

यह निर्देश है कि नीकरी में और इस तरह के दूसरे कामों में जो निर्बल वर्ग के लोग हैं, सेच्युल्ड कास्ट्स और सेड्युल्ड ट्राइब्स के उनको मूल्यायन दी जाये लेकिन कमी कमी जो दूसरे लोग पहले से काम कर रहे उनको नहीं मिलता है तो कठिनाई आती है फिर भी इन बातों का ध्यान आम तौर पर रखा जाता है।

Extension of Employees' State Insurance Scheme to Labourers

*317. SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether coverage under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme has steadily expanded; and

(b) whether Government propose to extend the E.S.I. Scheme to unorganised working population such as agricultural labourers, bidi workers, contract labourers, construction workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(b) The Employees' State Insurance Corporation has furnished the following information:—

The agricultural workers employed in workshops in agricultural farms and the contract labour employed in connection with the work of factories/establishments to which the Employees State Insurance Oct, 1948 already applies and which are situated in the areas where the benefit provisions of the Act are in force, are already coverable under the E.S.I. Scheme. Further, such of the bidi workers as are employed in non-power using

factories/establishments and shops, employing 20 or more persons and located in the areas where the benefit provisions of the Act are in force, will also be coverable under the Scheme as and when the provisions of the Act are extended to these classes of establishment by the State Governments under section 1(5) of the E.S.I. Act. The extension of the Scheme to the other categories of workers in the unorganised and semi-organised sectors of employment, including agricultural labourers, construction workers etc., is not considered feasible for the present, in as much as the organising of medical and other facilities for such workers will present serious difficulties.

SHRI S M BANERJEE: I would like to know whether it is a fact that the ESI scheme has not been extended to even 50 per cent of the workers working in the organised sector and if so, whether there is a plan to extend it further during the Fifth Plan, and if so, the number of workers likely to be covered and whether construction workers will also be covered.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: The ESI scheme is being extended from time to time having regard to the ability of the organisation to deal with the matter and also the industrial organisations to be covered. For the information of the hon Member I may state that after the recent amendment of the Act raising the remuneration of the workers to be covered from Rs. 500 to Rs 1,000, this sector alone consists of nearly 51 lakhs of additional workers, and the total number so far covered is 56 lakhs. In fact, there is an increase of six lakhs workers as a result of this, and the total beneficiaries come to nearly 2.2 crores in India, including the members of the workers' families. The scheme is in operation in three central industries, in 15 States and in the Union Territories of Delhi and Pondicherry. We are trying our best to cover as many workers as

possible, and this will be done on an instalment basis.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Has it been brought to his notice that some of the public sector units like HAL, Kanpur, have asked for exemption from the scheme on the ground that their present medical arrangements are better, and may I know whether exemption will be granted to them if they so desire.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: This is a matter that should be decided on the merits of each case. There cannot be any general principle. Though in certain cases the medical benefits may be better, this scheme not only covers medical benefits but also sickness benefits, insurance, and in case of death, the family is also covered. If a person dies, his wife will be provided for until she gets married or dies. or the children are also provided with all these benefits until they become major. Therefore, all these benefits can be provided under the scheme concerned by the public sector. Otherwise, taking a balanced-view in this matter, if the public sector provides more advantageous scheme for the benefits of the workers, naturally on such cases a decision will be taken on merits.

श्री राम नारायण शर्मा : ग्रहण महोदय, इस प्रश्न के द्वारा यह जानने की कोशिश की गई है कि अधिक से अधिक लोगों को कैसे कवर किया जाये लेकिन क्या सरकार की जानकारी में यह बात है कि जितने लोगों के ऊपर यह ई एस आई स्कीम लागू है और जहाँ जहाँ डिस्पेंसरीज हैं उनमें बहुत सी जगह डाक्टर नहीं हैं, दवाओं का प्रबन्ध नहीं है और मडिकल अटेडेन्ट नहीं है जिसके कारण ग्रामी जो ग्रामरेडी कवर्ड है वे सफर कर रहे हैं तो क्या सरकार इस स्कीम को एक्स्टेंड करने के पहले इस बात की जांच करेगी और जांच करके इस सम्बन्ध में उचित कार्यवाही करेगी ?

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: As I submitted, now 56 lakh workers belonging to the various industrial organizations are covered. Regarding the specific question put by my good friend Mr. Sharma, I may submit that as far as the posting of doctors and the administration of the hospitals are concerned, it is completely in the hands of the State Governments. We have impressed upon them and they are also taking a keen interest in this matter, and I hope sufficient progress will be made.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: My question also relates to the part of the question asked by Mr. Sharma. They are spreading the net which will be covered under ESI. My question not only relates to medical facilities but also the cash benefit for which the workers are being harassed in almost all the places. I want to know whether any scheme has been drawn up so that the insured persons may get cash benefit when it is due to them without going through any harassment.

SHRI RAGHUNATHA REDDY: This is a question of expression of opinion. If the hon. Member has got any specific case, we can look into it.

Pollution of Ganga Waters in West Bengal

*318. **SHRI N. K. SANGHI:** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the percentage of pollution of Ganga waters is increasing every year in West Bengal;

(b) whether the pollution has become a health hazard;

(c) the causes for this rapid increase in the percentage of pollution; and

(d) the steps taken to minimise it?