

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Question Hour begins.
Shri Sheo Sharan Verma.

11.09 hrs.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Health Scheme for Textile Workers

*141. SHRI SHEO SHARAN VERMA:
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any survey to ascertain whether textile workers are suffering from Tuberculosis and other diseases;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to start any special health scheme for them;

(c) if so, the time by which the scheme is likely to be started; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND MINISTER
OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE
(SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN): (a) to (d). A
statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

No comprehensive survey as such has been carried on the incidence of tuberculosis and other diseases amongst the textile workers. Some limited surveys had been made however in recent years by the Government of Maharashtra and the National Institute of Occupational Health, Ahmedabad. The surveys identified conditions of Byssinosis and a slightly higher incidence of Pulmonary tuberculosis amongst textile workers. Most of these workers are covered

under the Employees State Insurance Scheme which is undertaking to provide treatment as required. Apart from emphasis on preventive measures on work premises such as improved ventilation, safeguards against inhalation/accumulation of dust and fume, etc., there is no proposal presently for any special health scheme exclusively for such workers.

[Translation]

SHRI SHEO SHARAN VERMA: Sir, there is high incidence of tuberculosis and other diseases amongst textile workers. I would like to know whether any survey has been carried out health safeguards for textile workers? Has any scheme been formulated to ensure a healthy life to textile workers and a bright future for their families? If yes, what is the nature of that scheme and the time by which it will be implemented?

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, such surveys were carried out in Maharashtra and Gujarat according to information available with us. We plan to conduct such surveys in future also. I assure the hon. Member that such a survey will be conducted at the earliest possible time.

SHRI SHEO SHARAN VERMA: Sir, if the results of the survey show that textile workers are dying of such diseases, does the Government propose to introduce schemes for providing life-insurance cover and health care and protection to the workers? If so, the time by which these schemes will be implemented?

SHRIRAMJILAL SUMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we make efforts to ensure better health to textile workers. To achieve that end we take preventive measures like making the factory environment pollution-free, cleanliness of surrounding areas and use of short fibre. Steps are taken to protect the workers against diseases. Further efforts are required to be made in this direction and for this purpose the matter will have to be taken up with the Ministry of Health and we will request them.

[English]

PROF. N.G. RANGA: So far no effort has been made to help the handloom weavers in this direction. Will the Government consider the feasibility of making an inquiry and preparing a scheme for ensuring health insurance and health assistance to the handloom weavers especially those who are employed in large sectors and under cooperative societies?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, I am pleased to inform the august House that a provision of Rs. 20 crores has been made in the Eighth Five Year Plan for the welfare of powerloom and handloom workers. Further efforts will be made for their welfare.

[English]

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARDHANAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from the hon. Minister the norm fixed on the invisible waste percentage. It has been stated in reply to the question "Apart from emphasis on preventive measures on work premises such as improved ventilation, safeguards against inhalation/accumulation of dust and fume etc., there is no proposal presently for any special health scheme exclusively for such workers." The main cause of this tuberculosis is invisible and visible wastage produced in the textile industry. To prevent this, visible wastage percentage should be minimised. I want to know whether the Government would fix a norm on the invisible waste percentage of both public and private undertakings of textile mills. Will the Government make stringent rules to curtail invisible waste percentage of textile mills? The Government should have a certain norm on the percentage of invisible wastage. Then alone the working of the mills would be profitable and the disease will be prevented. As the proverb goes, prevention is better than cure. Will the Government take new steps to have a fixed norm as a Government policy and rule? Every mill which is committing more than that norm of the in-

visible wastage should be made liable to pay compensation properly to the workers affected by TB.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, it is true that incidence of T.B. is the highest amongst textile workers as compared to workers in other industries. There are two lung-related diseases that occur in the textile industry. Most of the textile workers are covered under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme through which special programmes have been introduced to improve the health of the workers. The Ministry is making every effort to provide better health services to textile workers and will continue to do so.

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARDHANAN: Here I want to seek your protection. Will the Government fix a norm and a law on the invisible waste percentage of textile mills? Then alone the root cause of tuberculosis will be eradicated. I want to know now whether the Government will fix that norm of minimum invisible wastage percentage for the textile mills. I want to know from the Prime Minister.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR): Mr. Speaker, the Indian Council of Medical Research has gone into this matter. The hon. member is correct that certain elements are causing diseases to the textile workers. But it is not essentially tuberculosis. There are different types of chest diseases. Tuberculosis is also there but it is only 4%, according to the survey that has been made in Ahmedabad in certain factories. I think that there is enough scope for looking into the whole aspect, and the technical aspect, as the hon. Member has said and, the Government will surely look into all these aspects and the erring mills will be asked to correct themselves.

[Translation]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Sir, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation has been given the responsibility of providing

health services to workers. I request the hon. Minister to conduct a survey of E.S.I. hospitals. The survey will show that these hospitals are not providing the facilities expected from them. His contention that all facilities are available is not true. The Government is requested to provide textile workers the same facilities which have been provided to 'Beedi Workers'. A national-level survey regarding the condition of textile workers should be carried out all over the country as has been done in case of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Sir, there is no need for a survey. The state of hospitals all over the country is bad. This includes all hospitals and not just the ones meant for workers. So we have to improve conditions of all hospitals. I assure the hon. Member that in the coming days, steps will be taken to improve the conditions in all the hospitals, particularly E.S.I. hospitals.

SHRIMATI SUBHASHINI ALI: Sir, there are a large number of textile mills in my constituency. Workers of those mills have the highest incidence of T.B. among all textile workers in the country. Nearly 80% of the textile workers in Kanpur suffer from T.B. One of the reasons for this is the very low wages of workers there. For the last five years there has been no revision of wages of textile workers be they in the private sector or public sector. Does the Government propose to hold a tripartite conference to solve the problems of textile workers?

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Sir, the question is related to diseases suffered by textile workers, not their wages. So I cannot comment on that. Kanpur is the oldest textile centre of the country. The mills situated there have been built with outdated technology resulting in fewer facilities compared to other textile centres. What the hon. Member said is true. Disease and unhygienic conditions do prevail there and this aspect needs special attention.

[English]

DR. VENKATESH KABDE: Sir, as the

Prime Minister has correctly pointed out, tuberculosis is not the only disease which is caused by exposure to certain dust particles in the Textile Mills but there are other diseases like Pneumoconiosis etc. which are caused due to exposure to dust. There is a simple method by which this disease can be detected in the earliest stage. There is a small instrument called the Jaipur Spirometer and if this instrument is used in every Textile Mill just for testing the lung capacity, we can find out the disease in the earliest stage itself. So, my question is: Will the Minister provide this Jaipur Spirometer which costs only about Rs. 200/- to every Mill so that this test can be performed on each worker in the Mill? By doing this test, the disease which is called Pneumoconiosis can be detected in the earlier stage and further measures can be taken.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the suggestion is welcome. We shall look into it and do the needful.

Integrated Child Development Services Projects

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*142. SHRI GOPI NATH
GAJAPATHI:
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA
RAJE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme has been launched or is proposed to be launched in the Eighth Five Year Plan to raise the nutrition status, enhance the awareness of mothers and improve the immunisation coverage of children and mothers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the amount spent so far on this scheme through Integrated Child Development Services Projects;

(c) the amount earmarked for the Eighth Five Year Plan, State-wise;