployment. Therefore, the Government is making efforts to increase job opportunities in the farm sector through increased investment in irrigation, watershed development, wasteland development, land reclamation, etc. Quite a few new programmes like the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, Sixty Thousand Pulses and Oilseeds Villages, National Project on Soil Health and Fertility, Eastern India Initiative have been launched during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. In addition, there is greater focus on the accelerated development of the rural non-farm sector and development of clusters around towns/market centres. A growing farm sector, better rural infrastructure and connectivity, skill development, adequate power supply and easy availability of credit would help in the creation of more employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector and, in turn, enhance the income of farm households.

The basic objective of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (NREGA) is to enhance the livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. During 2009-10 (provisionally upto