

cutions and 83 due to suicides. It will be seen that the total number of deaths constitutes a comparatively small fraction of the overall size of the Indian community in the Gulf countries i.e. 1.05 per thousand in 1993. Of the bodies sent back, most death were due to natural causes; apart from proven accidents, other unnatural deaths constitute 6% of this category.

Our Mission also make great efforts to obtain payment of compensation and legal dues wherever possible. In 1993, the amount repatriated by way of compensation was Rs.8.47 crores. The money is sent in the form of a draft to be paid to the legal heirs through the Collector of the district concerned.

Non cooperation on the part of the sponsor/employer, absence of or defective labour contracts or the fact that certain categories of expatriate workers are not covered by labour laws of the respective country also cause delay in the despatch of the body or other related issues. In many instances, ignorance on the part of relatives in India also causes delay as they do not provide the complete contact address and telephone number of the sponsor/employer of the deceased. In Saudi Arabia particularly, long distances, remoteness and inaccessibility of many places further complicate the matter. There are also cases where Indian workers desert their original employer and work illegally with someone else, thereby making it very difficult to persuade the sponsor/employer to meet the cost of despatch of body or to settle the dues without delay.

Despite shortages of staff in the Consular and Labour wings, our Mission, in the Gulf countries stretch themselves to the utmost and keep in constant touch with the concerned local authorities to have the

formalities completed at the earliest possible. We are seeking to get additional staff for these Missions and I have no doubt that the Finance Minister will be responsive to our request.

At time of personal distress caused by the death of a family member, it is only natural that every effort is made to investigate the cause of death and get due compensation. I would, however, request the Hon'ble Members to recognise that the vast number of Indians in the Gulf see their host countries as areas of opportunity not available to them in equal measure in India. As long as such a situation continues, it will be the endeavour of the Government to provide the maximum possible assistance to our nationals in the Gulf in close consultation and cooperation with the foreign Governments concerned.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam): Mr. Speaker Sir, this is a very serious issue. We wanted to have a discussion on this issue. We want to bring a lot of facts before the Government. Please allow for a discussion. We give proper notice.

MR. SPEAKER: You give proper notice. If there is time, we will consider.

12.59 hrs

**COPYRIGHT (SECOND
AMENDMENT) BILL**

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now we will go to item No. 14. bill for consideration and passing of Copyright (Second Amendment) Bill. Kumiri Sija.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA): I beg to move :

"That the Bill further to amend the Copyright Act, 1957, as reported by Joint Committee, be taken into consideration"

The bill was introduced in the House on 16th July, 1992 and a motion for reference of the Bill to Joint Committee of both the Houses was adopted on 19th August 1992, the Report of the Joint Committee and the Bill with the changes recommended by it were presented to the House on 24th August, 1993.

The Committee has done a commendable job. It has examined in depth every clause of the Bill. The Government are grateful to the Committee for completing its work in good time on such a complicated piece of legislation. The Joint Committee had the benefit of the views on various clauses of the Bill of a wide cross-section of member of public, non-official organisations concerned with Copyright matters and experts. The Committee had examined large number of memoranda submitted to it containing comments/suggestions on the provisions of the Bill and took oral evidence of the representative organisations in the field of Copyright.

13.00 hrs.

The recommendations of the Committee are largely acceptable to the Government with one or two exception which I shall speak later. However, at this stage, I wish to state that the Government have no major difference of views on the overall recommendations of the joint Committee. The

Committee has virtually endorsed the objectives of the Government in introducing the Bill which is to strengthen the protection of Copyright of authors and artists and generally to see that their reasonable economic interests are ensured.

Now I would commend the Bill as reported by the Joint Committee for consideration of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: We can take up further discussion of the bill after the interval.

13.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Fourteen of the clock.

14.07 hrs.

The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Seven minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.

(MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

COPYRIGHT (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL-CONTD.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Copyright (Second Amendment) Bill has been introduced by the Government to extend the duration of copyright from 50 years to 60 years. Further I would like to submit that this Bill has been specifically introduced exclusively extend of the duration of copyright of Rabindranath Tagore's writings by another 10 years. Only Vishwa Bharti enjoys the exclusive right to publish the literature of Rabindranath Tagore. To extend Copyright

period from 50 years to 60 years in case of literature, films, photos records and Government, semi-Government and international institutions documents and throwing open the publication abroad under in international agreement of Tagore's creations will mean that there won't be preconditions of copyright in abroad. Publication of Tagore's creations abroad will not be affected by copyright preconditions. However, impart of such foreign publications will amount to violation of copyright laws. This I believe is a sure sort paradox.

Sir, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister that copying of these creations abroad and their publication abroad without any hindrance will not taritamount to violation of copyright, but their import will be deemd as violation of copyright laws. Is this not paradoxical situation? The hon. Minister should pay attention regarding the extension of copyright duration by another 10 years. because import of such foreign publication will mean violation of copyright laws.

Sir, the Hon. Prime Minister is the Chancellor of Vishwa Bharti. I do not think there was any need to promulgate this Ordinance, because the Government should have been aware that publications of Rabindranath Tagore will sell like hot cakes. I would like to submit that even abroad the Copyright period is 50 years after the death of the writer or 50 years after the first publication. The . Minister should deeply ponder over the issue of extension of copy right period by another 10 years. This extension from 50 years to 60 years has been specifically aimed at restricting publication of Rabindranath Tagore's writings by another 10 years. I welcome the Bill move with this ebonafide intentions. I would like to submit that the anamoly of right of publication of writings abroad should be removed. I thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

Dr. SUDHIR RAY (BURDWAN): Mr. depty Speaker, Sir effective copyright protection promotes intellectual activity. The artists, painters, authors, writers, performing artists should be given protection by the State and the society. These people must feel that they are given adequate protection by the Government. But, unfortunately, in India plagiarism or piracy is often rampant and the long arm of law does not catch the offenders beause ours is a soft State. I apprehend that mere passing of this law would not deter plagiarism or piracy.

Mr. Depty Speaker, Sir, in fact, Mrs. Taslima Nasreen has published a book; her work are published in India without taking any permission from her. This is a better example of violation of copyright.

Firstly, the Copyright Act was passed in 1957. There are subsequent aendments as a result of which some ipmrovemente are achieved. Now, the new Bill tries to give protection to performing artists, musicians, authors, artists, painters, etc. Consequently a copyright society is to be formed. I hope that these copyright societies would perform their duties efficiently; and they get hold of all the offenders because a Rabindra Nath Tagore or a Sarat Chandra Chatterjee is not born overnight; such work of them or such literary work require dedication and time. Therefore, these people must feel that the society and the Government are coming forward to protect them. They must not be financially the losers. Their intrests much be adequately protected.

Now, this Bill seek to provide adequate to the composers of Indian music. Praviusly they did not enjoy this protection, as they did not follow the system of rotation, as it used to be in Western Music. The Bill further seeks

to protect the performing artists. They would enjoy copyright protection as regards sound recordings or visual recordings of their live programmes. The Bill also wants to protect the interests of authors, assignors or licensors in regard to the assignment of copyright and the issue of licenses. The Bill also seeks to protect the interests of the owners of copyright and related rights in the contest of technological development affecting reproduction, *inter alia* bringing within the scope of copyright, the subsequent hire or sale of copies of cinematography films, computer programmes, etc. The Bill also seeks to clarify the law in respect of cable, satellite other means of simultaneous communication.

The copyright societies would enforce law if there is any violation of copyright, they would impose penal measures, I hope.

It would also imply greater social control. I am happy that the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The proposed Bill would uphold the purity of the Act. The Copyright Bill would serve as a shield against any vandalism and mutilation.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI GOERGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I won't make an interminable speech because the Bill has come back after a reference to the Joint Select Committee. Regarding some apprehensions I would like to seek clarifications. All of us know the sole objective behind the copyright laws was to prevent unauthorised use of the creations of writers, artist, singers or any other person. I would like to raise another issue. Speeches deliv-

ered by the hon. Ministers, but for scarce exceptions are drafted the officers. These speeches cover the policies of the Government or any other issue. If I were Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, I would have confined myself to law and order. While making my submission I would like to dwell on the conventional points besides weaving the dream of the future of the country. If I were the Minister of Education, I would nourish the dream of education. All these speeches are penned down by the faceless people called bureaucrats. I would like to know whether consequent upon my resignation as the minister of Industry I would enjoy the copyright of the speeches delivered by me in my official capacity? I would like to know whether the correspondence undertaken by me as the Minister of Industry with the Ministers of the States Industry after relinquishing office will be published?

[English]

"George Fernandes's letters to Industry Ministers in the country."

[Translation]

Only if these speeches are published by the publications Division then copyright will be mine. I think in the country a sort of licensing system is in vogue and books of the publications Division are being printed. Copyrights are enjoyed by the dead writers or their families or anybody else. I would like to know if volumes of these speeches are published then copyright will be enjoyed by the deceased deceased penman's family or the Publications Division? In both the cases copyright and the royalty will be enjoyed by the Government. We fail to understand the logic of plundering the country in such a way. This is happening now and I have a list in this regard with me.

[English]

- (1) Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi - Copyright, Publications Division. Royalty-Family.

- (2) Indira Gandhi Selected Speeches and Writings-Copyright, Rahul Gandhi.

- (3) Selected speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi -

January, 1980 to 1981, Copyright, Rahul Gandhi.

January, 1982 - 1984, Copyright, Rahu! Gandhi.

- (4) Selected speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi, Volume III, 1972 to March, 1977, as Prime Minister -Copyright, Indira Gandhi.

[Translation]

I do not know how it will be done? I have mentioned only one name out of many like Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Shri Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister started delivering speeches from 1986. Five volumes containing speeches of Shri Rajiv Gandhi are already brought out. I fail to understand how it will be done. Copyrights are for protecting the rights of the authors. I went through the Amendment Bill yesterday night.

[English]

Ownership of copyright and the rights of the owner-Section 17 of the Act:

" Subject to the provisions of this Act, the author of a work shall be the first owner of the copyright therein".

[Translation]

You can say this.

[English]

No, he is not the author. He will say that it is his ideas. He had owned up the ideas. He is his Ghost writer.

But I would say that he is a Government employee who is a ghost writer. He is paid by the Government.

[Translation]

Royalty is being received by them even though the speeches were written by someone else. However, for three generations royalty of books written by others is being received by the family of others, I mean other than penmen's family. While in power availing of the benefits is O.K. It is prardently said make hay till the sunshine but not 60 years for the labour done by the officers. These things tantamount to fleecing the country.

Today this opportunity has come our way. That's why we have launched this discussion in the air. However, we won't leave you like this and would like a decision in this regard. We would like to be apprised of the legal position in this regard and we would also like to ascertain the views of the House in this connection. If it is improper then money should be taken back from the concerned persons.

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH (Jahanabad): This Bill has already been presented before the joint Parliamentary Committee. Therefore, I would not like to comment on it. But the books which are published without Government's permission and contain evil, absurd and rubbish matter

are harmful to the Indian youth and society, such book should not be allowed to be published. Some artists have originality in their art while others copy them which proves harmful to the original artists. There is a mafia gang involved in copying the writings of the original copy right holders. Therefore the Government should make a provision so that the original art writings etc. are not copied and only the original creations are recognised. It has been observed that those who copy, earn much more money than the original authors. It is difficult to say as to how and who would enforce the provisions of this Bill in positive direction and whether the provisions would be enforced properly?

DR. S.P. YADAV (Sambhal): As per this ordinance the penmen who acquired copyright before 31st, December, 1990 would not be benefited. The creations of Jai Shankar Prasad, Premchand, Sharat Chandra, Guleri ji and Devkinandan Khatri are no lesser absorbing than any other. But this ordinance would not benefit these writers. What was the Government doing at that time, why was it not introduced earlier. Sixty years have not passed since then, but these writers would not get any benefits. India has also signed the international agreement regarding copyright. Therefore, it should follow the international rules and regulations. If this Bill is passed in our country other countries would also get opportunity to expand the scope of it. I feel that our country would earn lesser profit and the western countries would earn more by increasing their supply. This is likely to be beneficial to the writers and publishers. However, it would be a bias attitude, if the Government take any action in view of a particular person or an institution.

[English]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

(DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA): There was a long felt need towards this Copyright Act to bring in this Copyright (Second Amendment) Bill. We have been governed by the Copyright Act of 1957. From time to time, amendments were brought in; they were brought in 1983, 1984 and 1992. Since we were signatory to the Berne Convention, a need was also felt that we need to bring in a new comprehensive Copyright Bill and also keeping in view the latest development in the technology, especially in the field of radio, satellite, computer and digital technologies.

As all the Members are aware, India is a major software producer and we need to protect the right of these people who are involved in the production of softwares in India. Also, as far as video is concerned, we have to protect our own artistes and similarly our performing artistes. Therefore, keeping in view this need, we started the work in 1987 to bring about this new Bill. A Working Group was set up by the Ministry and in 1990-91, the work was started for this act; and hence this Bill was brought in, in 1992; and now a new Bill has come.

It was referred to the Select Committee. As I said in the beginning, we have accepted most of the amendments that were sought by the select committee. And this new Bill has come about. I am thankful to the Members for the interest they have shown in this Bill. Some of the points were raised by the hon. Members. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava wanted to know why was the term raised from 50 to 60 years? This was sought by the Vishwa Bharati in 1992. Due to the works of Kavi Rabindranath Tagore, it was felt that we could not do it only for one person. Hence a comprehensive amendment was sought for all the works.

It was raised 50 to 60 years. In an answer to another point which has been raised by the Joint Select Committee and by many other people, i.e. why not to raise it from, 60 to 80 years, here I think the Member himself has answered that it has already been raised to 60 years and it is already part of the Act. We are not doing it now. It was done earlier. If we raise it further to 80 years then the same problem will come up and works will be published outside the country. Our Indian people will not be able to take advantage of this and it will be published outside and not within the country. That inherent problem is there.

Shri sudhir Ray also raised a point about the works of Taslima. This is a major point, not just for one artist or author but this is a widespread problem and that is what is enforcement. This lies with the State Government and we intend that seminars and other kinds of workshops will be organised in different States in different parts of the country so that people are made aware of this Act and enforcement as is necessary. As per the Act also it has taken care of the interests of these artists and other people are protected.

The hon. Member, shri George fernandes, raised a point about the official publications. Under section 28 of the main act, for Government works, Government is the owner of the copyright. In case of individual speeches the ownership lies with the individual speakers and not with the Government.

I think these are the few points and I thank the hon. Members for welcoming this copyright Bill.

MR, DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is:

"that the Bill further to amend the Copyright Act, 1957, as reported by Joint Committee, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we take up clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

clause 2— Amendment of section 2

Amendment made

page 3, line 4,—

for "in a" substitute " including, a" (3)

Page 3, line 5,—

for "machine, readaboe medium," substitute

"machine readable medium, capable" (4)

(Kumari Selja)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"that clause 2, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

clause 2, as amended, was added, to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"that clauses 3 to 5 stand part of the Bill.

The motion was adopted.

clauses 3 to 5 were added to the Bill.

Clause 7 was added to the Bill clause

Clause 6 Amndment of section 12

8 - Amendment of section 19

Amendment made

Amendments made:

page 5,—

page 7, line 15

for kins 7 and 8 substitute —

after "payable" insert ", if any," (7)

"(a) after sub-section (2),the following proviso shall be inserted, nameky:-" (5)

page 7,—

omit lines 18 to 29.

page 5,—

page 7, line 30 —

omit lines 12or 25 (6)

for "(6) substitute "(4)" (9)

(Kumari Selja)

page 7, line,—

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Bhargava, are you moving your amendments?

for "said period"substitute—

"said period unless otherwise specified in the assignment." (10)

SHRI GRIDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (JAIPUR):No.

page 7, line 34,—

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:The question is:—

for "(7)" substitute "(s) (11)

"That Clause 6, as amended, stand part of Bill."

page 7, line 36,—

for "(8)"substitute "(6)" (12)

The motion was adopted.

page 7, line 38,—

Clause 6, as amended, was added to the Bill

for "(9) substitute"(7)"(13)

page 7, line 39,—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:The question is :-

omit "or sub-section (7) or sub-section (8) (14)

" That clauses 7 stands part of the Bill."

Page 7, line 41,—

The motion was adopted.

for "1993" substite "1994" (15)

(Kumari Selja)

for "1993" substitute "1994" (19)

MR. DEPUTY - SPEAKER: The question is :-

Page 10, --

:The Clause 8, as amended, stand part of the Bill"

omit lines 17 to 19 (20)

Page 10, line 20, --

The motion was adopted

for "(3) substitute "(2)" (21)

Clause 8, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Page 11, line 9, --

MR. DEPTY SPEAKER: The question is :-

for "1993" substitute "1994" (22)
(Kumari Selja)

" That clauses 9 and 10 stand past of the bill ."

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA :
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to more page 9, line omit "ordinarily"

The motion was adopted:

Clauses 9 and 10 were added to the Bill.

[English]

Clause 11-Substitution of new chapter for chapter VII

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I now put Amendment No. 42 to the vote of the House.

Amendments made:

Amendment No. 42 was put and negatived.

Page 8, line 31,--

for "1993" substitute "1994" 16

MR. DEPUTY - SPEAKER: The question is :-

Page 8, line 38, --

"That clause 11, as amended, stand of the Bill ."

add at the end -- "consistent with his obligations as a member

Clause 11, as amended, was added to the Bill.

of the registrered copy right society" 17

Page 9, line 4, --

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The question is :

for "1993" substitute "1994" (18)

"That cluses 12 to 16 stand part of the Bill ."

Page 9, line 7, --

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 12 to 16 were added to the Bill.

Clause 17, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Clause 17 Amendment of Section 52

Clause 18- Insertion of new sections 52 B and 52 C

Amendments made:

Amendments made:

Page 13, --

Page 16, line 1, --

omit lines 39 to 41. (23)

for "sections" substitute "section" (31)

Page 13, line 42, --

Page 16, --

for "(2) substitute "(1)" (24)

omit line 3 to 13. (32)

Page 14, line 4, --

Page 16, lines 3 to 14 --

for "(3)" substitute "(2)" (25)

for "52c" substitute "52B" (33)

Page 14, line 15, --

Page 16, lines 16 to 19,--

for "(4)" substitute "(3)" (26)

omit "including the income and expenditure and the quantum of remuneration paid to individual owners of rights out of the payments received from the Central Government under the Copyright Act, 1993" (Kumari Selja)

Page 14 line 18,--

for "(5)" substitute "(4)" (27)

Page 15 line 26.

for "(6)" substitute "(5)" (28)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is :

Page 15, line 31

"That Clause 18, as amended, stand part of the Bill".

for "(7)" substitute "(6)" (29)

The motion was adopted

Page 15 line 32 --

Clause 18, as amended was added to the bill

for "(8)" substitute "(7)" (30)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:-

(Kumari Selja)

MR. DEPUTY -SPEAKER : The question is :

"That Clauses 19 to 22 stand part of the Bill.

"That Clause 17, as amended, stand of the Bill".

The motion was adopted

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 19 to 22 were added to the Bill.

Clause 23 - Insertion of new section 63 B and 63C

"That Clause 24, as amended, stand part of the Bill "

Page 18, line 7, --

The motion was adopted.

for "section" substitute "section" (35)

Clause 24, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Page 18,

Clause 1-1 Short Title and commencement

omit line 9 to 16. (36)

Amendment made:

Pa 18, line 17,--

Page 1, line 4, --

for "63"C substitute "63B" (37)

for "1993" substitute "1994" (2)

Page 18, 19,--

(Kumari Selja)

for "one month" substitute "seven days" (38)

MRDEPUTY - SPEAKER : The question is :

(Kumari Selja)

MR.DEPUTY - SPEAKER:The question is:

"That Clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill".

"That Cluse 23, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the bill

Clause 23, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Enting Formula

Clause 24-- Amended of section 78

Amendment made:

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 1, __

Page 19, line 19, --

for "Fourty - four " substitute --

for "52C" substitute "52B"

Forty - fifth"

(Kumari Selja)

(Kumari Selja)

MR. DEPUTY - SPEAKER : The question is:

MR.DEPUTY -SPEAKER : The question is :

821 *Statutory Res. Re: VAISAKHA 21, 1916 (SAKA) of the proclamation by 822
Approval of the Continuance in in force the President in r/o Manipur*

"That the Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

The Enacting Formula, as amended was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The question is:

" That the long Title stands part of the Bill"

The motion was adopted.

The long Title was added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now the Minister may move that the Bill, as amended, be passed.

KUMARI SELJA: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed".

MR. DEPUTY -SPEAKER: The question is : " That the Bill, as amended, be passed".

The motion was moved.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, we shall now go to the next subject. The Statutory Resolution by Shri S.B. Chavan.

14.45 hrs

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: APPROVAL OF THE CONTINUANCE IN FORCE OF THE PRODUCTION BY THE PRESIDENT IN RESPECT OF MANIPUR

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B.CHAVAN): Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution:-

"That this House approves the continuance in force of the Proclamation dated the 31st December, 1993 in respect of Manipur issued under article 356 of the Constitution by the President, for a further period of six months with effect from the 30th June, 1994".

As the House is aware, the President was pleased to issue a Proclamation under article 356 of the Constitution imposing President's Rule in Manipur. The Legislative Assembly of the State is presently under suspended animation. The Proclamation was approved by both House of Parliament on 22.2.1994. The Proclamation shall cease to operate on the expiration of a period of six months from the date of issue of the Proclamation i.e. on 29.6.1994.

The Government of Manipur in a recent report has stated that overall law and order situation has stated that the overall law and order situation in the State has shown steady improvement for the last fourmonths. /the Naga Kuki conflict is firmly under control though it as yet delicately balanced in sensitive areas. This conflict is likely to resurface in case of any let up in security operations. The violent activities by the Mitel Extremists and Naga-Kuki insurgents continue to be and are likely to remain on a high level, for some more time to come.

The Governor has reported that on the development side, the reprioritization of essential schemes relating to roads, water supply, irrigation, medical and public health and education has been done and adequate funds have been allotted to the development departments. The public distribution system has also been streamlined, particularly in the hill areas.

The availability of rice, wheat and ker-