

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1023
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2000
BELOW POVERTY LINE
SANJAY PASWAN

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) the criteria adopted by the Government to conduct census of the people living below poverty line:
- (b) the criteria formulated by World Bank for conducting census of people living below poverty line at the international level;
- (c) the number of persons living below poverty line in the country during the Ninth Five year Plan as compared to the initial years of the Eighth Five Year Plan; and
- (d) the details of the measures being taken by the Government to improve the living standard of the people living below poverty line?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS. (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE)

(a): The Census of the people living below the poverty line commonly known as BPL Census is conducted at two stages. First, on the basis of certain exclusion criteria some families are excluded. The exclusion criteria are as follows: if the family operates more than two hectares of land, has a pucca house, if any resident member of the family has annual income from salary/self-employment exceeding Rs. 20,000 per annum (Rs. 1,700 per month), or if the family possesses a Television set, Refrigerator, Ceiling Fan, Motor Cycle/Scooter, Three-Wheeler, or if the family owns a Tractor, Power Tiller, Combined Thresher/Harvester, then the family is excluded from the BPL group.

Among the remaining families, the total consumption, both purchased from the market and home grown, are divided by the total number of persons in the family. If this amount falls below the poverty line expenditure which is worked out at state level using the methodology contained in the report of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor (Lakdawala Committee), then the family is considered to be in the BPL group.

(b): The World Bank criteria for conducting the census of people living below the poverty line at the international level are not known. However, the Bank publishes the percentage of people living below the poverty line computed by the Member countries using their own methodologies. It also computes the percentage of persons living below international poverty line set by the World Bank of one US dollar a day, measured at 1985 international price and adjusted to local currency using the Purchasing Power Parity conversion factor.

(c): The Planning Commission estimates the percentage 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). These percentages are applied on the estimated population in order to arrive at the number of persons living below the poverty line. The large surveys of consumer expenditure by the NSSO are conducted at an interval of approximately five years. The last such survey was conducted in 1993-94. The next large survey on consumer expenditure is being conducted during the period July, 1999 to June, 2000. As such, the estimates of percentage of people living below the poverty line during the Ninth Five Year Plan which covers the period 1997-2002 are not available. The latest estimate of poverty available for the year 1993-94, from the NSSO large sample data on consumer expenditure. This may be treated as the initial year of the Eighth Five Year Plan as the Eighth Plan covers the period 1992-1997. In 1993-94, 35.97% of the persons lived below the poverty line.

(d) There is three-pronged action to alleviate and reduce the poverty in the country. These are: (a) acceleration of economic growth, (b) 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 (c) direct attack on poverty through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building for the poor.