

SHRI SAMERENDRA KUNDU (Balasore): Sir, Chitta Basu, should personally hand over the message of greetings of Lok Sabha.

11.02 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Identification of Primitive Tribes

*122 **SHRI HET RAM:** Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government of India have undertaken or plan to undertake a systematic review of primitive tribes to identify those who are still struggling for survival as hunters, gatherers or shifting cultivators but have not turned into landless labourers;

(b) if so, whether there is a proposal to constitute an expert group for primitive tribes at the national level to provide guidance in the formulation of comprehensive plan and action programme for reviewing their progress; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps being taken by Government in this direction?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):

(a) Yes, Sir.

Primitive Tribes are identified on the basis of three criteria, namely (i) pro-agricultural level of technology, (ii) low level of literacy and (iii) a stagnant or diminishing population.

Seventy four primitive tribal groups have

been identified so far in 15 Tribal sub-Plan States/Union Territories.

(b) and (c). The Working Group on the Development and Welfare of Scheduled Tribes during the VIII Five Year Plan (1990-95), which included experts, was constituted by the Planning Commission. It went into the question of development of primitive tribal groups and made recommendations regarding formulation of comprehensive plan and action programmes.

[English]

SHRI HET RAM: Sir, for the last forty years, the tribal India has been treated as national park or ethological park and development has been considered as per the national park and other accepted things. Nothing has been done to integrate them with other Indians. May I know whether the Government is thinking on the lines that tribes should be separated and kept separate?

Such provisions should be there so that they may be integrated.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Speaker, Sir, there cannot be two opinions about the fact that the problem of the Scheduled Tribes is very disappointing. That is why there is a feeling of resentment among them. The programmes prepared by the Government could not be implemented effectively anywhere. Any assistance granted by the Government will not bear fruits unless it is properly utilised and the programmes are implemented effectively by the State Governments. I may tell you for information that the Central Special Assistance worth Rs. 493.75 lakhs was provided in the Fifth Five Year Plan. But you will be surprised to know that only Rs. 369 lakhs were spent out of the entire amount, which implies that the State Governments could not even spend the entire money granted by the Central Government, what to talk of making any contribution to the funds from their own side. Similarly, Special Cen-

tral Assistance worth Rs. 1787 lakhs was given in the Sixth Five Year Plan and the total expenditure was Rs. 1815 lakhs which means that contribution of the State Government to the fund was even less than Rs. one crore. A small contribution was made to the fund in the Seventh Five Year Plan as the grant of Rs. 2915 lakhs was provided by the Central Government and the total expenditure amounted to Rs. 4107 lakhs. I have personally discussed this issue with the Planning Commission and we are really concerned about it. I agree with the honourable Members that appropriate efforts have not been made so far towards the development of the tribal people and their region. The new Government is committed to the development of the tribals and we shall try our level best for their upliftment.

[English]

SHRI HET RAM (Sirsa): In my supplementary, I said that a change of attitude must be there, and did not speak about funds. Funds have been provided by the Central Government, but the attitude was that the tribal areas were an ethnological or a national park, which have to be preserved. I was asking whether a change was going to be there, to consider that they are also men. The tribal area is still fighting for survival... (Interruptions)

My point is that even today, after 40 years, they are fighting for survival. They are short in kerosene; and for salt and kerosene, they are sold as animals in the market; and for 40 years, Government has done nothing, because the attitude was only that of treating them as a park, an ethnological park. We have to see whether Government is going to change the attitude towards tribals... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You must put a pointed question.

SHRI HET RAM: My point is that in areas where there is maximum population of tribals, the total funds given are negligible; and where most of their population has left, most of these budgetary provisions are util-

ized. When is this imbalance going to be balanced?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member's question is about the primitive tribes, particularly the illiterate ones among them. In Andaman and Nicobar, these people are still miles away from civilization. No one can have any objection in principle to whatever the honourable member has stated. He has asked for the facilities of education, medicine and roads to be made available to them. He has demanded to make them the rightful owners of their forests. I totally agree with him on this issue. But the most important question is how to do all this? We have Tribal Sub-plan, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissions and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissioners to look into these matters. Despite all these efforts, the progress made so far in this direction is not at all satisfactory. We are going to organise a seminar on the topic "Problem of Scheduled Tribes" in Delhi on 31st which will be inaugurated by the hon. Prime Minister. We have invited all the honourable members either representing or concerned about the tribals and the hon. Members of the House are also welcome to come to Vigyan Bhawan and present their views on the topic.

[English]

SHRI P. NARSA REDDY: Sir, I want to ask the hon. Minister. In view of the fact that the State Governments are not spending the amounts allotted by the Central Government, would the Central Government consider appointing, or taking steps to have, a Corporation of the type which the Malaysian Government has, to create the infrastructure of digging wells and having electric motors and levelling the land allotted to the primitive tribes? Would Central Government take such steps?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Speaker, Sir, the suggestions given by the honourable

Member have already been incorporated in the report presented in July, 1989 by the Working Group constituted for this purpose which was headed by the Welfare Secretary. It is pending with the Planning Commission. The Working Group has suggested that a sum of Rs. 200 crores should be spent on this work and there should be separate studies for various tribes and sub-tribes and separate plans should be drawn up for their development. The Working Group has submitted a proposal for Rs. 200 crores, but I do not think that the Planning Commission will give clearance for such a big amount. But we will try to persuade the Planning Commission and ask them to allocate this amount. But as I said, enactment of law alone is not enough. All concerned have to change their attitude. Everybody should think that the tribals are the very foundation of our society and everybody should do something with determination for their development. Such a feeling will have to be created. In my capacity as the Union Minister, I have been writing letters to the States and making all out efforts in this regard. As I said, we have convened a meeting for this purpose on 31st which would go into the details of the proposal.

SHRI A. LARANG SAI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the assistance being released by the centre is being spent properly by the States? He said he has been writing letters time and again. If so, is it that his letters do not have any effect on them? In that case, I would like to know as to what steps are proposed to be taken in this regard in future?

Secondly, is there any proposal to have a time-bound programme to complete these tribal plans?

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, though time-bound programmes are drawn up, these are not completed within the scheduled time-limit. It will be our endeavour to see that time-bound programmes are drawn up and then implemented as per the schedule.

[English]

SHRIMATI UMA GAJAPATI RAJU: Is the hon. Minister aware that due to lacunae in the criteria worked out by the Planning Commission for identification of new hill areas under the central assistance hill areas development programme, many tribals in the Eastern Ghats especially in the Araku/Anantgiri Districts of Visakhapatnam are deprived of their legitimate share of special assistance? Will the Minister use his good offices to expedite the extension of the central assistance to these deprived people in the tribal areas?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we will consider this point... (Interruptions) As I said, we will definitely take the points made by the hon. Member into consideration. We have been taking steps to find out as to how much of the assistance has reached the beneficiaries. We will remove the lacunae, if any, and also take measures to see that the benefits reach the beneficiaries.

[English]

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHARY: The tribal development has taken place. Has the Government so far identified those tribals who still live on hunting and gathering tools, etc.? Have these tribes been identified, how many of them are there and where are they?

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, its reply has already been given in the statement. Names of the States numbering 14-15 have been given and the number of tribals based on 1981 census has also been given. The population of such tribals is 16,90,257.

SHRI THAN SINGH JATAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the forests in the districts of Banswara, Dungarpur, Sirohi, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, falling under the Aravali Hills Range

in Rajasthan have been denuded. The tribals living in these districts are totally dependent on the forests. Will the Central Government and the State Government take up plantation work in these barren forest lands and allot the barren land under these forests areas to the tribals? Will the Government also make some arrangements for providing water to facilitate plantation? Mr. Speaker, Sir, exodus of Adivasis from these areas is taking place. They are migrating to cities in search of livelihood. Their huts are deserted. It is a very serious problem.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already said that there are no two opinions about it. Laws have been enacted, nobody can purchase Adivasi Land. The Adivasi land which might have been acquired by others will be restored to its original owner. The Adivasis should be freed from the exploitation by the money lenders who keep them under their debt trap. I have told the hon. Member that Act and fact are two different things. We will make endeavours to see that there is proper co-ordination between the Act and the facts. We have all along been writing about this. There is not a single State in the country in which Adivasi land has not been encroached upon. It is the primary responsibility of the State Governments to remove those encroachments.

As I said, I have already written to the State Governments and I shall write to them again. We are holding seminars to focuss attention on this problem. We will go to each and every State for this. We want to implement this proposal on priority basis. We seek the support of the entire House for this work. The tribal problem is a problem of the whole

country. It is not the problem of Adivasis alone. If, we view it as Adivasi problem, it will be an injustice to them. If we are to bring Adivasis to the mainstream of the country, the country has also to come forward for this. I, being the Welfare Minister, would like to give an assurance on behalf of the Government of India that all the Acts made for tribal development will be enforced effectively.

Minimum Wages for Agricultural Labour

*123. SHRI K. PRADHANI:
SHRI GANGA CHARAN
LODHI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the minimum wage fixed for agricultural labour in different States;

(b) when this limit was fixed;

(c) whether Government propose to reconsider this limit in view of the rise in prices and inflation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (d). Power to revise these minimum wages vests in the State Government and they are advised to periodically do so.