

this malpractice? Will the Government consider evolving a clear cut policy under which a lower rate of taxation for the poor and a higher rate of taxation for the rich could be provided?

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: The Government ensures availability of medicines on control rates under the national programme. Category I medicines are made available on control price. We had considered this issue last time also and the Government has constituted an expert committee for the purpose. After the expert committee submits its report, we are going to consider which of the medicines used by the poor could be made available in the market on 'control price' under the national programme.

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: During the last Session, in reply to my question, the Minister of State for Health, Kumari Saroj Khaparde, had assured that the Bombay Medical Store under the administrative control of the Union Health Ministry had actually sent a number of drugs which were below standard. They were substandard drugs and some of them were sent to certain hospitals even though the letter of intent was not there. The Minister of State had assured in reply to my question that all concerned will be subjected to a serious inquiry and results of the inquiry will be placed on the Table of the House. I would like to know whether that inquiry has been conducted and what are the findings of the inquiry.

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: Regarding the supplies from the Bombay Medical Store, in the last Session, the Government has replied. So, as the Member has desired, we will come out with the report and we will inform the hon. Member.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Child Labour

*1. **SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO:** Will the

Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any decrease in child labour in the country during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what steps other than legislation are being taken by Union Government to curb child labour?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) to (c). It is not possible to maintain figures regarding number of child workers in the country on a yearly basis.

The number of child labour in the country can only be ascertained either by a regular census or by a comprehensive and representative sample survey. The census of India is decennial while the figures on the basis of surveys carried out by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are available every 5 years. As far as the statistics pertaining to child labour are concerned, National Sample Survey (NSS) is considered more reliable because the questionnaire used for the purpose is more comprehensive as compared to the one used for census of India. It is not possible to say whether there has been any increase or decrease in the number of child workers during the last two years because the last round of National Sample Survey (38th Round) was conducted with reference to 1983 and the last census was with reference to 1981. However, it is possible to compare the figures regarding the estimated number of working children (in the age group 5 to 14 years) in 1977-78 and 1986 on the basis of the 32nd and 38th rounds of the National Sample Survey. The figures of child labour in 1986 are estimated on the basis of the figures of population of the relevant age group as projected by the Expert Committee on Population Projections and using the work participation rate as ascertained by the 38th round of N.S.S. These figures are as follows:-

	1977-78	1986
Number of Children (Age group 5 to 14)	171.95 Million	183.20 Million
Number of Working Children (Age group 5 to 14)	16.663 Million	16.668 Million

Thus it will be seen that while the population in the age group 5 to 14 registered an increase of 11.25 million between 1977-78 and 1986, the number of working children practically remained the same during the period. This means that the percentage of working children to the total child population in the age group 5 to 14 came down from 9.7% to 9.1%.

Government is fully aware that child labour cannot be curbed by legislation alone. Therefore, the National Child Labour Policy 1987 has been launched, which includes enforcement of the laws pertaining to the child labour, focusing of general development programmes for benefitting child labour and their families, and project - based plans of action for child labour.

[*Translation*]

Development of Towns

*2. SHRI M.L. JHIKRAM: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria of population prescribed for a town to become eligible for assistance under Government's plan for the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns;

(b) whether there is any proposal to relax the relevant conditions in respect of those towns which exist in thinly populated hill areas; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI):
(a) Presently towns with a population upto

one lakh as per 1981 Census are considered under the Scheme.

(b) and (c). No separate criteria has been laid down for hill areas. However, there is no lower limit of population for towns under the Scheme as long as the project pertains to an urban area.

[*English*]

Procurement of Sub-standard Supplies of Equipments for Clinical Labs in Delhi Hospitals

*4. SHRI VISHNU MODI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some instances of procurement of sub-standard supplies of equipments and chemicals in pathological labs and other wings of certain hospitals in Delhi have come to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the corrective action taken in regard thereto;

(c) whether Government have seen a report appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 8 October, 1988, regarding a lab technician in Kalawati Saran Hospital having suffered a miscarriage owing to alleged harassment inflicted for exposure of procurement of sub-standard supplies for the clinical laboratory; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI MOTILAL VORA): (a) and (b). Allegations regarding