

(b) and (c) The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission conducted an evaluation study (on sample basis) on Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) covering 18 States, the report of which was brought out in 2005. The study found that about 58 percent of the subsidized food grains issued from the Central Pool did not reach the BPL families due to identification errors, non-transparent operation and unethical practices in the implementation of TPDS. The findings of the study are in the public domain at www.planningcommission.gov.in.

To improve the functioning of TPDS, Department of Food & Public Distribution has initiated the Nine Point Action Plan which includes (i) continuous review to eliminate bogus ration cards; (ii) ensuring leakage-free and diversion-free distribution of PDS commodities; (iii) involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in PDS operations; (iv) ensuring transparency in working of PDS; (v) computerization of TPDS operations; (vi) carry out door-step delivery of PDS commodities to fair price shops; (vii) ensuring timely availability of food grains at fair price shops; (viii) creating awareness and (ix) making fair price shops financially viable entities.

(d) To create jobs in the rural areas (including tribal areas), the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been operationalized, guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. During the last three years (2007-08 to 2009-10), 642.49 crores of person days of employment have been created with an expenditure of Rs. 81,045.15 crores under the scheme. As far as creation of jobs in the tribal areas is concerned, numerous schemes have been initiated by the Union Government such as vocational training centres in tribal areas, special central assistance under tribal sub plan, scheme of investment in Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED), etc,

Variation between Poverty Incidences

2792. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a significant variation between poverty incidence in various States as per the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and as per the Indian Planning Commission official figure;

(b) whether it is a fact that based on MPI 81.4 percent of population of Bihar is living below poverty line where as Planning Commission says 41.4 percent people in Bihar are poor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that average poverty intensity among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and General is 54.8 percent, 59.2 percent, 53.3 percent and 47.2 percent respectively; and

(d) if so, the strategy of Government to reduce poverty among them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) :
(a) to (d) Yes Sir. The Oxford University and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have launched a new index to measure poverty named Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) based on a research study. This new poverty index is to be featured in the forthcoming 20th anniversary edition of the UNDP Human Development Report, which is likely to be released later this year in October 2010. In respect of Indian States, there is wide inter-State variation in MPI ranking. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) study mentions that 421 million people in 8 States in India namely Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, were multi dimensionally poor and the percentage of such population in Bihar is mentioned as 81.4%. The report also states that concentration of poverty is more amongst the social groups like Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) etc.

The MPI has used parameters representing deprivations suffered by the poor broadly under health, education and standard of living irrespective of income or consumption expenditure levels. This is not comparable with the official poverty estimates of the India. The MPI has used data from three different sources i.e. Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), and the World Health Survey (WHS). The research study itself mentions that three sources of data have been used on account of non-availability of data from single source for all the countries. Further, even the single source data does not pertain to the same year and results have been arrived at after making necessary adjustments.

The new index has been accompanied by a disclaimer stating that such studies, though sponsored by UNDP do not represent its official views or policies and that the Human Development Reports are known for their often controversial analyses of critical issues. Therefore, the contents of the OPHI study need to be read with due regard to the above.

The official estimates of poverty in India are based on the data obtained from a large sample survey of household consumption expenditure carried out by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in the country including above eight States with an interval of five years approximately. The latest official poverty estimates for the year 2004-05 also indicate the concentration of poverty in the above States with 193.8 million persons as against the total of 301.7 million poor in the country. As per the Planning Commission official estimates, 41.4 percent of population is below poverty line in Bihar.

The Central Government is implementing a number of poverty alleviation programmes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY), Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewable Mission (JNNURM), Swarna Jyanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), etc. All these poverty alleviation programmes of the Government have an in-built mechanism for progressiveness with an emphasis on improving the conditions of vulnerable sections of the society including SC/STs and OBCs.

Development of Naxalite affected districts

2793. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Minister of Finance has reportedly asked the Planning Commission to prepare development plan for 35 naxalite-affected districts in 9 States;