

fisheries. The plans also provide suitable technological interventions to minimize the crop losses due to above weather aberrations. To bring awareness among the stake holders, ICAR in collaboration with DAC&FW has organized National and State level interface meetings in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 before the onset of the season for preparedness assessment. Special emphasis was laid in these meetings on mechanism of implementation of the plans, refinement required and the impacts.

To insulate farmers against the loss of crop due to natural calamities, Government of India has launched Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) from Kharif season of 2016-17. Government of India approves Central assistance to States under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), which includes crop damage on the recommendation of the Inter Ministerial Central Team constituted on the basis of proposals received from States/UTs.

Keeping in view the impact of climate change and focusing on end to end solution in irrigation sector, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) has been made operationalised from 2015-16. For faster implementation of 99 major and medium irrigation project by December, 2019, a mission mode implementation has been envisaged to bring 76.03 lakh ha. under irrigation. Besides, for conservation and efficient use of water, micro irrigation is being promoted. So far about 9.5 million ha area has been brought under micro irrigation.

Regularization of contractual safai karamcharies

*87. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Railways have taken to abolish or regulate the regularization of contractual safai karamchari jobs, the details thereof;

(b) in how many stations and coaches has the cleaning work been completely mechanized during 2014-2017, the details thereof;

(c) the number of trains still running with direct discharge toilets;

(d) how many such trains have been replaced in the last three years; and

(e) the Railways' plan for the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) On the Railways, primarily the jobs relating to Safai are carried out by regularly appointed Railway servants designated as Safaiwalas/cleaners. However, in a few departments, the work of cleanliness (including mechanised cleaning) has been outsourced to external agencies

(contractors), who in turn engage safai karamcharies on contractual basis. In view of the fact that such contract staff are contract employees of contractors, there is no question of their regularization in Railways. In this connection, attention is drawn to Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances' OM dated 11.12.2006, whereby all Ministries of the Government of India were directed to follow/implement the orders of the Apex Court (Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court) in the case of "Secretary of State of Karnataka *Vs.* Uma Devi and Others" (Civil Appeal No. 3595-3612/1999). As per this directive, appointment has to be given only by following the prescribed procedure of recruitment. Moreover, there is no provision in the Contract Labour (R&A) Act, 1970 for automatic absorption of such contract labour.

In view of aforesaid statutory provisions, Railways is statutorily barred to take any step to regularise contract workers.

(b) Integrated Mechanized Housekeeping Contracts have been awarded in around 488 stations. Mechanised coach cleaning contracts are provided in around 132 major coaching depots.

(c) 45% of coaches on Indian Railways are running with direct discharge as on 31.1.2018.

(d) Total 23104 coaches were fitted with bio-toilets during last three years.

(e) Passenger coaches are being progressively provided with bio-toilets eliminating direct discharge and a large number will be completed in the next two years.

Telecommunication projects in karnataka

*88. DR. VINAY P. SAHASRABUDDHE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the progress of various ongoing projects of the Central Government for better telecommunication infrastructure in Karnataka, district-wise;

(b) the reasons for inadequate pace of implementation of projects in certain districts of the State;

(c) the estimate of livelihood opportunities made available through new communications infrastructure projects implemented in the State of Karnataka after June, 2014; and

(d) the comparative figures of amount spent on communications-related projects implemented in Karnataka between 2009-14 and 2014-17?