

- (iv) On the request of MOS to Union Law Minister, Chief Justice of India and Chief Justice of all the High Courts in the country, instructions have been issued by the Honble Chief Justice of India to all Chief Justices of High Courts for expeditious disposal of cases involving older persons 60 years and above.
- (v) On the request of this Ministry, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have issued instructions to all State Governments to ensure provision of separate queues for older persons in hospitals at every stage and the other request of the Ministry for inclusion of geriatrics in the medical curricula of the country is under their consideration.
- (vi) At the initiative of this Ministry, a Telephone Helpline has been started by an NGO called Agewell with the financial assistance from the Ministry.
- (vii) At Secretariat for NCOP which would also process and take follow-up action on the representations/complaints/ grievances of older persons has been established by Age Well Foundation on the initiative and with the financial assistance of this Ministry.
- Cviii) Ministry of Telecommunications have announced grant of telephone connections to older persons on priority basis.
- (ix) Ministry of Rural Development is considering launching of a new scheme called ANNAPURNA under which free foodgrains upto 10 Kgs are to be provided to poor older persons.

Staff Strength of Sail

*117. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Steel Authority of India is overstaffed;
 - (b) if so, the steps proposed to reduce the strength to make SAIL viable;
- and

(c) other measures taken to make it a profit-making company again?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The steps taken to reduce the strength of manpower of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) include, inter-alia, Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), redeployment of manpower from the identified areas and restriction in recruitment.

(c) Government has been in constant dialogue with SAIL and has been periodically reviewing its performance with a view to increase its competitiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, to check losses and improve the financial health of SAIL the Company has drawn up a comprehensive financial and business restructuring plan. The measures outlined in the plan include, inter-alia:

- (i) A reduction in operational costs by reducing input cost, ' reducing consumption of raw materials and other inputs and by increasing operating efficiencies;
- (ii) Improvement in techno-economic parameters such as fuel and power consumption;
- (iii) Increased recovery for services/facilities;
- (iv) Right sizing manpower through a Voluntary Retirement Schemes (VRS);
- (v) Restructuring of assets;
- (vi) Disposal of idle assets; and
- (vii) Financial restructuring.

Utilization of Special Component Plan Outlay

*118 DR.ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the percentage of expenditure under the Special Component Plan outlay is not being fully utilised;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and