

Child Labour

782. SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether according to the "Progress of the Nations Report-1995" prepared by the UNICEF, in India between 5 percent and 30 per cent of the children, under the age of 16, are engaged in child labour;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to rehabilitate them?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) : (a) and (b) UNICEF in their progress of the Nations Report, 1995 have observed that between 5% and 30% of children under the age of 16 are estimated to fall under the definition of child labour.

According to 1981 Census, 4.26% of children in the country are working children.

(c) National Child Labour Policy, 1987 has three action plans to rehabilitate child labour i.e. (i) a legislative action plan; (ii) focussing of general development programmes for benefiting children wherever possible; and (iii) project-based action plan in areas of high concentration of child labour engaged in wage/quasi-wage employment.

At present, 12 National Child Labour Projects are under implementation in 8 States covering approximately 16,000 children. A major activity undertaken under the National Child Labour Projects is establishment of special schools to provide basic needs like non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition, etc., to the children withdrawn from employment. Voluntary agencies are being financially assisted to the extent of 75% for taking up welfare projects for working children under the Grants-in-Aid Scheme.

In addition to the above, the National Authority for Elimination of Child Labour has also identified 100 districts which have the highest incidence of child labour in the country. It has been decided that projects to eliminate child labour in hazardous occupations will be started as per the *National Child Labour Project Scheme* in these districts. A *Workshop* of these 100 District Collectors is scheduled to take place in New Delhi on 13-14 September, 1995. The concerned Collectors have been requested to prepare project proposals in their respective districts based on the National Child Labour Project Scheme. An allocation of Rs. 34.4 crores has been made for the current financial year to undertake projects for children withdrawn from work.

Export of Carpets

783. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK :
SHRIMATI PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL :
SHRI GOVINDRAO NIKAM :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether U.S. is insisting on rugmark for import of carpets from India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government in this regard; and

(d) the steps the Government propose to take to increase the export of carpets?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, some Private Member Bills are pending in the U.S. Senate and House of Representative seeking amendments in the U.S. Laws for imposition of a ban on import of goods manufactured with the use of child labour.

(c) The Carpet Export Promotion Council has introduced a 'Kaleen' label for carpets to be exported from the country as a hallmark of commitment for eradication of child labour from the Indian Carpet Industry and contribution towards welfare of carpet weavers.

(d) The steps taken by the Govt. to increase export of carpets includes sponsoring of sales-cum-study teams abroad, participation in international fairs and exhibitions, organisation of buyer-seller meets, overseas publicity and publication of catalogues, conducting of seminars and workshops and organisation of the All India Carpet Trade Fair annually.

Excise Duty on Tobacco Products

784. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken initiatives to stabilise Excise duties on tobacco and agro-based products;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY) : (a) and (b) The excise duty on tobacco and agro-based products has been prescribed after taking into account various relevant considerations. Changes, if any, in these duty rates will depend on prevailing circumstances.

Setting up of Task Force/Steering Committee by ITDC

785. SHRIMATI MAHENDRA KUMARI :
SHRIMATI KRISHNENDRA KAUR (Deepa) :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :