

(c) and (d) Sustainable use of natural resources has been integrated into national decision making through various policy statements such as National Forest Policy, National Wildlife Action Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan, National Environment Policy, National Water Policy; legislative measures such as Environment (Protection) Act, Wildlife (Protection) Act, Biological Diversity Act, Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act; and programmes such as Joint Forest Management and Afforestation. Further the Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation & Resettlement Bill is already before the Parliament to regulate the use of land resources. The Approach Paper to the Twelfth Five Year Plan brings out the need for developing a mechanism so that different agencies responsible for using natural resources ensure that the growth process is sustainable.

**Regional imbalance in country**

1336. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering that development of the infrastructure and connectivity is the most important method to remove regional imbalance in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has prepared certain specific programme to alleviate poverty in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Regional imbalances result from varying factors such as differences in resource endowment, geographical and historical characteristics and availability of infrastructure including connectivity. The planning and development of an area is primarily the responsibility of the States concerned. The Central Government, on its part, supplements the efforts of the State Governments through various Special Area Development Programmes, Flagship Programmes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes which cover development of infrastructure and connectivity also.

(c) and (d) Various schemes focusing on poverty alleviation and also on infrastructure and connectivity are in operation in the States. The major

development programmes/schemes in operation in the country are : (i) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), (ii) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), (iii) Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), (iv) National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), (v) Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), (vi) Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), (vii) Mid Day Meal (MDM), (viii) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), (ix) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), (x) Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), (xi) Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), (xii) Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY), (xiii) Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission (RGDWM), and (xiv) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

The specific scheme to remove the regional imbalance is the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF). The BRGF has two components, namely, (i) District Component covering 272 backward districts in 27 States (including 22 districts approved for coverage in June, 2012), and (ii) State Component which, in its present form, includes the Special Plan for Bihar, Special Plan for the Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) districts of Odisha, Special Plan for West Bengal, Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Selected Tribal and Backward Districts and the Special Package to implement drought mitigation strategies in Bundelkhand region.

#### **Auction of natural resources**

1337. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has given a mandate that all natural resources should be allocated only through auction; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Subsequent to the Hon'ble Supreme Court's Judgment dated 2 February, 2012, the Government moved a Presidential Reference dated 12th April, 2012 for the consideration of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which *inter-alia* included the following question:

"Whether the only permissible method for disposal of all natural resources across all sectors and in all circumstances is by the conduct of auctions?"

#### **Methodology for estimating poverty**

1338. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state: