

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:254

ANSWERED ON:17.12.2004

CHIEF MINISTERS` CONFERENCE

Narhire Smt. Kalpana Ramesh;Pradhan Shri Dharmendra

**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) the issues discussed in the two days` conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers of Rural Development held in New Delhi in the month of June, 2004;

(b) the outcome of the discussions; and

(c) the issues on which there was broad consensus amongst the Chief Ministers?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No.254 to be replied on 17.12.2004.

The Conference of Chief Ministers was organized on 29th & 30th June, 2004 in New Delhi primarily to focus attention on certain important areas of concern in implementation of various rural development programmes in order to achieve the objectives stated in the NCMP in regard to widening and deepening of rural prosperity. The agenda items were formulated in accordance with the thrust areas contained in NCMP. The strategy of rural development has to be through a set of programmes for poverty alleviation, massive employment generation, area development and infrastructure development. The major programmes of the Ministry, which were deliberated in the Conference were wage-employment programme, self-employment programme, area development programmes, infrastructure development programmes-rural housing, rural connectivity, rural drinking water supply, rural sanitation and devolution of power to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Some of the general issues emerged during the Conference are given below:

1. The North Eastern Chief Ministers observed that as the financial position of the States are very weak, it will not be possible for them to contribute the present State share of 25% of the total Plan funds, and therefore, they have pleaded for funding pattern of 90:10.
2. Several States pleaded for a change in the allocation criteria. They were of the view that fund allocation should be based on progress and performance of the schemes rather than on a single criterion of poverty ratio. This is particularly important because official estimates of poverty ratios of many States have come down substantially and they stand to loose substantial funds on account of this.
3. The present methodology of estimating poverty at the national level should undergo a change. The methodology used for estimating poverty is not based on realistic considerations.
4. The West Bengal Minister raised the issue of chairmanship of District Level Vigilance & Monitoring Committees. According to him instead of the Members of Parliament, these Committees should be chaired by the Zila Panchayat Chairman who is constitutionally elected representative.
5. Some of the States argued for more flexibility for better spending on need based schemes rather than adopting uniformly formulated schemes which may not be suitable for local conditions and requirements.

Besides, detailed discussions on State specific issues relating to the implementation of various rural development programmes, there was a consensus that keeping in view the magnitude of the rural poverty and also the need for rural infrastructure the allocation under various rural development programmes should be enhanced considerably to achieve the visible results within a given period of time. Further, it was also agreed to strengthen the mechanism for effective implementation of the rural development programmes through active involvement of the Panchayati Raj Institutions who are to be empowered as per the provisions of the Constitution (73rd Amendment Act).