

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4788

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2010

DEFINITION OF POOR

Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Yadav Shri Dharmendra

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is considering to overhaul the definition of the country's poor and the new norms are likely to automatically list SCs/STs as below poverty line;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the expert group set up by the Government to review the current set of economic indicators to identify the poor has submitted its report;
- (d) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the aforesaid expert group;
- (e) whether the Government is also considering specific criteria for automatic listing of widows and physically challenged people as poor; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSION(SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a) & (b): The Planning Commission estimates the number and proportion of persons living below poverty line including SCs/STs based on a large sample survey of House Hold Consumption Expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) with an interval of five years approximately. Based on the Expert Group Methodology (Lakdawala Committee) the national Poverty lines at 2004-05 prices were estimated as Rs.356.60 per capita per month in the rural areas and Rs.538.60 per capita per month in urban areas and the official poverty estimates at the national level for the year 2004-05 were 301.7 million persons accounting for 27.5% of the total population.

The Planning Commission in December, 2005 constituted an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Suresh D. Tendulkar to review alternate concepts of poverty and to recommend changes in the existing procedures used for official estimates of poverty. The Tendulkar Committee submitted its report in December, 2009 and recommended the Mixed Reference Period (MRP) equivalent Poverty Line Basket (PLB) corresponding to urban poverty ratio of 25.7% at all India level as the new reference PLB. This new reference PLB has been applied to rural as well as urban population in all the States. The resulting estimate of the all-India rural poverty head count ratio for 2004-05 was placed at 41.8 %, urban poverty head count ratio at 25.7 % and 37.2 % at all-India level. The poverty lines for rural and urban areas as per capita consumption expenditure of Rs 446.68 and Rs 578.80 per month respectively for the year 2004-05 recommended by the Tendulkar Committee have been accepted by the Planning Commission.

(c) to (f): The Planning Commission estimates the number and proportion of persons living below the poverty line at the National and State level separately for rural and urban areas, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) conducts the Below Poverty Line (BPL) Census through the State Governments/UT Administrations to identify the BPL households in the rural areas. The MoRD constituted an Expert Group headed by Dr. N.C. Saxena (Saxena Committee) to review the methodology for conducting the BPL Census to identify the BPL households in the rural areas. The Expert Group submitted its report in August 2009 and its recommendations include automatic inclusion of certain categories of house holds in the BPL list such as designated most discriminated against Scheduled Caste groups, called Maha Dalit, Single women headed households, Households with disabled person as a bread earner, Households headed by a minor etc. The Ministry of Rural Development is already in the process of finalizing the methodology for conducting the next BPL Census for preparation of list of BPL households by taking into account the recommendations of Saxena Committee.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) as a nodal Ministry, issue the general guidelines for identification of BPL families in the urban areas. However, there has not been a uniform methodology followed by the States/UTs for identification of BPL households in urban areas. An Expert Group under the chairmanship of Prof S.R. Hashim has been constituted by the Planning Commission to recommend a suitable methodology for identification of BPL families in the urban areas so that a uniform criterion is followed.