

such as rail links, roads, air services, power and water. The Government of India has already announced new initiatives for the development of infrastructure in North East. Ministry of Industry through the Growth Centres and Integrated Infrastructure Development Schemes is facilitating the creation of industry related infrastructure. Entrepreneurship development programme and Self-employment through PMRY are also aimed at entrepreneurship diffusion in North Eastern States.

Comprehensive Bill for PF Scheme to Agricultural Labour

1582. SHRI P. SOUNDARA RAJAN:
SHRI R. MARGABANDU:
SHRI O.S. MANIAN:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to bring a comprehensive Bill for providing Provident Fund Scheme to the agricultural labour;

(b) if so, whether Government will consult all the trade unions including State level unions before drafting the Bill; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to extend this Provident Fund facility to the unorganised agricultural labour in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) The agricultural farms, fruit gardens, poultry farms, plantations etc employing 20 or more persons already attract provisions of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. The workers employed in such farms are thus eligible for various benefits provided under the Provident Funds and other schemes framed under the Act. There is no proposal to bring any new Bill for providing Provident Fund for agricultural workers.

Abnormal increase in Agriculture Workers in Maharashtra

1583. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of agricultural workers in the State of Maharashtra as on date;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been abnormal increase in the number of such labourers in the state during the last five years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take for the Welfare of such labourers and provide alternative source of employment to them in the State with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) Number of agricultural workers in Maharashtra as per 1981 and 1991 census is given below:

Year	No. of agricul- tural labourers	No. of Cul- tivators
1981	6,470,855	8,535,910
1991	8,313,223	10,172,108

(d) The Government have taken several steps for the welfare and improvement of conditions of agricultural workers in the country. A large number of existing Labour laws like the Minimum Wages Act, the Equal Remuneration Act, the Child labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act and the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act etc. are applicable to the agricultural workers. The provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act are also applicable to a section of farm labour. Besides, a proposal for introducing a comprehensive Central legislation for agricultural workers to provide for regulation of their employment and working conditions and to provide for their welfare is under Government's consideration. Apart from