number of income tax evaders among trader and business community, which has grown over the years to 58.96 lakh in 2015 if so, the details and reasons thereof; and

(c) whether this is a conservative figure considering the number of millionaires spawned by the new economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Majority of cases selected by the Income Tax Department (ITD) for scrutiny of returns of income pertain to business or profession category. Further, as part of enforcement measures, the ITD conducted searches in 990 groups of assessees during last 2 years (F.Ys. 2014-15 and 2015-16), seizing undisclosed assets worth ₹ 1,474 crore. These assessees admitted undisclosed income of ₹ 21,354 crore. During the same period, 9,457 surveys conducted resulted in detection of undisclosed income of ₹ 22,475 crore. Further, there has been significant rise in criminal prosecutions filed by the Income Tax Department in last 2 years and number of cases where prosecution complaints were filed and offences were compounded during F.Ys. 2014-15 and 2015-16 is 3,140 as against 1,690 during F.Ys. 2012-13 and 2013-14. Most of the cases wherein searches or surveys were conducted or criminal prosecutions were instituted pertain to business category and not salary. The inference that flows from these facts suggests that business community cannot evade taxes easily.

(b) and (c) There is no laxness on the part of the Income Tax Authorities in tackling instances of tax-evasion by any segment of taxpayers including the traders and business community. The figure of 58.96 lakhs income-tax evaders in 2015 mentioned in the Question appears to refer to the number of probable non-filers of the Income-Tax Returns (ITR) which were identified by the ITD for further examination based upon certain parameters including information furnished by third party sources. Such examination *per-se* does not imply that the persons concerned have indulged in evasion of tax. Such exercises are more in the nature of mechanisms to bridge the information gap between the taxpayers and the ITD.

While curbing tax evasion is an on-going exercise, in last few years, Government has taken number of important measures such as rationalization of tax-rates, simplification of tax laws, effective use of technology, strengthening of enforcement machinery etc. These measures have led to overall improvement in compliance culture.

Macro-economic stability of Indian economy

2505. SHRI AJAY SANCHETI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian economy has continued to consolidate the gains achieved in restoring macro-economical stability;

(b) if so, details in this regard; and

(c) whether Government proposes to manage the economy in the backdrop of uncertain and fragile outlook of the world economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): (a) and (b) The Economic Survey 2015-16 pointed out that the Indian economy has continued to consolidate the gains achieved in restoring macro-economical stability. As per the data released by the Central Statistics Office, the growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant market prices increased from 6.6 per cent in 2013-14 to 7.2 per cent in 2014-15 and 7.6 per cent in 2015-16. There has been a gradual decline in inflation, measured using the Consumer Price Index (Combined), from 9.5 per cent in 2013-14 to 5.9 per cent in 2014-15 and further to 4.9 per cent in 2015-16; albeit a moderate increase in inflation in the recent months due to elevated prices of certain commodities. The focus of the Government on fiscal consolidation has helped in reducing the fiscal deficit of the Centre as a ratio of GDP from 4.5 per cent in 2013-14 to 4.1 per cent in 2014-15, 3.9 per cent in 2015-16 (provisional actual) and 3.5 per cent in 2016-17 (budget estimate). Foreign exchange reserves increased from US dollar 304.2 billion at end-March 2014 to US dollar 362.7 billion as on 22nd July 2016 and current account deficit as percentage of GDP declined from 1.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 1.1 per cent in 2015-16.

(c) The focus of Government's policy management is to improve growth, foster macro-economic stability including controlling inflation. Despite the unfavorable global demand conditions that led to a sharp decline in India's exports and the uncertain and fragile outlook of the world economy, the economic growth in India has remained robust, supported mainly by the growth-promoting policies of the Government and the strength of domestic demand. The efforts to simplify business and investment-related clearances, fast-track governance reforms and promote skills have helped India significantly improve its ranking in the ease of doing business index, as per the World Bank Group's Doing Business Report, 2016. The comprehensive reforms in foreign direct investment have resulted in the highest ever FDI inflows in 2015-16, indicating positive global investor sentiments towards the Indian economy.

Recovery of bank loan from defaulters

2506. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE:
SHRI RIPUN BORA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount borrowed by top 100 borrowers;