

Disappearance of voluntary agencies with afforestation funds

2517. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of voluntary agencies have disappeared after receiving payments for afforestation projects funded by the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board during the last three years;
- (b) if so, the details of such voluntary agencies vanishing after receiving funds and the amount involved therein;
- (c) whether Government has since taken any steps to locate the voluntary agencies which have vanished;
- (d) if so, whether any responsibility has been fixed on such lapses; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) : (a) and (b) The financial assistance to the Voluntary Organisations (VOs) were provided under the Grants-in-Aid for Greening India scheme on the basis of recommendation of the State Governments which *inter-alia* envisaged the tree planting by people's participation. The funds were released in three instalments. A total of 564 projects were sanctioned to equal number of VOs during 2003-08. While 57 organisations availed all the three instalments, 245 availed two instalments and remaining 262 VOs came only for first instalment. Due to non-performance of the VOs, this scheme has been discontinued since 2008-09 and no new projects have been sanctioned to NGOs during the last three years.

(c) to (e) At the instance of the Ministry, high level committees have been constituted in the states to effect investigation, recovery of funds and legal action against defaulting agencies. The essential details of the defaulting organisations have been compiled by the Ministry in specially designed templates which have been provided to the concerned states.