

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:839
ANSWERED ON:28.11.2005
PLIGHT OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS
Saradgi Shri Iqbal Ahmed

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nation has pointed out that many of the 450 million waged agricultural workers are suffering from a high incidence of poverty and hunger;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government in this regard; and
- (c) the action taken/being taken to help and improve the conditions of agricultural labourers in India?

Answer

MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO)

(a) to (c): A statement is annexed.

Statement referred to in part (a) to (c) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 839 for 28.11.2005 regarding Plight of Agricultural Labourers.

(a): A news item containing such a statement has appeared in a daily newspaper "The Hindu" on 14.10.2005.

(b) & (c): The Government has made assessment of incidence of poverty for the population as a whole. According to the NSSO survey (1999-2000), about 26% of the population is living Below Poverty Line. Rural economy being agriculture based, a large number of agricultural labourers live below the poverty line. However, no estimate of poverty among agricultural workers separately is available.

The Government has launched several welfare and poverty alleviation/ employment generation schemes for the rural poor which, inter-alia, include agricultural workers. Some of such schemes are: Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana, Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), etc. The Government is implementing Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) with the objective to provide assistance to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) rural households. Further, Janshree Bima Yojana providing for insurance cover to people living below or marginally above the poverty line, is also available for workers in the unorganised sector including agricultural workers. The Government has also redesigned the Universal Health Insurance Scheme (UHIS), which is available to families living below poverty line (BPL) which, inter-alia, include agricultural workers, at subsidized annual premium of Rs. 165, Rs. 248 and Rs. 330 for individual, a family of five, and a family of seven respectively. The scheme provides for reimbursement of hospitalization expenses up to Rs. 30,000/- basis per family, coverage of death of worker due to accident (Rs. 25,000/-) etc. Recently the Government has enacted National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which provides for 100 days of employment in a year for poor families in the rural areas to atleast one person in every rural household for asset creating public works programmes.