

- (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.