

noticed that the report does not reflect any original estimate of survey done by the organization. It refers to selective portions of studies conducted by various other institutions *e.g.* Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS) and organizations that may differ in time frame and survey methodology. The findings of CEFS report has been got verified by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh. In most of the cases the findings were not found true. The study conducted by NCAER-PIF mainly highlights the findings of the CAG report on the performance audit conducted by CAG which was for the period 2006-07, the first year of the NREGA implementation. The CAG report has been examined in this Ministry. This report does not highlight any cases of data manipulation. However, the report has mainly focused on the procedural gaps and record maintenance by the implementing agencies because of inadequate staff. Specific instances of anomalies pointed out in CAG report have been shared with the State Governments for corrective action.

(c) The Ministry has taken the following measures for strengthening the implementation of the NREGA:

- (i) States have been requested to appoint dedicated staff and provide them adequate training for NREGA implementation at all levels. To meet the salaries of such dedicated staff, the administrative expenditure under NREGA which was earlier limited to 2% of the total cost was enhanced to 4% with effect from 1.4.2007 and has now been further enhanced to 6% in the current year.
- (ii) Training to all other functionaries involved in the implementation of the Act (PRIs and officials) has been emphasized from time to time. Expenditure towards the training programmes is borne by the Central Government.
- (iii) A web enabled Management Information System (MIS) has been developed in the Ministry to regularly monitor the reliability and authenticity of the figures reported by the States. State Governments are advised to make corrections whenever defects are noticed.
- (iv) Modifications have been made in Schedule I & II of the Act to strengthen the provisions of transparency and accountability, social audit and grievance redressal.
- (v) National toll-free telephone Helpline under NREGA established which receives complaints and queries relating to NREGA. States have also been requested to set up similar helplines.

Convergence of Rural Development Scheme in NREGS

411. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to strengthen the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) by converging other rural development schemes in it;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the employment avenues in the scheme are likely to grow after convergence of other rural development schemes in NREGS; and
- (d) if so, the estimated growth of employment avenues as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The issues are under examination of the Government.

Redefining poverty line

412. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
MS. MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has decided to redefine poverty line and take count of Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries;
- (b) whether his Ministry has decided to start a survey to identify BPL beneficiaries this year;
- (c) if so, whether his Ministry had used income as its criteria for defining poverty in Eighth Plan and consumption in Ninth Plan;
- (d) if so, whether the current poverty line is based on consumption basket of 1973-74 and it needs to be completely redefined; and
- (e) if so, by when Government is likely to complete survey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) The Planning Commission as the nodal agency in the Government of India for estimation of poverty in the country defines the poverty line. No decision has been taken by the Planning Commission to redefine the poverty line at the moment.

(b) An Expert Group has been constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development in August 2008 to advise the Ministry on the methodology for conducting the Below Poverty Line (BPL) census for the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The tenure of the Expert Group has been extended up to 15th July, 2009.

(c) to (e) Poverty is estimated by the Planning Commission using the poverty line, which is expressed in terms of per capita consumption expenditure. The poverty line used by the Planning Commission at present is derived from the consumption basket of 1973-74 (NSS 28th Round of consumer expenditure). Identification of BPL families, which is conducted from the census of rural households by the Ministry of Rural Development in association with the State Governments, is distinct from the measurement of poverty made by the Planning Commission.