

Secondly, Sir, at a time of global recession, our friends, the UPA Mark-II, who are ruling this country today, find inspiration from one country. Their President himself is talking about Buffalo and Bangalore. ...*(Interruptions)*... That is outsourcing. They are already talking about that. They themselves are looking at ways, and every country in the world is looking at ways, to protect the livelihood of their own people. *(Time-bell rings)* That is what I said, including America. And in such a situation for us to go ahead, it is going to be disastrous. ...*(Interruptions)*...

I demand from the Government that please come to the House, discuss this agreement that you want to reach in the House and let Parliament be taken into confidence. Only then, a final decision be taken. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD (Bihar): Sir, I associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

श्री प्रकाश जावडेकर (महाराष्ट्र): सर, मैं इस विषय से अपने आप को एसोसिएट करता हूँ।

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी (बिहार): महोदय, मैं भी स्वयं को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करता हूँ।

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA (Rajasthan): Sir, I also associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We all associate ourselves.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has concluded and the hon. Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment to reply.

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK): Sir, I am extremely happy that the House yesterday could find time to discuss the working of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Yesterday, for more than four hours, there were deliberations and 24 hon. Members could participate in this discussion. I can say at this point of time that the discussion was very informative, it went into different aspects concerning the Ministry and, I think, that in the days to come, the suggestions, the various points which were raised during the discussion shall guide me in improving further the functioning of the Ministry which, I believe, is entrusted with the task of working for the cause of those sections of the society which are deprived, disadvantaged and vulnerable. The mandate of this Ministry is the educational, economic and social empowerment of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. This Ministry also has the mandate to deal with issues concerning persons with disabilities, the senior citizens as well as to deal with concerns arising out of drug abuse.

Sir, as has been pointed out by the hon. Member, Shri D. Raja, while he initiated the discussion on the working of this Ministry, he rightly pointed out that the Preamble of the Constitution of India aim secure — justice, social, economic and political, which is also the mandate basically of this Ministry. Article 46 relating to the Directive Principles of the State Policy further directs to promote with special care, the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Shri D. Raja was absolutely right that this is what is the mandate and this is what is expected from the Ministry. And, therefore, I understand the spirit in which he had made certain references. But, there is no lack of vision; there is no lack of mission. The vision of this Ministry emanates from the Constitution of India which clearly mandates the Ministry to perform for these vulnerable sections of the society and to fulfil that vision, is the mission of this Ministry. I understand that there can be large expectations and we may not be able to live up to those expectations. The mission we are talking about is a mission which deals with the most deprived sections and, therefore, I would like to accept in all humility that though there may be shortcomings, we will march towards achieving those goals in a much more determined manner and this Government is determined to move in this direction with firm resolve. As this Ministry is concerned with the development of the Scheduled Castes, which constitute 16.2 per cent of the total population, a large number of Schemes of this Ministry are around the development of the Scheduled Castes, and so is the allocation also. In the current year, which is almost 75 per cent of the allocation goes towards the Schemes meant for the educational development of the Scheduled Castes. There are a large number of scholarship schemes — the Post-Matric Scholarship, the Top Class Education, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship, National Overseas SC Scholarship, and we have also scholarship schemes like Pre-Matric Scholarships for children of those parents engaged in unclean occupations. We also have been supporting construction of hostels under the Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana for, both, boys and girls. Because of all these Schemes, through which we have been assisting the State Governments, about 35 lakh students get scholarships under the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme. Under the Top Class Education and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship Schemes, approximately 2,500 students have benefited for pursuing professional education in premier institutions and for research programmes. We are also providing assistance to students under National Overseas Scholarship Schemes. Almost 1,064 hostels have been sanctioned for the Scheduled Caste students in different parts of the country, in the last five years, which has added 79,000 seats to the existing hostels. I think, this is, broadly, what could have been achieved in the last few years.

Several Members have expressed their concern about the state of affairs in regard to the Scheduled Castes. Many of the concerns which have been expressed, I do share those concerns. I do agree with most of the things which have been expressed. But, at the same time,

I would like that the House should also be aware of as to what progress, what achievement we have been able to do in the last few years.

One important thing which I would like to bring to the notice of the House is in regard to the literacy rate of the Scheduled Castes. That has increased from 52.2 per cent, in 1991, to 64.8 per cent, in 2001.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN) in the Chair]

Specially, in regard to the female literacy among Scheduled Castes, the rate which was a mere 3.3 per cent, in 1961, jumped by almost 13 times in the year 2001. This reference I am making because correspondingly, the total female literacy rate which was 15.4 per cent, in 1961, rose up to 53.7 per cent in 2001; the increase was three-and-a-half times. In total female literacy, as far as female literacy among Scheduled Caste girls is concerned, that went up by almost 13 times. So, I think, the efforts of the Government in this direction have paid. We are not satisfied where we have reached. We have to go beyond that. But this I, specifically, wanted to bring to your notice, Madam, because all of us are concerned about female literacy and National Literacy Mission is also, now, going to be the National Female Literacy Mission because we believe that if we are able to empower the women, and empower them through education, by making them literate, that will make our efforts to reach the goal much more easier.

The gross enrolment ratio among Scheduled Castes, in the age group of 6-14 years, has increased from 85.6 per cent, in 2001-02, to 105.89 per cent, in 2006-07. The poverty ratio among SCs, which was 48.1 per cent, in rural areas, and 49.5 per cent, in urban areas, in 1993-94, has gone down to 36.8 per cent and 39.9 per cent in the year 2004-05. I am aware that we have a long way to go. But I just want to bring to the notice of this House that this is an area where we have been able to move in a much better manner.

The strategy of the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan, which quite a number of Members had pointed out yesterday, was started in the year 1979. This is also an area of concern. The guidelines in this regard have been issued by the Planning Commission from time to time. As per the Planning Commission guidelines of 2005-06, the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan has to be formulated by the States, Union Territories and Central Ministries to channelise the flow of outlay and benefits from the Plan in proportion to the population of the Scheduled Castes. As per the available reports — these reports are basically sent by the State Governments — the flow to the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan during 2007-08 and 2008-09 was 16 per cent and 15.71 per cent respectively as against the Scheduled Castes population of 16.2 per cent, on an aggregate basis at the national level. It may, however, be noted that the guidelines on the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan have been issued by the Planning Commission and compliance to these guidelines need to be ensured. We, as a nodal Ministry, will make every possible effort to ensure that these guidelines issued by the Planning Commission are properly followed and the Planning

Commission should also keep these guidelines in view while approving the annual Plan of different Ministries and Departments. The Ministry monitors allocation under the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and we have been taking up this issue with the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the requisite funds are earmarked for this particular Scheme.

Shri D. Raja, yesterday, made a mention that the Special Central Assistance for the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan was reduced. But the fact is that it has not been reduced. What was provided last year was Rs. 480 crores as Special Central Assistance. However, at the end of the year, instead of Rs. 480 crores, we spent Rs. 600 crores because there were savings in other divisions of the Ministry. This year, the same amount of Rs. 480 crores has been retained.

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): I said that it was getting stagnant.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: No. On the Special Central Assistance, you made a specific mention that it had been reduced. The other issue that the allocation was stagnant is a different issue altogether. But there was a particular reference to this issue. If you had not said that ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Bringing it down from Rs. 600 crores to Rs. 400 crores is a reduction.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: I understand it. I knew that this would be pointed out. But the point is that what was provided last year as Plan allocation was Rs. 2,400 crores. This time, the Plan allocation is 2,500 crores. Therefore, unless and until the same type of a situation happens, like it happened in other divisions in the Ministry, savings will not be there and, therefore, the figure will not go up to Rs. 600 crores. Nevertheless, I have taken the point in the spirit in which it has been mentioned. But I just want to correct the facts and, therefore, I have mentioned it.

The funds provided to the State Government under this particular Scheme are just an additive to their SCSP with an objective to give a thrust to the family-oriented schemes for the economic development of the Scheduled Castes below the poverty line. The two finance and development corporations, that is, the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation, have been providing loans for selfemployment to Scheduled Caste beneficiaries at concessional rates between 4 per cent and 6 per cent, normally. The NSFDC and NSKFDC have disbursed, approximately, Rs. 1,058 crores to provide loans to 3.65 lakh beneficiaries in the last five years.

Some hon. Members raised an issue in regard to atrocities committed against Scheduled Castes. This is a matter of great concern to all of us. This is a matter which came up for discussion during the Question Hour on the first day of this Session. We all are concerned about it. The Prime Minister, himself, in a meeting of the Inter-State Council, which was held, especially, on the topic of 'Offences of Untouchability and Atrocities' had, clearly, expressed his concern that these types of things cannot happen and should not happen. Subsequently, the Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, had also taken

up this issue and suggested that the Ministry should constitute a Committee in order to make a constant review of the progress of implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. A Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister was constituted with representatives of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and some other non-officials and that Committee went to different States and conducted a review. These meetings were held, generally, at the zonal level, but almost all the States were covered. We intend now to further intensify the exercise of reviewing the implementation because the statistics which are before us, are a matter of great concern. This information has been provided by the National Crime Records Bureau, which says that in 2004, the number of cases registered was 26,523; in 2005 — 25,836; in 2006 — 26,665; in 2007 — 29,825. And similar figures, somewhat lesser, were for the year 2008. There has been a reduction. But our concern is not just mere statistics; our concern is the mindset. Our concern is that if there is violence in our society today, and the violence is of this nature, then this thing shall not be allowed to continue. We have taken it very seriously. So far as coordination and implementation of these Acts, the PCR and the Prevention of Atrocities, is concerned, some provisions are allocated to the Ministry of Home Affairs and in the case of some other provisions, we are responsible but ultimately implementation is with the State Governments. Nevertheless, all of us will have to make a joint effort to see that what is provided in the legislation is implemented at the field level and towards that end, we stand committed and we will try and do whatever is possible.

Hon. Member, Shri B.K. Hariprasad, was very passionate in putting across his views regarding manual scavenging. This is a very serious issue. As of now, the situation is that, at the beginning of the year, 1,15,000 manual scavengers and their dependents remained to be rehabilitated to alternative occupations. This information is provided by the State Governments. So far as the definition of 'manual scavenging' is concerned, there is a lot of difference. The State Governments take it in a different manner. There are a large number of NGOs working for the welfare of manual scavengers and they view it in a different manner. Yesterday, Shri Praveen Rashtrapal raised this issue and he had mentioned about a report which talks about 13 lakh manual scavengers. He wanted to know what figures the Government had on it. Now, as far as the Government is concerned, the State Governments have reported 1,15,000; out of these, up to May this year, 44,536 persons have been rehabilitated under the Selfemployment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers. The scheme envisaged rehabilitation of all the remaining manual scavengers and their dependents by 31st March, 2009. This could not be possible. Now, the scheme has been extended up to 31st March, 2010. Knowing the gravity of the issue and knowing the concern of the hon. Members in this regard, we have been constantly taking it up with the State Governments, and I have also written to the Chief Ministers that they should pay the required attention to this so that we are able to come out of this situation as early as possible. Shri B.K. Hariprasad had also raised an issue with regard to sanitation workers and

their working conditions. We are also concerned with the working conditions of the sanitation workers, who are exposed to various hazards, in regard to their health and safety. Within the Ministry, we are trying to study what their working conditions are, what equipments they have been provided with, what kind of training they are provided, what safety measures have been taken, what diseases or illnesses they are prone to, what the mortality rate among the sanitation workers is, etc. We are trying to study all these issues. But, in the meanwhile, as none of the existing labour laws regulate the working conditions of sanitation workers, from the health and safety angle, and to provide for their welfare, as a distinct group, the Ministry has taken up with the Ministry of Labour the need for bringing in a comprehensive legislation for this group. Now, quite a number of hon. Members raised their concerns in regard to Other Backward Classes (OBCs). According to Mandal Commission, 52 per cent of the total population is from the OBCs...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): It is 58 per cent.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: There are different figures now. Some figures talk about 52 per cent. The National Sample Survey Organisation comes up with a lesser figure. But it constitutes a large section of the Indian population. Almost 1963 castes are included in the Central List of OBCs. The Educational Development Programmes for OBCs include pre and post matric scholarships and construction of hostels. Approximately, 25 lakh students are supported by this scholarship given by the Ministry through State Governments. In the last five years, 400 hostels have been sanctioned, adding the capacity further to 32,600 seats. Some hon. Members raised the issue of granting constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes. Now, definitely, we believe that there is scope to further empower the Commission, and its functions need to be enlarged. How, and in what manner, the Commission's functions have to be enlarged, we are going into that matter. And, once we are able to firm up our views in this regard, we can come back on this issue. For the economic empowerment of the OBCs, the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation provided loans at concessional rates to encourage and support self-employment schemes. Nearly 5.5 lakh beneficiaries have been provided loans up to Rs. 618 crores in the last five years.

Another important area of concern, and which has been mandated to this Ministry, is the persons with disabilities. Madam, you had raised this issue. According to the 2001 Census, 2.2 per cent of the population comes under this category of persons with disabilities. Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 enacted by Parliament defines 'disability' as 'blindness, low vision, leprosy cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and mental illness' and there are details as to who will be considered as a disabled and all that. The National Trust Act also came into being in the year 1999; it covers two additional disabilities, that is, autism and multiple disabilities.

1.00 P.M.

Strategy for empowerment of persons with disabilities include their rehabilitation, education, employment in Government through reservation and in private sector, through incentives and self-employment through concessional loans. The Government has taken a series of initiatives over the last five years. Even yesterday, some hon. Members had raised the issue of the backlog of disabled people in Government services. The Department of Personnel and Training had taken up this matter, issued certain instructions and, I understand, had planned a time-bound programme to fill up vacancies under this particular category.

Then, we have the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities which was announced in 2006 to focus attention on the need for action regarding rehabilitation, accessibility and other important issues. Meanwhile, the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted. India was among the first countries to sign the UN Convention — and this came into force in the year 2008 — which cast certain obligations as a signatory country towards enforcement of various rights for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry implements two major schemes for assistance to persons with disabilities: assistive devices and putting up vocational training centres, special schools and half-way homes. There is a scheme to provide assistive devices through NGOs. The eligibility criteria has been revised. There is a new scheme to provide incentives to employers in the private sector for employing persons with disabilities. The Central Government has been providing employers' contribution towards EPF and ESI for the first three years for every person with disability employed after 1st April, 2008 and drawing monthly emoluments up to Rs. 25,000. However, the response so far to this incentive scheme has not been up to the mark. The private sector needs to respond handsomely to this scheme, employ persons with disability in large numbers and avail of the incentive available under this scheme.

Then, in the area of social defence, the Ministry primarily focuses on the welfare and maintenance of senior citizens. According to 2001 Census, there are 7.6 crore senior citizens in the country. Demographic changes are taking place on a huge scale and, by 2026, the percentage of senior citizens in our population will go up to 12.4 per cent and this will be a major section of the population.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: What? Sir, 7.6 crore senior citizens?

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: Yes, 7.6 crore senior citizens, that is, people above 60 years of age, according to the 2001 Census.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Strange. It can't be only 7.6 crore, Sir.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: That is what it is. That constitutes 7.5 per cent....*(Interruptions)*... Those are the figures available with me. It is 7.5 per cent of the population which falls in the category of senior citizens. And this will go up to 12.5 per cent by the year 2026. These demographic changes are taking place, and the main problem of the senior citizens, as the

House is aware, is in regard to their security, healthcare and need for their care and maintenance. There has been an enactment, namely, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens, which Madam you had referred to yesterday, and I would like to inform the House that 21 States and six Union Territories have brought the Act into force. The model rules have been prepared and circulated to the States for adoption. States like Gujarat, West Bengal and Tripura have already framed rules and other States are in preparation of these rules.

Madam, the Scheme for Integrated Programme for Older Persons also came up for discussion yesterday. That Scheme has different subschemes; almost 13 Schemes are there. The allocation on this particular Scheme is Rs. 22 crores. Many hon. Members had expressed their concern that the available allocation is too meagre. I share their concern, and I am in full agreement to the sentiments which they had expressed. About 450 NGOs covering almost 45,000 beneficiaries are implementing the different schemes available under this particular scheme of Integrated Programme for Older Persons.

Then, Madam, some hon. Members, especially, I think, it was hon. Shri Narayan Singh who had raised the issue of drug abuse and as to how this matter should get the desired attention. About 400 Non-Governmental Organisations are implementing the Scheme of the Ministry in regard to the prevention of drug abuse. We have made certain changes that apart from the NGOs to involve the local bodies both urban and rural, we have made changes so that they can also be assisted. A National Consultative Committee on De-addiction and Rehabilitation was constituted in July 2008, which has various stakeholders as members, including agencies dealing with supply and demand reduction. In order to address the issue of drug abuse among children in schools, the Ministry is implementing a scheme which also provides for programmes focussing on children and youth both in as well as outside educational institutions. The Programme would start at the school level, addressing adolescent groups and also covers college students. Parents and teachers would be sensitised to understand the psychology of youth and to help them to keep away from drug abuse. The Ministry has a National Awareness Campaign on Drug Abuse on 26th June, every year, which is observed as International Day Against Drug Abuse. But, we are aware that a day's campaign is not good enough. The problem is serious. Our concerns are there. Several Members have talked about that, and 26th June is not the day when the educational institutions are open. It is the students in schools and colleges who have to be sensitised, who have to be made aware and, therefore, we are preparing a programme of a massive awareness campaign in educational institutions during the rest of the year as well, so that we are effectively able to reach to this section of the society which is the most vulnerable. Hon. Members have raised several issues. I have tried to cover some of them. I will briefly mention some of the important priorities, which the Ministry will be focussing in the next couple of years. Some Members had mentioned, I think, it was Mr. D. Raja mentioned about the scholarship rates; Hariprasadji had also talked about post-matric

scholarship; Shri Jesudasu Seelam had also talked about the post-matric scholarship. The scholarship rates for the OBC students have not been revised since the year 1999, and the scholarship rates for the Scheduled Caste students have not been revised since the year 2003. Therefore, we will focus our attention to revise the scholarship rates because we also are in full agreement with the sentiments which were expressed by the hon. Members. A new pilot scheme, namely, the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, is being started this year. The announcement to this effect was made by the hon. Finance Minister while presenting the Budget. This will be basically convergence of different schemes of different Ministries and Departments. The pilot project will be for a thousand villages with more than 50 per cent Scheduled Caste population. A mention was made that these thousand villages is too small a number, Rs. 100 crore is too small an amount, but this is just meant to be a pilot project. Based on the experience of implementing this project, further in the days to come, this will be expanded. As envisaged, this scheme, which is meant for villages for more than 50 per cent Scheduled Caste concentration, these villages according to the 2001 census, is 44,000. There was a dispute in the figures but we have the information that it is 44,000. Even if you take the Rs. ten lakh which will be provided as gap filling other than what will happen by converging different developmental schemes, this ten lakh will itself mean that on this scheme the allocation will have to be not less than Rs. 4500 crores. This we are going to try and focus and see that it is effectively implemented.

We shall revise the scheme to provide assistive devices to persons with disabilities by increasing income ceiling for eligibility and upper limit of the cost of assistive aids and will streamline its implementation. We will also make an attempt to increase the number of beneficiaries because a large number of people still remain uncovered and when I had a discussion with the hon. Prime Minister he was also expressing his concern and made it very clear that we have to do everything possible to lessen the burden on the lives of the people who are disabled. Procedure for certification of disability is also a major issue. Today the certificates are issued at the district level. The disabled find it very difficult to reach there. The first thing to do for a disabled to get any advantage of the Government scheme is that the certificates are required and...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA (Rajasthan): I am not saying anything. ...*(Interruptions)*... You know the word 'disabled' is not used now. They use the word 'differently abled' because the word 'disabled' is not being used any more. So, you use the word 'differently abled'.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: We will have to take a formal position on this matter. I do agree with what the hon. Member, Najmaji, has pointed out, but as of now the position is that we have the Persons with Disabilities Act, we have a United Nations Convention on Rights with Persons with Disability. But we have taken this suggestion in the spirit with which it has been expressed. This

process of certification of disability will be simplified, decentralised and streamlined. A comprehensive Bill to amend the Persons with Disabilities Act with a view to strengthening its provisions in the light of the last 14 years experience and to bring it in line with the provisions of the UN Conventions will be brought before the Parliament this year. We have already begun the process and just a day before we had a meeting of the Central Coordination Committee where we had a threadbare discussion, the process is on.

A new scheme is proposed to be launched for providing assistance for construction of old age home for indigent senior citizens at the district level. A review of the national policy For Older Persons — 1999, is necessary as ten years have passed since then. We are conducting a review what we have achieved, what more needs to be done and keeping in view that the share of the older citizens in the population is going to increase substantially, we will also be preparing a long-term perspective plan to meet the requirements of the older people. Yesterday a mention was made by Shri Shanta Kumarji about the mandate of the Ministry having beggary also as a subject but nothing was said on this subject in the Annual Report. Beggary is also an important issue, which needs urgent attention. Many States have enacted legislation on this subject. We propose to have a national consultation on this issue in order to prepare a strategy to address this problem. We are aware about the seriousness of this issue. A National Awareness Campaign, as I have mentioned earlier, on drug abuse will be taken up in a big way. Collection of authentic data on the extent,

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

pattern and trends of substance abuse is essential in order to devise effective strategies to address the problem. A pilot survey will be launched shortly through the NSSO in this regard. A National policy on prevention of alcoholism and substance abuse...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: You are looking at the right direction.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: I don't know why there was a big smile, but a National Policy on Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance abuse will be evolved for implementation. We are also going to come up with a mechanism to assess the performance of the NGOs in implementing different schemes of the Ministry. There had been a mention about the NGOs' role. Some of the NGOs have been doing exemplary work and some may have been the black sheep. But, I think, that we will have to come up with a mechanism, one, to assess and secondly to assist, to train, to support the NGOs in the discharge of their responsibilities because we believe that the civil society will also have to play a major role in carrying forward this agenda and towards that end we will come up with mechanisms to make them more effective and more accountable. Then, there was a mention about Dr. Ambedkar Foundation. Shri D. Raja had talked about the awards. The awards have not been given for quite some time but we are going to revive the award scheme. About the National Library also we have already taken up with the concerned authorities to make available to us the bungalows for this purpose and we are following on that.

Then, we will also be conducting a study on the various recommendations and suggestions of different Commissions and Committees so that we are able to prepare comprehensive strategies and to evolve more effective mechanisms. If there is any need we can further create rights. Today there are several rights enshrined in the Constitution, several rights created through in different legislations. How far we have been able to enforce those rights, to what extent we have achieved, where are the gaps, how do we fill up those gaps, what more needs to be done, which other rights have to be created, we are going to go into that issue in detail so that on the one hand it will be the focus on effectively implementing the schemes and programmes and on the other hand it will be the enforcement of the rights of the Scheduled Castes, other backward classes, the persons with disabilities, the senior citizens and rights of these vulnerable sections of the society. Now, I think, I have already taken substantial amount of time. Concerns were expressed about the allocation which has remained around where it had been. I think, I do agree with those sentiments. The passionate appeal which was made, that more focus needs to be there. We take those views very seriously. I can tell you for sure that...

DR. EJAZ ALI: What about the *Dalit* reservation? ...(व्यवधान)... Several members had raised this issue. Yesterday many Members had raised this issue.

श्री उपसभापति: ऐजाज़ अली साहब, आप बैठिए। ...(व्यवधान)... बैठिए। आप बाद में बोलिएगा। ...(व्यवधान)... Let the Minister complete. ...(व्यवधान)... Please sit down.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: Now, the suggestions which were made yesterday will definitely help me, guide me in the functioning of the Ministry and I am grateful that a large number of hon. Members participated in the discussion and I thank all the Members, I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no...(Interruptions)... Mr. Raja, he has covered all the issues...(Interruptions)...

SHRI D. RAJA: No, no. Sir, I have to seek only a couple of clarifications. ...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I request you all to sit down...(Interruptions)...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, I have a point to make. It is regarding credit to Scheduled Castes and...(Interruptions)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is all there, Mr. Seelam...(Interruptions)... One minute...(Interruptions)... One minute...(Interruptions)...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, do you know that an MP quarrelled with a bank Manager?... (Interruptions)... We are concerned about the flow of credit from public sector banks and private institutions. I would like to know what efforts the Government is making in this regard.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. That is all right.

Mr. Raja, take only one minute. Please, be brief.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, I will be brief. It is good that we have two young and energetic Ministers — Mr. Mukul Wasnik and Mr. Napoleon. I would like to seek a couple of clarifications.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not couple, just one.

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, the first one is with regard to Special Central Assistance. It was Rs. 577.71 crores in 2008-09 and now it is 469 crores in 2009-10 Budget. If my figures are wrong, I stand corrected. If your figures are wrong, you must correct your figure, because you have made a pointed reference to it. That is why I pointed out that the allocation to the Special Central Assistance is going down and is getting stagnant. This is first point.

Secondly, Sir, the hon. Minister has made a reference to the Planning Commission. I would like to know whether the Planning Commission keeps a tab on all the Ministries whether they are keeping a separate Sub-Plan Account for SCs. It is reported — even the Planning Commission has said it — that many Ministries claim that the Sub-Plan is indivisible. The Budget is indivisible.

श्री उपसभापति: आप ने तो participate नहीं किया, Clarifications could be sought by only those Members who have participated in the discussion...*(Interruptions)*... Let us follow certain rules.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, when we are discussing the working of Ministry, we should be allowed to seek clarifications...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Madhu, 24 Members have spoken on this. I have no objection if the entire House wishes to seek clarifications from the Minister...*(Interruptions)*...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We don't want...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, the other issue is about drug addicts, alcohol addicts and even the people with different abilities or disabilities. My suggestion is, this Ministry is handicapped to deal with these sections. I think, these people can be put in a separate category or department and be clubbed with the Ministry of Health.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raja, please conclude...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Raja, you always co-operate...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, I also have a point to make. You please give me an opportunity...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Seelam, please...*(Interruptions)*... While requesting for time, you have already made your point...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI D. RAJA: Sir, finally, I request for formation of a separate Ministry for drug addicts, alcohol addicts, persons with different abilities, senior citizens, because this Ministry cannot address their concerns. This Ministry needs to focus on Scheduled Caste and Other Backward

Classes. Sir, for Minorities, there is a separate Ministry. It is focussing on Minorities. It gets more Budget allocation. Sir, in the same way, Tribal affairs has got a separate Ministry. It is focussing on tribals. It gets more Budget allocation. But, this Ministry lacks focus. That is why I make an appeal to both the young and energetic Ministers to take up this issue...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raja, I think, you just seek clarification.

SHRI D. RAJA: ...and focus on Scheduled Castes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hariprasad. You have one minute. Be pointed.

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD (Karnataka): Sir, I have only one point to make ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: One minute. I have got the list.

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Sir, there is no dearth of programmes in this Ministry.

श्री उपसभापति: वही मैं कह रहा हूँ।

डा० (श्रीमती) नजमा ए हेपतुल्ला: आप वहाँ से कहिए।

श्री उपसभापति: मैं वही कह रहा हूँ। देखिए, The Minister, while replying, cannot address all the issues raised by the hon. Members. But that does not mean that the Minister has not taken note of that. He has already said that he has received a lot of suggestions. He will attend to them.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: But, Sir, in the House of Elders, the percentage of elderly people has been given wrong. ...*(Interruptions)*... At least, in the House of Elders, the percentage of elderly people should be given correctly. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Pardon please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: In the House of Elders, the percentage of elderly people, in the country, should be given correct. That is my only request to the hon. Minister. He has given a wrong figure. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, my point is this. There are a lot of programmers for the weaker sections of the society. But at the implementation point, there are a lot of flaws. That's why I had requested the hon. Minister about the possibility of evolving a system, in the Ministry, to have vigilance through a Monitoring Committee. Is the hon. Minister going to constitute such a committee?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rangarajan. Only one query please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, the reservation for disabled people has not even been mentioned. I need a reply from the hon. Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay that's all. ...*(Interruptions)*... आपने तो participate नहीं किया। ...*(Interruptions)*... I have the list of all the participants. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Rangarajan, it's okay. ...*(Interruptions)*... Next, Mr. Praveen Rashtrapal. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: the CBI inquiry should be reviewed. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rangarajan, you seek your clarification. ...*(Interruptions)*... You can say, but we have business to carry on. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Praveen Rashtrapal.

SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL (Gujarat): Sir, I will make a mention about one and-a-half problem. ...*(Interruptions)*... I do not know why the hon. Minister has very tactfully avoided the basic issue of not filling up of backlog posts for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in spite of directions from the hon. Prime Minister to complete all backlogs before the end of September, 2006. The Central Government may not take action against a State Government. But the Prime Minister is capable of taking action against the Central Ministry. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, one small thing more. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is about manual scavenging. Hon. Minister should know how manual scavenging is allowed to go on in the Indian Railway tracks. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He has covered this.

SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: No, he has not answered this. ...*(Interruptions)*... The Central Government...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All that has been covered. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Action should be taken against them. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards the fact that the entire credit flow...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have been requesting the Members to cooperate.

डा. (श्रीमती) नजमा ए. हेपतुल्ला: सर, आप adjourn कर दीजिए।

श्री उपसभापति: मैं वही करूंगा।

डा. (श्रीमती) नजमा ए. हेपतुल्ला: सर, adjourn तो आप करेंगे।

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Madam, do you want me to speak or not.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Seelam, you put on question.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, the total credit flow from the public sector banks and other financial institutions has drastically come down to just a meager amount of Rs. 15,000 crores. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. Don't go into details. ...*(Interruptions)*... नंदी येल्लैया जी, आप बैठिए न, मैंने आपका तो नाम नहीं पुकारा?

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: We request the Minister to take it up with the Ministry of Finance that there should, at least, be 10 per cent credit flow. For the minorities, it is 15 per cent.

We welcome it. But for *dalits*, at least, 10 per cent of credit flow has to be ensured. (*Time-bell rings*) Part 'b' of my question is this. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There cannot be any part in this. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Is there any scheme to sensitize, mobilize, and motivate the *dalit* community for capacity building. There should be a scheme. It should not be a one-way process, but a two-way process. ...(*Interruptions*)... The receiving mechanism should also be sensitized. There should be motivation, mobilization through a Government scheme. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are making a speech. ...(*Interruptions*)... Now, Mr. Siva.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, objecting to the exclusion of the creamy layer, while providing reservation to the OBCs, I had, yesterday, urged upon the hon. Minister to take necessary steps that social backwardness should be the sole criterion for providing reservation to the OBCs, irrespective of economic status. Sir, I had also mentioned that the Census for the OBCs was taken only in 1931. Nearly 80 years have passed. Therefore, while taking 2011 Census, the Minister should take initiatives so that the OBC Census is also taken at that time.

डा. नारायण सिंह मानकलाव (नाम-निर्देशित): महोदय, मंत्री जी ने सारे सवालों का जवाब बहुत स्पष्ट और अच्छी तरह से दे दिया। मेरा एक सवाल था घुमक्कड़ जातियों के बारे में, उनके विकास के बारे में, इसे शायद वे नोट नहीं कर पाए, मैं इस पर उनका स्पष्टीकरण चाहता हूँ।

SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT (Maharashtra): Sir, in my speech also I had mentioned about this. ...(*Interruptions*)... Will the hon. Minister clarify the Government's stand on reducing the rate of interest on educational loans to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes students? ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please cooperate. ...(*Interruptions*)... This is not correct...(*Interruptions*)... This is not followed.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS (Tamil Nadu): Sir, there was Bill for reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which was passed in this House, but it could not be passed in the Lok Sabha because of some discrepancies in the Bill. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether that Bill will be reviewed, anomalies sorted out and re-introduced here. Also, there is another Bill, which is for reservation for OBCs. Will that be, again, brought forward? Sir, he did not mention about the reservation in private sector. What is the status of that? Then, will the Report of the Natchiappan Committee be implemented so that we could have reservation in judiciary as well?

श्री वीर पाल सिंह यादव (उत्तर प्रदेश): महोदय, पिछड़े वर्ग के लोग नौकरियों में अब भी 6% से ज्यादा नहीं हैं और इस संबंध में मैंने मंत्री जी से कल निवेदन भी किया था, कि वे इस संबंध में भी कुछ कहें। दूसरा, मैंने पिछड़ों से संबंधित संसदीय समिति के बारे में भी जो कहा था, उस बारे में भी कुछ मंत्री जी कहें।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you want to reply?

श्री नंदी येल्लैया (आन्ध्र प्रदेश): सर, ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: आपने नहीं पूछा, You did not participate in the discussion ...(Interruptions)...

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सर, हमें टाइम नहीं मिला ..(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: देखिए, मैं अगर आपको समय देता हूँ तो मुझे दूसरों को भी देना पड़ेगा। ...(व्यवधान)...

Please excuse me, आप बैठिए।

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी (बिहार): उपसभापति महोदय, हम लोगों ने इसाई और मुस्लिम समाज के...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: जी, आपने पूछा था।

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: अनुसूचित जाति के लोगों के बारे में रंगनाथ मिश्र आयोग की अनुशंसा के बारे में भी...(व्यवधान)...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you, because others are also asking for but I have refused them. ...(Interruptions)... I have refused others; so, I will not allow...(Interruptions)...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: उसके बारे में भी स्पष्टीकरण चाहेंगे कि इसाई अनुसूचित जाति और मुस्लिम अनुसूचित जाति के लोगों को भी वे आरक्षण देने जा रहे हैं या नहीं?... (व्यवधान)...

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सर, प्लीज़।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: नहीं, नहीं। वह आपकी पार्टी का मसला है, हमारा नहीं। Mr. Minister, would you like to clarify all these points or would you like to write to them?

श्री वी. हनुमंत राव: सर, एक मिनट।...(व्यवधान)...

श्री उपसभापति: नहीं, नहीं, किसी को नहीं, बिल्कुल नहीं।...(व्यवधान)...

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK): Sir, there are quite a number of concerns which have been expressed again and stress has been laid that those points should also be replied, but I am afraid to say that what Shri D. Raja was mentioning in regard to the allocation of Special Central Assistance is not correct. I think, what I had stated earlier, that figure stands correct. The allocation which was Rs. 480 crores last year stands to be Rs. 480 crores this year. ...(Interruptions)... So, this is the position. On the second issue, yesterday, while initiating the discussion, he elaborated how from the mid 1985, the then Ministry which was carved out of the Ministry of Home Affairs was further divided into the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Now, he is suggesting that this Ministry should be further divided and a division of this should be taken out and given to the Ministry of Health. I don't know why he wants that this Ministry should be further divided. The position, as it stands today, in regard to disability and drug abuse is that the Ministry of Health is concerned with the treatment of these sections while the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is concerned with their rehabilitation. So, that difference is there. That is all I wanted to bring to the notice of the hon. Member. Then, as far as

the guidelines of the Planning Commission are concerned, there are specific guidelines. We also keep monitoring; we also keep getting information from the State Governments as to allocation which they have made under the Schedule Castes Sub Plan; the Planning Commission is also monitoring it. So, we are on that; and I have the correspondence between my Ministry and the Planning Commission and the information that we have got from the States as far as this particular matter is concerned.

Hariprasadji has mentioned whether we have any intention to have a vigilance type of mechanism in the Ministry, I am afraid that I will not be in a position to respond to that instantaneously; but as I mentioned earlier while replying, we will go into the entire issue and work out a mechanism where we are able to implement our schemes in a much more effective manner. So, while doing that, his suggestion will also be taken into consideration.

Rangarajanji has mentioned about the CBI enquiry. I readily don't have information about this. But I will collect the information and I can send this information to him.

Praveen Rashtupalji has mentioned about the SC/ST backlog. I think, the hon. Member, who is very well informed, is aware that the Government had undertaken a Special Recruitment Drive to fill up the backlog. Almost 53000 vacancies in backlog for the Schedule Castes were filled up. However, I don't have the latest information. But about the Railways also, which he has mentioned, in regard to manual scavenging, definitely, we will view these sentiments with all the seriousness it deserves.

Jesudasu Seelamji has talked about the flow of credit to the Scheduled Castes which should not be less than ten per cent of the total credit. I cannot respond to this. But we have noted his concerns and we will communicate it to the concerned Minister.

As far as the Reservation Bill is concerned, Ramadossji has pointed out about this, last time, it could not be legislated though it was passed by the Rajya Sabha, but the concerns which were expressed during that point of time, will be addressed while this thing will be taken up again. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: What about the figures of elderly persons?

SHRI D. RAJA: Tell us the exact figures of elderly persons. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: I don't want to get into a situation where I am...
...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, yesterday, there was a mention of deaf and dumb. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: But since you have pointed out and you are insisting that the figure which I have quoted is a wrong figure, though I feel that I am right, but still because you are insisting, I will find out, verify and inform you accordingly.

Yesterday, Dr. Pilaniaji had mentioned about the deaf and dumb problem. Ahluwaliaji has raised it again. Sir, this issue had come to the Ministry earlier. We had taken it up with the Finance Ministry which did not accept the suggestion as was made. But we will definitely take it up again because the manner in which and the sentiment in which it has been expressed, we agree with that sentiment. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Sir, what about the creamy layer?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Wait, wait.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: About the creamy layer, the hon. Member is aware that it was right from the initial days in 1993 when the Supreme Court had decided on the issue. The creamy layer had come into effect since that time. Subsequently, in a different matter, in the year 2008 also, this issue had come up. What is with me at the moment is that, from time to time, whenever there is a need to revise the scales, the National Commission for Backward Classes goes into the issue. Recently, there was an enhancement of income criteria for the creamy layer.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned for lunch for one hour.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thirty-four minutes past one of the clock

The House re-assembled after lunch at thirty-six minutes past two of the clock

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Prabhat Jha to start the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

श्री प्रभात झा (मध्य प्रदेश) : उपसभापति महोदय, मैं संचार और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय के कार्यकरण के संबंध में अपनी चर्चा को आरम्भ कर रहा हूँ। बुनियादी तौर पर मनुष्य का स्वभाव जिज्ञासु होता है। वह जानना चाहता है, वह सुनता है, देखता है और महसूस करता है और उसके बारे में जानने की कोशिश भी करता है। जाने-पहचाने दो दिल, चाहे पास रहें या दूर, लेकिन ऐसा कभी नहीं हो सकता कि वे एक-दूसरे के बारे में न जानना चाहते हों। यही कारण है जिसकी वजह से आदिकाल से संचार व्यवस्था की शुरुआत हो जाती है। विभिन्न युगों में इसकी व्यवस्थाएं अलग-अलग रही होंगी, लेकिन संचार कभी रुका नहीं है। जब मानव पढ़ा-लिखा नहीं था, तब वह मोम से, लकड़ी से, नुकीले लोहे से, पत्थर की नोंक से अपनी बातें लिखता था और संवाद करता था। पेरु में जो स्पैनिश लोग होते हैं, वे गांठदार रस्सी से कितनी गांठें बंधी हैं, उसके द्वारा संदेश भेजते थे और जिसको संदेश मिलता था, वह समझता था कि इन गांठों का क्या अर्थ होता है। इसी प्रकार प्राचीन काल में जब युद्ध होता था तो युद्ध के समय हरकारा राज्यों में दौड़ा दिए जाते थे। उसके साथ वह घोड़े पर चढ़कर जाता था और साथ में नुकीला भाला होता था। उस भाले पर मशाल जलती थी और रस्सी लटकी रहती थी। इसका मतलब यह होता था कि जो लोग युद्ध में भाग नहीं लेंगे, उनका घर जला दिया जाएगा, जो लोग लड़ाई में भाग नहीं लेंगे, उन्हें फांसी पर चढ़ा दिया जाएगा।

महोदय, अब मैं डाक विभाग पर आता हूँ। 1836 में पहली बार रोलेट हिल ने डाक व्यवस्था का सर्वेक्षण किया। आखिर डाक भारत की जिंदगी क्यों है, यह विभाग जिंदगी क्यों है, उसका एक उदाहरण है। 1836 में