

gradual shortage of potable water in the State's rural areas which is having an adverse impact on the health of the village folk and which has already claimed many precious lives (*Interruptions*)

SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ: You can verify from the Chief Minister, the facts which I have submitted.

[*English*]

Urban Settlement Policy

*497. SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the urban population in the country has been increasing rapidly;

(b) whether the Government have any urban settlement policy; and

(c) if some the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Urban Development is primarily the responsibility of the State Government/U.T. Administration. The Central Govt. plays only a catalytic/nodal role. The policy content in the programmes undertaken has efforts at reduction of migration of population from rural areas to major urban areas, through removal of poverty and jobs for urban poor through Nehru Rozgar Yojana, and improvement in the living conditions in slum areas.

SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister's reply is very evasive. My question was about the policy on urban settlement, but she did not mention anything about that. When I visited metropolitan cities I found the downtrodden people sleeping in the streets during night. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have any specific programme to give shelter for the people who are living below the poverty line. Likewise, in cities like Delhi, Bombay, Madras etc., the Central Government employees have not been provided adequate accommodation. Hence, I would also like to know whether the Government have any plan to give accommodation for them at the earliest.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Members that the urban population of our country is increasing and it has gone up by 5.77 crores and at present it is 21.72 crores. The Urban Development Ministry is in the process of formulating a National Urban Policy and it may be called Settlement Policy also. Then, recognition the serious situation of urbanisation process, the Government has constituted a National Commission on Urbanisation and it has recommended adequate investment in the growth centres so that they become sources of employment for neighbouring areas. We have already formulated various schemes and they are under examination.

SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Sir, I would like to know whether the Government have any plan to construct parallel cities near the metropolitan cities with all amenities to check the growth of population.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: We have a scheme for the integrated development of small and medium towns and the scheme of IDSFT was introduced during Sixth Five Year Plan which is to reduce migration from rural areas to urban areas, to generate more employment and to provide sufficient infrastructure facilities to these towns and their hinterlands to serve them better.

SHRI SUNIL DATT (Bombay North West): In Bombay we have more than 40 per cent people living in slums. The hon. Minister said that there is improvement in the living conditions in some areas. But we have slums on aviation land, we have slums on railway property and we have slums on Defence land. No amenities are provided over there. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if they have done anything to give proper amenities to the slum dwellers of those areas.

SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL: This is a question about the facilities to the slum areas. You would perhaps recall that Rs. 100 crores was given for improvement of Taravi area and if you go to that area, you will see that things have improved. Yet, there are certain areas, as you mentioned railway areas, which need improvement. It is under Railway Ministry and we would like to see that also improves.