

there are several work-establishments in Delhi in which children are employed. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: You please be specific whether an annual report will be published or not?

SHRIRADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA: We have enacted several laws with regard to child labour. The hon. Member has given a good suggestion and we will consider it.

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAKTAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am pained to hear the reply of the hon. Minister because even today a large number of children are found working in our country and the laws to this effect are no more than yet another addition to the pages of statute-book. A number of small children can be found working in carpets weaving industry in Mirzapur and Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, a number of children can be seen working hotels, Bidi industry etc. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government propose to bring about any amendment in the law in near future in view of violation of existing laws. My second question is this that a number of orphans are being taken to foreign countries to work as bonded labour in the guise that they have been adopted by them. Is the Government aware of this fact? If so, what steps are being taken to check it?

SHRIRADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government is not aware of the fact that children are being taken to foreign countries in the guise of adoption.

PROF. NIRMALA KUMARI SHAKTAWAT: What is your department doing then?

SHRI RADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA: I am coming to that. Her second point is this that small children are found working in Mirzapur and Jammu and Kashmir in carpet weaving industry. I would like to inform her in this regard that we have launched as many as 10 to 11 projects for the places where children are engaged in large number. Under the project launched in Mirzapur, children are imparted professional training and provided mid-day meals and children in the age group of 5-14 are given education. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM PYARE PANIKA: Incorrect reply is being given.

SHRI RADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA: It is not an incorrect reply, it is a correct reply.

She has enquired about Mirzapur. As regards amounts sanctioned by the Government for Mirzapur, an amount of Rs. 62,61,000/- was sanctioned for the year 1988-89 and for 1989-90 it is Rs. 17,83,500/-. As against sanctioned amounts, and amount of Rs. 4,78,151 was released in 1988-89 and for the year 1989-90 and amount of Rs. 3,58,181 has so far been allocated. 10 schools are being run and as many as 500 children are studying in them.

As regards Jammu and Kashmir, the State Government has not sent any proposal to this effect so far.

[*English*]

Amendment to Indian Forest (Conservation) Act

*231. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to liberalise the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed changes and the reasons thereof;

(c) whether all State Governments have been authorised to transfer forest land for development proposes; and

(d) the measures to be adopted to ensure that forest land is not transferred for any purpose other than development?

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON): (a) and (b). Government have not liberalised Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. On the contrary, the Act has been made more stringent by the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 1988.

(c) and (d). The State Governments have not been authorised to transfer forest land for development purposes. Diversion of forest land for development purposes needs prior approval of Government of India.

[*English*]

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am extremely happy that the Government have not liberalised the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. On the contrary, the Act has been made most

stringent by the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act, 1988. In spite of the Act having been made most stringent, the denudation of forests is taking place on a large scale and it is going on unchecked. This is going to seriously affect the very existence of mankind. This being so, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the stringent measures proposed by the Government to prevent further devastation of forests.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): Sir, the Forest Conservation Act deals primarily with the diversion of forest land for other purposes and through this Act, which was passed in 1980, the diversion of forest land for other purposes has come down from level of 1.5 lakh hectares per annum to 15,000 hectares per annum. As far as the denudation of forests is concerned, this does not come under the purview of the Forest Conservation Act. We have already announced a new Forest Policy and under that new Forest Policy we are examining as to how we can amend the Indian Forest Act of 1927, which is too old. That will cover the denudation of forests. The reasons for denudation forest areas are quite obvious. We have to step up the availability of fuel, fodder and timber and also the basic needs of the population. Time and again, I have said that with the increasing biotic pressure, both of human population and cattle population, it is becoming very very difficult for us to check the denudation of forests. Still, we are taking all steps for checking the denudation of forests and taking also steps for plantation to meet the basic needs of the people.

SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Hundreds of proposals and projects are being submitted before the Ministry from different States every year for clearance. My State of Kerala is also not lagging behind in this particular matter. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many proposals and projects have been submitted before the Ministry from the State of Kerala during the last three years and, how many of the proposals and projects are being rejected on the ground of ecology and environment.

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: The total number of projects received from the State of Kerala is 94 and out of these, the total number of projects approved is 48 and the total number of projects not approval is 22 and the total number of projects which are rejected for non-furnishing of the information is 20. Four projects have been withdrawn.

SHRI GEORGE JOSEPH MUNDACKAL: Due to the strict implementation of the Forest Act, many of the development

works are not being carried out. If one or two kilometres happen to be forest area of 50 KM canal work going on, how much suffering the farmers will have to face if the proposal is not cleared by the Government.

It may be that if high tension line is passing through the forest area to take electricity to a town area, only two trees may be cut that purpose, or it may be that 30 or 50 feet of forest area may have to be converted into roads for the convenience of pilgrims, but due to the strict implementation of the Forest Act, such development work is suffering.

Will you take a lenient view of the Forest Act so that the development work that is urgently needed in the State can be completed?

SHRI Z.R. ANSARI: We have tried to take a lenient view in such genuine cases and, therefore, we have liberalised the rules for the clearance of those cases. Originally, all the cases for the diversion of forest land had to come to the Central Government and they have to take clearance from here. Now we have made certain changes in our rules.

If the diversion of forest area is only one hectare, the case will be processed at the regional level and the Regional Forest Officer, Government of India, will clear the case without bringing it to us.

For one hectare to ten hectares, there was a long procedure of going through a Technical Committee and processing it and the Advisory Committee will report the matter to the Government and to approves or disapproves. We take action according to the advice given by the Advisory Committee in bigger cases only now.

Now we have taken a decision and amended the rules that up to ten hectares diversion of forest area, the cases should not be processed through the Advisory Committee. They will be processed through the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

In the hill districts or where the forest area is more than 50% we are not insisting on compensatory afforestation on non-forest area in cases involving 5 hectares of forest land. We are allowing them if the afforestations being done on twice the extent of degraded forest land.

For tribals and for other village communities who are living in the forest area, we have allowed the buildings which were not allowed previously.