

(Protection) Act, 1986, for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water management and development. The main objective for the constitution the Authority is the urgent need for regulating the indiscriminate boring and withdrawal of ground water in the country.

As regards effectiveness of watershed programmes is concerned, a comprehensive assessment of watershed programmes in India carried out by International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) *inter-alia* revealed that watershed programmes are providing multiple benefits in terms of increasing cropping intensity, creating additional water storage capacity, generating rural employment, reducing run-off and soil loss, etc.

Science parks

1831. SHRI P. RAJEEVE : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has any plans to start science parks in the country; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) No, Sir. The subject matter of Science Parks is dealt by Ministry of Culture.

- (b) Does not arise.

Spending on Research and Development

1832. SHRI THOMAS SANGMA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the current level of Government spending on Research and Development (R&D) as percentage of our GDP;
- (b) the current level of Government spending on R&D in the renewable energy sector;
- (c) whether the Government has decided to enhance the spending on R&D by the end of Twelfth Five Year Plan period;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Government is planning to enhance the spending on R&D in renewable energy sector in the Twelfth Five Year Plan period; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) The present level of investment in the country for Research & Development (R&D) in science and technology sector is 0.88% of GDP. Out of which, the Government spends 0.65%.

(b) According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Rs. 239.56 crores was spent for R&D in the renewable energy sector during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. The Government proposes to enhance the spending on R&D as percentage of GDP to 2% by the end of XII Five Year Plan period from the current level of 0.88% with enhanced participation from the private sector to keep up the pace of development in S&T.

(e) and (f) Yes Sir. A budgetary provision of Rs. 2300 crore has been made for R&D in renewable energy sector in the Twelfth Five Year Plan period.

Setting up of BIRAC

1833. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has approved the setting up of the Bio-technology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) in order to stimulate and enhance the innovation capacity of the industry;

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard, so far; and

(c) whether Government has encouraged Public-Private Partnership in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government approved the setting up of Bio-technology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) a Section 25 'Not-for-Profit Company' of Government of India in November, 2011. BIRAC was registered under Indian Companies Act, 1956 and has been incorporated on 20th March, 2012 as an interface agency of Department of Bio-technology. BIRAC has been set up as a single window to strengthen and empower the emerging biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.