

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time her Ministry requires to abolish the inhuman system of manual scavengers in our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Prime Ministers' Office has directed Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation to prepare status notes on their respective programmes and institutions, evaluate the progress, indicate the difficulties in implementation and suggest time-bound measures to complete the conversion of dry latrines and the liberation of manual scavengers.

The Government of India has revised the guidelines of the Centrally Sponsored "Integrated Low Cost Sanitation" Scheme. As per the revised guidelines, it is proposed to convert existing dry latrines in to water borne flush toilets in the urban areas of the country in a time bound manner from the year 2007-08 to 2009-10.

Workers in Gulf countries

2244. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian workers working in Gulf countries are contract labourers but not immigrant workers as usually called;

(b) if so, whether any steps are being taken to introduce joint consultative mechanisms to redress the grievances, protect the workers from the atrocities committed;

(c) whether any steps are mooted to sign bilateral labour agreements with these countries to alleviate the problems of the ex-patriate labour;

(d) if so, the details of the above two points; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Overseas Indian workers in Gulf countries are contract labourers to the extent that there is a labour contract between the foreign employer and the worker stipulating, *inter-alia*, the terms and conditions of employment mutually agreed upon by both parties and the period of contract.

(b) to (d) In order to ensure the protection and welfare of the Indian emigrant workers, Government has been signing bilateral MoUs on Labour. In December 2006 the Government signed an MoU with the UAE and in April 2007 with Kuwait. In November 2007 an Additional Protocol with Qatar was signed to update the 1985 Agreement. MoUs are being finalized with Malaysia and Oman. MoUs are also being pursued with Bahrain and Yemen. These MoUs provide for protection of workers in the informal sector also. Further the MoUs provide resolution of bilateral labour issues through the mechanism of a Joint Working Group.

(e) The question does not arise.