

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2738
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2002
POVERTY LEVEL
A. VENKATESH NAIK;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have achieved the aim of downsizing the level of poverty in the country;
- (b) if so, the extent to which the poverty level has been downsized in the nineties; (
- (c) whether the progress of downsizing the poverty level has been much slow;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government propose to change the existing method of estimating the poverty level;
- (f) if so, the criteria proposed to be adopted in this regard;
- (g) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (h) the specific programmes made by the Government to reduce the poverty level in the rural areas in particular and in the entire country in general?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES, MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE)

(a) to (d): The Planning Commission estimates the percentage and number of persons living below the poverty line at national and state level from the large sample surveys on consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. The two latest such surveys were conducted in 1993-94 (NSS 50th Round) and 1999-2000 (NSS 55th Round). The number of persons living below the poverty line calculated from 50th Round large sample survey on consumer expenditure conducted by the NSSO in 1993-94 was 320.4 million, which is 35.97 per cent of the total population. The data from the latest large survey of the 55th Round indicate the number of persons living below the poverty line in the country in 1999-2000 as 260.25 million, which is 26.10 per cent of the total population.

(e) to (g): There is no proposal to change the method of estimation of poverty level at the moment since it is based on the recommendations of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor, which comprised of the leading experts in the country.

(h): There is a three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country. These are:

- (i) acceleration of economic growth,
- (ii) human, and social development through literacy, education, health, nutrition, meeting of the minimum needs, elevation of social and economic status of the weaker sections of the society, etc., and
- (iii) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets- building for the poor.

The increase in income of the people living below the poverty line occur from the joint impact of general growth process and direct income generation of the poor arising from various anti-poverty programmes introduced from time to time by the Government for their upliftment. Since the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85), the Government has been implementing employment and asset generation schemes for the upliftment of the people living below the poverty line. These schemes are mainly of two types, self-employment and wage employment. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has been the major self-employment programme and it has been in operation in all the blocks of the country since 1980. The wage employment programme initially was National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) during the Sixth Plan period. In the Seventh Plan, another wage employment programme under the name Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was introduced. Then in 1989, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched by merging the National Programme, and it became the main wage-employment programme. In addition, several programmes to help the poor were also in operation until March, 1999. These programmes are: Million Wells Scheme (MWS),

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA).

>From 1st April, 1999, these programmes, excepting EAS and JRY have been restructured into single self-employment programme called the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) with the primary objectives of focussed approach to poverty alleviation, capitalising advantages of group lending, and overcoming the problems associated with multiplicity of programmes. Also, from 1st April, 1999, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) has been restructured as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) with the primary objective of creation of demand driven community village infrastructure including durable assets at the village level and assets to enable the rural poor to increase the opportunities for sustained employment. Its secondary objective is generation of supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in the rural areas. The wage employment under the programme is given to Below Poverty Lines (BPL) families.

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) announced by the Prime Minister on 15.8.2001 was launched in September 2001. The scheme focuses on generation of wage employment, creation of durable rural assets and infrastructure and provision of food security to the rural poor. The scheme of JGSY and EAS have been brought under the purview of this mega scheme. The SGRY will be a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) implemented on cost sharing basis between Centre and States in the ratio of 75:25 of the cash component of the programme.