

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Disinvestment Commission

*501. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether setting up of Disinvestment Commission has been cleared by Government;

(b) if so, whether the Chairman and the members of the Commission have been appointed;

(c) what will be its main functions; and

(d) by what time it is likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) The Government have already set up a Disinvestment Commission and have appointed a full-time Chairman and four-part-time Members. The Commission has started functioning. The Commission is to advise the Government on various aspects related to disinvestment like timing, extent, pricing, mode etc.

World Bank's concern over declining female-male sex ratio

*502. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has expressed concern over the declining female-male ratio in India;

(b) whether it has pointed out that the high number of missing Indian women and high mortality rate of girl child under five are some of the top worries;

(c) if so, whether the World Bank report in this regard has been accepted by Government;

(d) what are the suggestions made in the said report; and

(e) to what extent they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The World Bank in its report titled 'Improving Women's health in India—Development in Practice' has inter-alia mentioned that India is one of the countries where males significantly outnumber females; and that the sex ratio of the population has become increasingly weighted towards men.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Report inter-alia has mentioned marked regional variations, the worsening of male/female mortality ratio. For children aged 0-4 in a number of States, and the persistence of excess mortality among women of Child bearing age.

(c) The contents of the Report have been noted.

(d) The said Report in its Chapter 'Strategies for Change' has recommended strong and sustained government commitment, a favourable policy environment and well-targetted resources. The report focusses on improving the health of Indian Women and girls through Public and private health care and related sources. Long-term improvements in education and employment opportunities for women would have a positive impact on the health of Indian Women and their children. In the short-term significant improvements can be expected by improving existing services expending them to meet women's needs. The most cost effective interventions in the health sector are those that improve the health of children and of women of reproductive age. The Report further recommends that through legislation, legal enforcement, and information, education and communication (IEC) harmful practices such as domestic violence and discrimination can be curbed. Involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations and Women's groups are expected to make services more responsive to Women and improve utilisation and impacts.

(e) Various programmes of action and advocacy are being implemented by the

Government in the country for the welfare and development of women and Girl Child. Attempts are also being made to project positive images of the girl child so as to bring about changes in societal attitudes towards them. The Government has also initiated media campaigns to generate awareness on various issues relating to girl child. The National Plan of Action for the SAARC Decade (1991-2000 A.D.) for the girl child focussing on the survival, protection and development of the girl child has been formulated. A special set of interventions for adolescent girls has been institutionalised through the ICDS structure.

Government has enacted the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 which came into force with effect from 1.1.96 and provides that use of diagnostic techniques for the purpose of pre-natal sex determination leading to female foeticide is a legal offence.

Rehabilitation of Women and Child Labour in Bidi Sector

*503. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate percentage of women and child labour in the bidi sector;

(b) whether Government have any plans to rehabilitate such labour in other sectors; and

(c) if so, the plans to reduce child labour in the bidi sector?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) As per the Report on Working and Living Conditions of Workers in Beedi Industry in India prepared by Labour Bureau (1995), it is estimated that 65.9% of workers in the bidi industry are women and 1% are children. Bidi and

Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 regulates the working conditions of all bidi and cigar workers including women workers. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, prohibits employment of children in the process of bidi making. A programme for Elimination of Child Labour in all hazardous occupations including beedi making has been launched. So far 76 National Child Labour Projects covering about 1.5 lakh children in child labour endemic States have been sanctioned. These Projects involve identification of children employed in such industry, withdrawing them from work and putting them in special schools established for this purpose where they are given basic education and vocational training. Health checks, nutrition and payment of stipend are the other areas of concern addressed under the Programme.

ESI Hospitals and Dispensaries in Maharashtra

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

(a) total number of ESI hospitals and dispensaries which are functioning in various parts of the State of Maharashtra with district-wise details thereof;

(b) whether Government have any proposal to upgrade these dispensaries to bed hospitals in the near future;

(c) if so, details thereof; and

(d) the number of ESI dispensaries in Nagpur which are likely to be upgraded into 50 and more bed hospitals?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.