

>

Title: Need to bring the workers of MNREGA in the ambit of "Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Act, 2008".

SHRI P.K. BIJU: I would like to raise an important matter before the House. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) was passed in September, 2005 and it has a positive impact on the livelihood of rural poor. MNREGA is guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household. But some pertinent questions related with social security of the workers are still left answered. Those who were the registered members but cannot able to participate in the MNREGA activities either due to ill-health or old-age would be naturally ousted out of this social net. Apart from these, the workers may also fall into cycles of excessive seasonality of employment and suffer from absence of social security protection such as life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old-age protection and any other benefit. The sector is also highly unorganized and there is no mechanism for the redressal of their grievances and protection against on-the-job accidents. These shortcomings will hamper the ethos and spirit of this employment guarantee programme and will end up with partial accomplishment of its goals. There should be specific welfare schemes to curb the weaknesses of the programme.

So, Sir, the Government should take necessary steps to form a welfare fund to take care of its members and their families in their misfortunes. I would also urge upon the Government to consider the MNREGA workers under the category of unorganized sector and include them within the ambit of the "Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Act, 2008".