

12.00 hrs.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee

. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, thousands of *Anganwadi* workers, helpers and *Balwadi* workers led by six different all India trade unions including the Federation of *Anganwadi* and *Balwadi* workers, of which I am the working President, are having a *march* and *dhama* today in Delhi for the redressal of their grievances by the Central Government.

The main demands of the *Anganwadi* workers are regularisation of them, as Government employees, pending that guaranteeing minimum wages for them, no privatisation of ICDS schemes and increase of the present insignificant sum given to them as their travel allowance and fuel charge for cooking for the beneficiaries.

The *Balwadi* workers' economic situation is even worse. They got a pittance as allowance. Moreover, under different educational authorities, they get different sums as allowances. There are no uniform guidelines.

This morning, we saw the H.R.D. Minister. He could not, at all, assure us of anything.

The miserable situation of *Anganwadi* and *Balwadi* workers were raised many times in the House and it was found that the demands of these workers enjoy a very wide support.

Sir, keeping this in mind, through you, I appeal to the Government to take positive steps to fulfil the demands of these workers.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA (Jadavpur) : Sir, I also support this issue because the *Anganwadi* workers have been fighting for their demands for a long time and we have been raising this continually in this House.

MR. SPEAKER : If you say that you have endorsed it, that will be enough.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA : But so far, very little has been done. So, I would request the Government, through you, to look into the matter and to see that the demands of the *Anganwadis* are regarded with sympathy...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur) : Mr. Speaker Sir, this issue has been raised so many times in the House. It had come up in the form of a question also. The Hon. Minister in his reply to the question had told that the Government was considering to increase their salaries. But today, when the representatives of the employees of the *Aaganwaris* met the hon. Minister, they were not given any assurance. They returned disappointed from there.

Sir, wherever it is evaluated on the national or the international level, it is said that it is an important work.

The problems of the rural development and the problems of the rural people specially, are concerned mainly with the health and family welfare. But such people engaged in this work are being neglected in such a manner that their poverty, helplessness and unemployment is being exploited continuously. Today, these thousands of women workers have come to Delhi with their complaints. The hon. Minister has disappointed them. He should reconsider it and take some positive step in this direction.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura) Sir, these thousands of women workers have not come once but various times before the Parliament. They work very well. Everywhere there is some disorder but these women work hard among the people. Their wages in less I think that they have come for the fifth time before the Parliament in thousands to put forth their grievances.

Mr. Speaker Sir, my submission is that the Government must give some reply on this issue and some way out should be found to solve this problem...(Interruptions)

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pall) : We support it ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down, now. I have called her name. Let her speak.

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI (Sikkim) : Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the problems faced by the farmers of Sikkim. In many parts of Sikkim, farmers are facing hardship due to drought-like situation. Though Sikkim is called Denzong or 'The Valley of Rice', the mainstay of farmers in Sikkim is the cultivation of maize. But due to lack of rainfall, the farmers are suffering. Plants did not grow at all and whatever plants could grow, those too dried up due to lack of rain. The farmers cannot go for second sowing because of the topographical and climatic conditions. This amounts to a total loss of crop for the farmers and they may have to suffer even starvation. Relief is to be given in a big way to save the farmers from starvation. The State Government alone cannot provide sufficient funds for relief work of this magnitude. I urge upon the Government to come forward and extend help to the State Government by allocating sufficient funds for the relief work, Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Government should have given some assurance to *anganbadi* employees, we would be able to convey them as we are going to attend their meeting.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is an assurance given by the Minister on the floor of the House. It should be more than sufficient.