

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1426
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10th FEBRUARY, 2021

PROBLEMS FACED BY TEA INDUSTRY

1426. SHRI SISIR KUMAR ADHIKARI:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the tea industry in the country is under severe stress due to various reasons like rise in production costs and stagnation in prices, among others;
- (b) if so, the measures taken/being taken by the Government to tackle the said problem;
- (c) whether the Government would consider announcing special measures/benefits for improving the conditions of tea labourers of the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री हरदीप सिंह पुरी)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI)

(a) & (b) : While the tea Industry is sensitive to fluctuation in the cost of various inputs like raw materials, wages and the demand-supply scenario, tea production in India is showing a stable trend. It increased from 1325 M.Kgs. in 2017-18 to 1360 M.Kgs. in 2019-20.

The production cycle of tea was affected during the initial period of the Covid related lockdown, particularly in the months of March - April, 2020. However, the production of tea has improved from May, 2020 onwards after the plantation sector resumed operations. This disruption resulted in decline in production to the tune of 105.21 M.Kgs. during April to December 2020 as compared to corresponding period of previous year. During the current year 2020-21 (April 20-January 21), the auction price of tea has increased by Rs.59.73 per Kg over the corresponding period of previous year, which should ensure better financial outcomes for the tea sector and help it to recuperate.

The Government, through the Tea Board, is implementing the "Tea Development & Promotion Scheme" for providing financial assistance to the tea industry in the country. The scheme focuses on increasing productivity, quality, value addition, orthodox tea production, and formation of Self Help Groups and Farmer Producer Organisations. The

Tea Board provided financial assistance of Rs.384.85 cr. to the tea industry from 2017 - 18 till January 2021.

(c) & (d): The working conditions of tea garden workers are governed under the Plantation Labour Act (PLA), 1951 and enforced by the state government concerned. The workers and their dependents are provided basic welfare services and amenities e.g. housing, medical and primary education, water supply, sanitation etc. under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. Apart from PLA, workers of the tea industry are also covered by various industrial and social security legislations such as Workmen's Compensation Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, Payment of Bonus Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Payment of Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Industrial Disputes Act, Factories Act and Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act, 1946.

The Tea Board also extends certain welfare measures to tea workers and their wards/dependents, which are supplemental in nature. Tea Board has disbursed an amount of Rs.17.72 Crore during the period from 2017-18 till January 2021 for the benefit of Tea garden workers.

In addition the Central Government has announced a scheme in the Union Budget 2021-22 for the welfare of Tea workers, especially women and their children, in Assam and West Bengal with a total outlay of Rs.1,000 Crore.
