

**Poor condition of internal roads of tea gardens in Assam**

3061. SHRI SANTIUSE KUJUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many tea gardens in Assam do not have proper internal road connectivity and drinking water facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government implements any such schemes or any order has been passed to the tea garden management to make well connected roads and provide proper drinking water in the tea gardens; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (d) As most of the tea gardens in Assam are located in remote areas, the infrastructural facilities and connectivity to such areas is at times less than adequate. However, the Plantation Labour Act, (PLA) 1951 mandates the tea estates to provide basic welfare services and amenities *e.g.* housing, health facilities and primary education, water supply, sanitation etc. to the tea workers. The provisions of the PLA are enforced by the State Government concerned. Moreover under the Assam Plantations Labour Rules, 1956, the employer is liable to maintain in good conditions the approach roads and paths to the area where houses are located.

Tea Board implements programmes for Human Resource Development (HRD) under the XII Plan Scheme namely, Tea Development and Promotion Scheme. The HRD component is aimed at filling in critical gaps in the welfare of tea garden workers, particularly in health and education sector.

**Fall in merchandise goods and services exports**

3062. SHRI K. C. RAMAMURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for merchandise exports coming down from US 314 billion dollars in 2013-14 to US 262 billion dollars in 2015-16;

(b) whether even service exports have registered a negative growth of 2.5 per cent in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15;

(c) whether the country is slowly losing grip over supremacy on service exports;

(d) whether any assessment has been made to find out reasons behind the same; and

(e) if so, the findings of such assessment and steps taken/proposed to be taken to arrest declining trends in services and merchandise goods exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) The reasons for merchandise exports coming down from US\$ 314 billion in 2013-14 to US\$ 262 billion in 2015-16 are as follows:

- (i) Slowdown in developed and emerging economies.
- (ii) Sharp fall in Crude and petroleum product prices.
- (iii) Steep fall in commodity prices which contributed to a drop in the total value of India's exports.
- (iv) Substantial appreciation of the US dollar against all other currencies.
- (v) Decline in world-wide imports led to the sharp fall in India's exports.

(b) and (c) Services exports have registered a negative growth of 2.4% in 2015-16 as compared to 2014-15. However, services exports of India registered a positive growth of 2.2% during 2016-17 (Apr-Sept) as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

(d) and (e) The Government of India has taken a number of steps based on the assessments made from time to time to arrest the trends in merchandise and services exports, which are as follows:

- (i) The Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) was introduced in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2015-20 on April 1, 2015 with 4914 tariff lines at 8 digit levels. The Government has extended the market coverage to all countries in respect of 7914 tariff lines. The revenue forgone under the scheme (MEIS) has increased from ₹ 22000 crore to ₹ 23500 crore per annum. Further, fiscal incentives under the scheme has proved beneficial in the sense that the rate of decrease of export value of items under MEIS has been lower than the rate of decrease of export value of items not under MEIS: -8.29% for MEIS products and -24.03% for non-MEIS products in terms of US\$ in 2015-16.
- (ii) The Government launched Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) in the FTP 2015-2020. The Scheme provided rewards to service providers of notified services.

- (iii) Interest Equalization Scheme on pre and post shipment credit launched to provide cheaper credit to exporters.
- (iv) The Government continues to provide the facility of access to duty free raw materials and capital goods for exports through schemes like Advance Authorization, Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA), Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) and Drawback/refund of Duties.
- (v) Further, in order to promote trade in services, Government of India follows a multi-pronged strategy of negotiating meaningful market access through multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade agreements, trade promotion through participation in international fairs/exhibitions, focussed strategies for specific markets and sectors.
- (vi) The Government is implementing the Niryat Bandhu Scheme with an objective to reach out to the new and potential exporters including exporters from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and mentor them through orientation programmes, counselling sessions, individual facilitation, etc., on various aspects of foreign trade for being able to get into international trade and boost exports from India.

**Impact of demonetisation on working capital and goods**

3063. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether consequent upon demonetisation, Indian exporters have expressed apprehension over its impact on working capital and production of goods;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government had called meeting of Export Promotion Councils and other sector representatives to discuss the impact of demonetisation, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) to what extent, the exports would be affected in the current year, and remedial measures taken by Government to boost export, with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (c) A meeting was convened by Department of Commerce on 21st November, 2016 with Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) to assess the impact of demonetisation on the country's exports/exporters. A similar meeting was also convened by Ministry of Micro, Small and