

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, March 13, 1997 / Phalgun 22, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met one minute past Eleven of the Clock

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

[Translation]

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL (Varanasi) : Mr Speaker, Sir today, in front of the police station, Chhatra Sangathan Sangharsh Morcha (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You may raise it after Question Hour. Raise this matter in Zero Hour. You will get a chance during that hour.

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL : Three students have been killed in the election of Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You will get a chance during Zero Hour.

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL : Today, they are sitting on dharna (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am aware of it.

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL : A high level Committee, a Judicial Committee (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You will get a chance in Zero Hour. Otherwise you would lose a chance in zero Hour also.

[English]

11.02 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Child Labour

*261. SHRI HARIN PATHAK :
SHRI S.D.N.R. WAIYAR :

Will the Minister or LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the number of child labour is increasing in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to bring forward a bill ensuring minimum wages for them;

(c) whether the Government propose to introduce compulsory education for these children;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the names of the districts in Karnataka and other States where special schools for child labourers have so far been sanctioned; and

(f) total number of child labourers proposed to be admitted in these special schools?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The census figures show that the number of working children has come down from 13.64 million in 1981 to 11.28 million in 1991. Government is committed to the goal of eradication of child labour in all its forms and making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right. However, priority is being given to eradication of child labour in hazardous occupations for which 76 National Child Labour Projects have been sanctioned so far. Minimum wages for working children are fixed as per provisions of Section 3(3) of the Minimum Wages Act., 1948. The names of the districts in Karnataka and the districts of other States which have been sanctioned National Child Labour Projects for opening special schools for the rehabilitation of children withdrawn from hazardous occupations are given in the Annexure. A total of 1.50 lakh children are proposed to be rehabilitated through the 76 National Child Labour Projects sanctioned so far, including three projects in the State of Karnataka.

Annexure

Districts Sanctioned Child Labour Projects

ANDHRA PRADESH : Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah, East Godawari, Guntur, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Khammam, Kurnool, Medak, Nalgonda, Nellore, Nizamabad, Prakasam (Markapur), Ranga Reddy, Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, Warangal, West Godavari (20)

BIHAR : Dumka, Garhwa, Jamui, Nalanda, Pakur, Sahibganj, Saharsa, West Singhbhum (8)

GUJARAT : Panchmahals, Surat (2)

KARNATAKA : Bijapur, Dharwad, Gulbarga (3)

MADHYA PRADESH : Bilaspur, Durg, Mandasaur, Rajnandgoan, Surguja (5)

MAHARASHTRA : Selapur, Thane (2)

ORISSA : Angul, Bargarh, Bolangri, Deogarh, Gajapathi (Udaigiri), Ganjam Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangapur, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur, Sonepur (16)

RAJASTHAN : Jaipur, Udaipur	(2)
TAMIL NADU : Coimbatore, Chidambarnar, Dharmapuri, Kamrajar, Salem, Pudukottai, Tiruchirapalli, North Arcot	(8)
UTTAR PRADESH : Aligarh, Ferozabad, Varanasi (Mirzapur-Bhadohi), Moradabad	(4)
WEST BENGAL : North 24-Pargana, South 24-Pargana, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Midnapur, Burdwan	(6)
	<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> (76)

MR. SPEAKER : No Supplementary.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : It is a very important supplementary. But I seek your projection. I have some documents. The reply of the hon. Minister is :

"The census figures show that the number of working children has come down from 13.64 million in 1981 to 11.28 million in 1991."

Sir, it is a very serious matter which I am raising today on the floor of the House.

[Translation]

The problem of child labour is very serious. It must be debated. I have three different official documents (Interruptions) Please tell the Hon'ble Speaker. He is saying that I should speak slowly as I have undergone angioplasty.

[English]

Thank you very much for reminding me.

[Translation]

There are three documents. On 9th December the Hon. Minister had said in reply to the same question.

[English]

According to 1981 census, the total number of working children in India was 13.6 million. According to the forty-third round of National Sample Survey conducted in 1987-88, the total number of working children increased to 17.2 million. The data regarding working children, as per 1991 census, are yet to be released. The answer given by the same Minister is :

"It is estimated that presently there would be about 20 million working children."

[Translation]

The hon. Minister had stated three months back that there were 20 million child labourers. I have official

documents. I have current status. It has been said that 43rd Report was yet to be submitted. However the figure may touch around two crore. The report of Suresh Bargava, a representative of UNICEF in the home State of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, is available with me. It has been stated therein that :

[English]

"There are 3.5 crore child labourers in India".

First of all, I would like to have a clarification from the hon. Minister, What is true and which figure is correct. The hon. Minister has said that it is decreasing; that in 1981 it was 13.64 million and that in 1991 it has decreased to 11.28 million. Here are the three documents of the Central Government and the UNICEF. I would like to know what is the true picture and what is the actual status.

MR. SPEAKER : There is no contradiction. What the hon. Minister has stated is the correct position. If you analyse it properly, you will not find any contradiction. You ask the next question. I know the figures very well than anybody else. There is no contradiction in what the hon. Minister has stated. In 1981, Census is 13 million. Is it all right?

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Yes Sir.

MR. SPEAKER : The National Sample Survey in 1987, that is after five years, is 17 million. In 1996, there will be some increase, so estimated figure is 20 million. Now the final figure of 1991 Census is 11 million. Where is the contradiction? I rule out that there is any contradiction.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You ask the question.

... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am very familiar with the subject.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : I am reading out the reply given by him on December 9th. It has been indicated there in that there were 17 million working children.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, the hon. Member got a reply from the ex-Labour Minister, now he should put the question to the present Labour Minister.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : That figure goes down because of the skilfulness and efficient working of the ex-Labour Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : No You should understand what is Census and what is the National Sample Survey.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : I know that.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : You should understand what is the difference between these two and what is the estimate. There are three differences.

..... (Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, are former Ministers allowed to answer questions?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I am sorry, I withdraw.

It is a question which has to be nationally debated.

..... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, let the hon. Minister clarify

It should be replied this way. I don't want to go into its discussion. As my friend, Shri Sanat Mehta has reminded.

..... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Sir, the hon. Minister replied on the floor of the House that it has increased on 9th December, four months back. Now, again all these figures have changed. How one can believe?

Recently, last month, I had undergone angioplasty surgery.

MR. SPEAKER : No, it is because, by December 1996 the 1991 Census was not available.

[Translation]

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, I will clarify the position. The hon. Member is correct in saying that on 9th December, I had given the figure that according to 1981 Census, it was 13.64 million. The Census Report of 1991 was available only at the end of December. Therefore, the answer given on 9th December is correct (Interruptions)

I have undergone surgery. But, I would like to tell all honourable Members that there are 60-70 per cent drop outs among the children of primary schools and middle schools. It is a matter of serious concern.

[English]

[Translation]

Education is the backbone of the nation.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : He is repeating the reply given on 11th December (Interruptions)

[Translation]

[English]

The children of this country do not get education and they work on roads, in hotels and in tea stalls of villages. They are engaged in works forcibly.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : When did you receive that Report?

[English]

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : I read the report on 9th December 1996 (Interruptions)

The Government should be serious about it. That is the only suggestion.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Sir, through you I would like to know whether the Government is serious in implementing the National Labour Project, which has been announced by it, in letter and spirit. My specific question is whether the Government is serious to implement this policy and this Act Minimum Wages Act.

I have asked, what are the minimum wages. The hon. Minister has replied that it is as per the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Section 3(3). I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what are the minimum wages as per Section 3(3) of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Please tell me how much money has been given. Are you going to increase the minimum wages? What are the minimum wages for the working children?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, the Government is very serious to eliminate child labour in the country. If the hon. Member is aware, even in advanced countries this is persisting. In the Common Minimum Programme we have clearly stated that child labour in all forms will be eliminated and it has been reflected in the President's Address also.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : Sir, the hon. Member has not studied the Minimum Wages Act ... (Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Sir , I am sorry. I have not studied it! I have got the figures with me and I am ready to debate everything.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : I will give you the provision of the Act. (Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : I have the papers. I have studied it for seven hour yesterday night. You have not even been able to give me the correct answer ... (Interruptions)

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : For the knowledge of the hon. Member, I will give you the provision of the Act ... (Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : It is only because of the hon. Speaker who has supported you. Otherwise, you have no words to express it. This is the answer which you have given me in three months time (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I think, the hon. Minister know how to handle his questions.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Once he has accepted. It is 17.2 millions. It is not an estimated figure. It is the correct figure (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Harin Pathak, please do not underestimate the hon. Minister. He knows how handle his questions.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : The correct figure is 17.2 millions (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's question is this. Yes, you have a provision for fixing the minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act. But, what is the amount that you have fixed? That is what he wants to know.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: The amount of minimum wages has to be fixed by the appropriate Government with regard to the industry.

MR. SPEAKER: You do not have information from them.

[Translation]

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: He has saved his skin. But please ask him to carry out study constantly.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: I think , you can get the information from the State Governments.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : I have studied everything. No State Government has fixed the minimum wages for the children. That is the position. I am very clear on that (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: That is not correct.

..... (Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : Sir, if the State Governments have not fixed the minimum wages, then this is very serious (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has said that the State Governments have not fixed the minimum wages for children.

..... (Interruptions)

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR : What subsequent steps the Government of India is talking? ... (Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Sir, this is a very serious question. There must be some responsibility (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let me put a supplementary. I know your concern. I myself will put a supplementary. There was a proposal that the Minimum Wages Act should be amended to bring the wages of the children at par with the adults. What is the position?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : That is under circulation. We are still expecting the reply from the State Governments. After getting the reply, we will give.

MR. SPEAKER : Good. I think, I have helped you something. Now, Shri Sudhir Giri.

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, as per the Central Government scheme, in the rural areas some boys and girls working as labourers have been taken away from their places of work and they have been admitted into schools for the purpose of serving their interests and some money was paid to them. They were paid money for a year or two. But, what will be the fate of those boys and girls after a year or two?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : What is that question? I could not follow the question.

MR. SPEAKER: I could not also follow the question. Will you please repeat?

SHRI SUDHIR GIRI : As per the Central Government scheme, the boys and girls who are working in different factories or in the households are getting admitted into schools and during that period of their schooling, they are paid some amount as per the Government's decision and norms. After their period of schooling, what will be the fate of those boys and girls?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: The child labour who is taken out of the hazardous industries is being put in special

schools where we are giving vocational training and we are also paying stipends to the parents of the child. It is about Rs. 100 per month. After vocational training, the child has to find a way out.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Where are the vocational schools? There is no vocational training school being set up. That is a different question.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: We have about 1,800 schools in the country.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: That is different. But he asked a different question.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: There are 1,800 schools and in these schools, the children who have been taken out from the hazardous industries are being given midday meal, vocational training and special training.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : After schooling, what will they do?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: After schooling, I have said that they have to find out their own means (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : It is stated that many schools have been opened. Please provide the details of amount of money provided to each school(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER Last week, there was a question about this. All the information was already furnished. I remember it.

[Translation]

Pay Scale to MTNL Employees

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*262. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :
DR. BALIRAM :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited have not been given the pay scale as per rules prevalent in the Nigam even after a period of ten years of its inception;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the number of such employees;

(c) whether any committee has been constituted by the Government to provide pay-scale as per the rules of the Nigam;

(d) if so, the salient features and composition thereof;

(e) the number of meetings held by the committee during the last two years and the decision taken in these meetings; and

(f) the time by which the committee is likely to submit its final report?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) MTNL Employees consist of following two categories:

(i) Directly recruited 62 employees;

(ii) The Government employees on deemed deputation, approximately 62,500.

Out of directly recruited employees of MTNL, 48 employees have already been given the industrial DA pay scales. The pay scales of remaining 14 employees who are in executive category is under consideration of the Management:

The Government employees who are on deemed deputation are drawing Government pay scales because the case of their absorption in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited has not been yet decided.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f) Question does not arise in view of (c) above.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Mr Speaker Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that 62 employees have been recruited directly. Out of them 48 employees have already been given industrial DA pay scales. I would like to know the category of these employees and the time since when they are being paid dearness allowance. Whether the Government is contemplating to give industrial DA pay scales to remaining 14 employees? For how many years, they have been working in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.?

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : The entire issue is *sub judice*. This Staff Union of the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited have gone before the Central Administrative