

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: As on date, in our country, as far as petroleum products are concerned, in the past we have adopted the dual pricing policy and also the administrative price mechanism, through which we have created artificial price hike also. This Committee has suggested, firstly, that this burden should no more be borne by the customers.

Secondly, oil products should completely be liberalised by the terminal year 2002 and market determined price will be prevailing. At that time, we are hopeful that the petroleum products prices may come down in the terminal year.

Thirdly, in the phased manner, we are taking out the APM. So also reduction in the excise duties and customs duties. This will enable our national oil companies to get themselves equipped to face the international market players within our country. They will also be able to sustain the competition from them. I hope in the terminal year 2002, the market determined price will definitely give us some kind of reduction in the oil prices.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the Annexure-I where it is mentioned that the freight subsidy on supplies to far-flung areas should be made through the fiscal budget. I would like to inform him that in the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands which is one of the most far-flung and remote island territories of the country, is facing a very erratic system of pricing of petroleum products. In the islands like Campbell, Car Nicobar, Diglipur, Mayabandar and Rangat, the price of petroleum is Rs. 40 a litre or Rs. 50 a litre. Similarly, the prices of all the petroleum products are very high.

So, I would like to know categorically from the hon. Minister what sort of mechanism he is going to provide for these far-flung areas so that the customers do not suffer and that they are not to pay exorbitant prices for petroleum products.

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY : Sir, in the terminal year, 2002, we will be retaining 15 per cent of the LPG subsidy and also 33.3 per cent of kerosene subsidy which are being distributed through the public distribution system. This subsidy will be passed on to the fiscal budget. We will not be retaining it. And also one more subsidy and other kinds of concessions will be continued for the far-flung areas where we are supplying the petroleum products, including LPG and kerosene.

The hon. Member has pointed out about the miseries in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Sir, he can come to me and discuss with me. We will take whatever possible steps. We will definitely redress the grievances of Andaman & Nicobar Islands to his satisfaction. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Will you send a group of experts to study the problem?

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY: We will consider.

SHRI V. SATHIAMOORTHY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that we are getting only 30 per cent of the petroleum products out of the total requirement of petroleum products. Is it the fate of our nation to depend upon other nations for ever?

Or has our country got any master plan to attain self-sufficiency in the near future? I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any plan to attain self-sufficiency.

SHRI VAZHAPADY K. RAMAMURTHY : Sir, if God willing, all our exploration efforts are going to yield fruits and definitely the hon. Member's wishes will be fulfilled. As far as our experience is concerned, as on date, India is having only a scarce deposit. So this will not be going to meet our requirement and demands for petroleum products in the country. I cannot say that in a shorter period or in a long time, we will be attaining self-sufficiency. We have to depend on the rich and resourceful countries of the world for crude and other petroleum products.

[Translation]

Unemployment

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*183. DR. CHINTA MOHAN :
PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of unemployed persons had gone to 58 million by 1997;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have set a target for elimination of unemployment by 2002 A.D. in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to achieve this target and the percentage of additional avenues of employment required to be generated annually for this purpose?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The approach to the Ninth Plan envisages priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. Greater productive employment will be generated in the growth process itself by concentrating on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterized by higher rates of unemployment and underemployment. The details will be known only after the Ninth Plan document is finalised by the government.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : Sir, employment is an important subject. Before the Lok Sabha election, the BJP in its manifesto has said that it would bring in one crore jobs per year. Already they have come to power. They have presented the Budget. I would like to know categorically from the Minister how many jobs he has created in this present Budget. That is part one of my supplementary.

Part two is, last year the United Front Government has brought in an Agricultural Labour Bill. Last year, suddenly the Lok Sabha was dissolved. I want to know categorically from the Minister when he is going to bring in the Bill for discussion. If there is a delay, what are the reasons for the delay?

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that undoubtedly employment is an important issue. We have a major problem on our hand. In fact, the Finance Minister during his Budget speech laid emphasis on this problem saying that it is the commitment of our Government to address this problem. He has very clearly said that about 40 lakh families will be assisted in two lakh groups this year by expending the existing NABARD scheme for self-employment to ensure that much of employment is created. In addition to that, the existing programmes should achieve at least, about 7-8 million jobs this year. This is according to the present Budget allocation. This answer is with regard to the first part of his first supplementary or sub-supplementary.

With regard to the Agricultural Bill, to the best of my knowledge, the Government is, in principle, committed to it. We are in the process of looking at it. I am sure the hon. Labour Minister will bring forward as soon as it is decided.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : The previous successive Governments, particularly, the Congress Governments have brought in Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Nagarpalika Bills to remove rural and urban poverty and also unemployment. I want to know this categorically from the Minister. Is there any such scheme that the BJP Government is planning to bring it? If so, what are they? This is part one of my second supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER : Please put your supplementary.

DR. CHINTA MOHAN : Unemployed graduates, undergraduates, post-graduates all of them are looking to this Government to get some type of incentive or some type of help. Is there any Plan before the Government to give them any help for their employment?

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : I must point out that the question that is being put is very particularly directed towards the poverty alleviation programme which actually should be addressed through a separate question. However, since my friend has raised it in this House I must point out to him that the hon. Finance Minister in his Budget Speech has said that the existing poverty alleviation programmes will be unified under the broad categories of self-employment scheme and wage employment scheme could be intensified.

Now, for specific details of how many schemes are there, I would need a specific notice to reply to. But generally I can assure him, through you, that this is our area of concentration and we would definitely encourage and with regard to youth I have already mentioned that we have a programme where two lakh self-help groups covering about 48 lakh families will be assisted in the next five years through the scheme of micro-credit, that is, 10,000 self-employment groups covering over two lakh families. This will be assisted this year itself.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, alongwith the problems of poverty and illiteracy, unemployment among youths is also spreading. Their parents are very much concerned about it. In view of all this, our Government had fixed a target in its National Agenda to eliminate this problem from the country by the year 2002. I would like to know about the efforts being made by the Government to remove unemployment. Right now, 58 million people are unemployed in our country.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not the way. Please ask your supplementary.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the rate of employment generation is 2% in our country. However, rate of employment generation is required to be 3% to get rid of unemployment problem. What efforts are being made by the Government to encourage the agro-based industries to achieve the desired rate of employment?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You put your supplementary, otherwise, I will disallow your supplementary.

[Translation]

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the unemployed youth who go abroad in search of employment are being looted by the agents. I want to know whether a special cell will be set up by the Ministry of Labour to check this loot and to provide employment to the people?

[English]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Sir, the hon. Member's question is in many parts. But the first part, if I may address with your permission is that he has indicated a figure of 58 million as the unemployed. I would like to correct his assessment because what was estimated was that during the period 1992-97, i.e. the Eighth Plan period, the number of persons who would require employment was 58 million. If the rate of growth of employment was 3.64 per cent during those years, we would have achieved this target. But

what we achieved was about six million jobs per year during the Eighth Plan, which means that there has been about 28 million which has not achieved the target. The actual number of jobs that are estimated to be created by 2002 from the period 1992 onwards in those ten years is 94 million. It is true that in the Eighth Plan the target was 3.64 per cent but we only achieved a target of 2.03 per cent.

In fact, the retargeting which was done half way through the Plan was 2.7, but even that was not achieved. We have fallen behind in our target. Today, in the Draft Ninth Plan—which is not yet finalised—it is envisaged that by the end of the year 2007, that is, by the end of the Tenth Plan, we should be able to come to this House and tell the House that we have been able to reach a level where unemployment is under control or has come to a level of completing the target of achieving total employment. But then that is only 2007, not 2002 as originally envisaged because in the Eighth Plan we have fallen behind in our target.

With regard to intensive agriculture, I can assure the hon. Member that in the Ninth Plan we will concentrate on agriculture-oriented and smaller industries to go in for this. In fact, the Prime Minister has directed that Action Plan be prepared to double the agricultural production over the next ten years. Agriculture is the largest employment providing sector with 66 per cent, and we would be concentrating on that.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Will you be increasing the agricultural production by taxing it at eight per cent as proposed in your Budget. By this, unemployment will further increase.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Sir, I will note my hon. friend's comments and communicate the same to the Finance Minister. I do believe that he has some point there. I cannot wish it away because, after all, we both have always argued the same point at one point, and even now.

But I would submit that with regard to employment abroad, in the Ministry of Labour we do have a Cell and we do give certification to people who are authorised agents to deal with employment abroad. I understand that today, about eight lakh people have employment abroad. We are going into this and would be keeping an eye on this. But it is not a question of solving the unemployment problem by asking the people to be employed abroad. That is not our intention. The intention is very clear that we have to increase growth in areas which are labour-intensive to solve this problem.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : Sir, the unemployment problem in West Bengal is extremely serious. It is reported that in 1977, the total number of registered unemployed in West Bengal was 16 lakhs. Now, in 1998, the number of unemployed has gone up to 60 lakhs. I want to know whether the hon. Minister has got the break up of the number of registered unemployed for each of the States and Union Territories? That is part (a) of my question.

Part (b) of my question is whether the Minister is aware that the funds allocated for employment benefit schemes by which various young people will be given jobs, like the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and the Prime Minister' Rozgar Yojana, are being in properly utilised in West Bengal and whether those funds have gone to Personal Ledger Account and siphoned out and utilised elsewhere? These are the two parts of my question.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, everybody is asking double Supplementaries.

MR. SPEAKER : You can answer only one Supplementary.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : No, Sir, I am quite willing to answer them. Sir, I may point out that I need a separate notice for figures which Shri Panja has asked. We do have them but I would communicate to him in writing how much exactly is the figure of those who are registered in the Employment Exchange. But I think it would be appropriate for me to point out to him that it does not necessarily mean that all those registered in the Employment Exchange are unemployed because there are many people who are privately employed but would still prefer to register themselves because in our country, there is a tendency that the only job that is considered to be a proper job is a Government job. So, they do not declare the private job. It is a reality of life. So, a mere increase of figures in the Employment Exchange does not mean that there is necessarily an increase in the unemployment. With regard to the West Bengal's level of unemployment, he is right, he is not wrong, but then West Bengal is not the only State where there has been an increase ...*(interruptions)*

I have said that the West Bengal is not the only State where unemployment has increased. What more do they want? But he is right in what he says; it is not totally off the mark.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : He is saying that there is unemployment all over. Should, therefore, no answer be given regarding West Bengal? I want to know the actual figure from the hon. Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : Let him complete.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : It is not the way that the minister is alleging about privately employed persons. What is the inquiry made?

MR. SPEAKER : Let him complete.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : I have told the hon. Member that I will communicate the figures to him. The present Question, unfortunately, did not arm me for a question like this. But I assure him that he will get the figures. ...*(interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I am coming to you.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : With regard to the *yojanas* in the Personal Ledger Account, the hon. Minister in charge of programmes will have to give the reply and not me. And, it would require a separate notice. Since he has raised a specific question, the specific answer can be given only by the hon. Minister concerned, or by me, if we have a proper notice of it in advance. I shall obtain information and send it to him.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, regarding the groups which are being given some training, it is said that they will be given finances etc. I would like to know whether the Government is thinking anything about marketing also because this is one of the spheres where self-employed groups, which are trained, are particularly being hindered. So, I want to know whether the Government will take into consideration as to how to provide some help to them, whom even they are giving, in marketing their products.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the question and the suggestion is very relevant. Whenever we do self-employment programmes, we ultimately have a situation at the end of it that when they start manufacturing, the young youth who are self-employed have a difficulty in marketing. I shall definitely take the suggestion given by the hon. Member very seriously and communicate it to both, the Minister of Finance as well as the Minister of Rural Areas and Employment.

SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the answer given over here is the 58 million unemployed by 1997 do not exist. The first part of my question: what is the correct figure then? Secondly, the labour-intensive technology has been emphasised by the Minister himself.

Sir, we have Khadi and Village Industries Commission where many schemes are run on this basis and on this principle. In the organised sector, as far as I know, there is a reduction in employment which is going on because of the new technology that has been brought about. The schemes that were implemented through Khadi and Village Commissions have been totally changed. The schemes which were in the form of a subsidy have now been started in the form of a loan. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to look into that and bring about a change because all amounts that are being given by the Central Government to the State Governments or directly to the societies are lying idle and due to this, the employment generation which was to take place, has been reduced?

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, though the second half of the question does not deal with the Question before the House, but I think that the suggestion he has made is a positive one and I shall communicate it to the Ministers concerned. But with regard to the figures, I want to point out to him that 58 million was the figure of estimation of total number of persons requiring employment

during 1992-97. It was the number of people requiring employment. And the question asked was whether the number of unemployed persons had gone to 50 millions by 1997 to which I said 'no'.

The actual figure of 1997, according to the survey, would be approximately 28 million. I should also tell the hon. Member how I arrived at this figure. The figure of 58 millions was expected. What was created was six million jobs every year in five years. So, on subtracting 30 million from 58 millions, I arrived at 28 millions.

We must understand that the figures are only indicative. These figures are National Sample Survey Organisation figures. The truth of the matter is the last survey was done in 1994 the survey was that 9 million were totally unemployed, in other words, openly unemployed, i.e., they had no employment at all. The number of those partly employed, under the CDA Schemes, comes to 20 million. That is in 1994. Now in July, we are going to have next sample survey which will be taken. That will be in 1998-99. Normally every four years it is done. Therefore, the real accurate figure can only be given after the sample is done. At present, I am giving estimate to the hon. Member.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL: This unemployment problem is a very important issue to the country and it is creating lot of problems, not necessarily in the younger generation, but even in various sectors of the country. It has particularly hampered every sector such as, agriculture, industry and many others. Plans have been made to achieve a targeted growth of employment, but they have failed very miserably. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to clarify whether he would make a categorical review to monitor the whole unemployment issue.

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM: It is a suggestion which is welcome. I shall communicate it to the Labour Minister. I am sure he will let you know about it.

Primary Health Centres in the States

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*184. SHRI SADASHIVRAO D. MANDLIK :
SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres functioning in various States in the country with State-wise break-up;

(b) whether the Government have received any request from State Governments for revamping secondary health system in the States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;