

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEVKUMAR BALYAN) : (a) Yes, Sir. There is considerable scope to increase agricultural productivity in many States. For instance, productivity of rice per hectare of area is below 2 ton in states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. Suitable technologies and varieties are available for raising level of productivity. This requires interventions like supply of quality seed to farmer, improving capacity of farmers to use modern inputs, remunerative prices for output and infrastructure. Public capital formation in agriculture in India is low.

(b) Given the diversity of Indian agriculture, there exists scope for both increase in agricultural productivity and enhancing the production. The growing belief that agriculture has lost the capacity to absorb labour is not correct, as it has imbibed several new sub-sectors requiring skill applications.

(c) Government is taking several measures to raise agricultural productivity. These include enhanced supply of quality seed, strong extension, expansion of irrigation, remunerative prices for farmers and increase in supply of institutional credit to farmers.

#### **Off-shore fishing by foreign and joint venture companies**

1776. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government recognises a recent Expert Committee's recommendation that waters between 200 m and 500 m kept as buffer zone, will hurt the livelihood of fishermen; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the recommendation to throw open off-shore regions for fishing by foreign and joint venture companies would work against the interest of the local fishermen, if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN) : (a) and (b) The Expert Committee constituted for a comprehensive review of deep sea fishing Policy and Guidelines has *inter-alia* suggested that the waters between 200m to 500 m depth zone may be kept as a buffer zone to augment the resources in both the near-shore waters as well as in the off-shore areas. There is no proposal to throw open off-shore regions for fishing by foreign vessels.