

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Employment and Upliftment of the Poor

97. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need for a consensual approach towards employment and upliftment of the poor and downtrodden people in the rural areas of the country including development of people of backward, hilly and desert areas; and

(b) if so, what effective steps Government have taken so far to remove poverty and for upliftment of people of the tribal hilly and desert areas in the States like Rajasthan and Orissa for providing suitable employment and other financial assistance during 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government is implementing various wage-employment, self-employment, infrastructure and area development programmes for removing poverty and upliftment of rural poor including those in tribal, hilly and desert areas in the States like Rajasthan and Orissa. The wage employment programmes are Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), and Million Wells Scheme (MWS). The self-employment programmes are Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth or Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Areas (SITRA) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). The area development programmes are Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP). The infrastructure development programmes in rural areas are Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), and

Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP). These programmes with greater vigour will continue during 1998-99.

Identification of most Backward and Poorest Districts

98. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had appointed a Committee in the recent past to evolve criteria for identification of 100 most backward and poorest districts in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether identification of such districts has since been made;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government have evolved any special action plan for the development of such districts; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken in that regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BABAGOUDA PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. E.A.S. Sarma was constituted with the following terms of reference:

(i) To recommend criteria for deciding 100 most backward and poorest districts in the country.

(ii) To identify such districts in various States, as per suggested criteria.

(iii) To suggest an appropriate definition of the term 'infrastructure development' and to identify the specific sectors to be included therein.

(c) to (f) The report of the committee is under consideration by the Government.