

Common Minimum Programme has made it very clear which will be included in that policy, that this issue of eviction of tribal communities and other forest-dwelling communities from the forest areas will be discontinued. We are coming with something new, not only in this policy but also in real terms to make it effective.

SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Sir, I would like to submit to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, that there are so many schools for girls of Scheduled Caste community in so many States where the literacy rate is low. I remember the recent cases of Gujarat and Rajasthan where these schools are to get 100 per cent grant from the Central Government, but for the last two years they are not being given grant from the Central Government.

SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH: Sir, this is a new question altogether about what happens in the administration. I can only inform the hon. Member as the Minister of Tribal Affairs that we are having some specific schemes where there is a component for women and child education. It is for the State Governments to implement the schemes. There are certain schemes which are implemented directly by us through the NGOs. But I can tell the hon. Member that even this question will be taken care of in detail in the policy that we are evolving.

UN Report on Children

*265. DR. KARAN SINGH:+
DR. T SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the United Nation report on the "state of world children 2005";

(b) if so, whether there is lack of basic amenities for children in the country and millions of children are denied access to proper shelter, clean drinking water, toilets, immunization, nutrition, education and even information;

(c) if so, what are the other aspects that have been mentioned in the report about India; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to improve condition of children who are deprived of the basic rights? .

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the house by Dr. Karan Singh.

[21 March, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The State of the World's Children 2005, an annual publication of UNICEF, contains basic child indicators, such as, Infant Mortality Rate, Under 5 Mortality Rate, Primary School Enrolment/Attendance, Low Birth Weight, Immunization coverage, percentage of population using improved drinking water sources and using adequate sanitation facilities and others in respect of various countries in the world, including India. India has made steady progress in many areas, like education, immunization coverage, reduction in Infant Mortality Rate, etc.

(d) Several schemes and programmes are being implemented by different Ministries and Departments to improve the conditions of children in the country. These include, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Nutrition Component of Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), Balika Samriddhi Yojana, Reproduction and Child Health Programme, National Nutritional Anaemia Control Programme, National Prophylaxis Programme against BLidness due to Vitamin A, Pulse Polio, Universal Immunization Programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid Day Meal Programme, Creches and Day Ce Centres, Integrated Scheme for Street Children, Integrated Scheme for Juvenile Justice, Scheme for Elimination of Child Labour, Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana, Swajaldhara, Total Sanitation Campaign, etc.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, a poet has rightly said that child is father of the man. In other words, before a person becomes an adult, he has to go through childhood. If the childhood is distorted by malnutrition, by poverty, by violence, by exploitation, obviously, the adulthood is not going to be a positive one. Sir, this report by the UNESCO makes a very, very depressing reading, although India has made some progress, as the Minister has pointed out.

This report still tells us that 72 million children do not have access to drinking water, twenty seven crores have no access to toilets, 85 million are not immunised, 27 million are severely under-weight and malnourished, 3[^] million have never been to school and 103 million have lack of access to information. Sir, this is despite the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals and so on. Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, that in view of the new thrust that we are giving towards poverty eradication, what concrete steps he is going to take to see that in the course of these five years the lot of our children is

substantially improved because any great nation, Sir, can be based only if the children are well looked after.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, I entirely share the anguish and concern of the hon. Member and I may assure him and the hon. House also that this is an area in which we are not at all interested in giving explanations only. We have to focus on actions that have direct bearing on these problems. So far what we have tried to do is increasing the cost component of SNP in ICDS to Rs. 1,500 crores, universalisation of ICDS, increasing ICDS centres by one lakh eighty-three thousand, and providing mid-day meals in school, free education, rural health schemes to focus on children and maternal health, Balmiki Samriddhi Yojana, for the survival of girl child, National Commission for protection of child rights and National Plan of action with specific targets. What I would like to add here is that I am not informing the hon. Member about these things as if they are absolutes in this scheme. What is needed, Sir, according to my assessment is, since schemes and plans regarding children are distributed in many Ministries of his Government, I think a fresh look needs to be taken as to how we can concretise some coordination, which will bring about a focussed handling of the problems of these children in our country. That is the issue which I think is very important. With your cooperation, Sir, I will try to see how we can address them.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister has anticipated my second Supplementary which was that in view of the fact that there are multiple agencies dealing with children, there has to be coordination, if possible. I am glad that he is working in that direction. Sir, this is one particular point I would like to make. Children suffering from HIV/AIDS are among the most tragic situations in the world. There are young children who are born with AIDS. You can imagine the sort of suffering those children go through. Something has to be done to pay special attention not only to the prevention but to the cure and welfare of such children because they are living the most wretched and miserable existence on this planet. So when he does the coordination, will he also very kindly pay special attention to this?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: It will be done.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, on the one side, it is a known fact that the children of this country and millions of children are denied proper shelter, safe drinking water etc; another section is street children. They are in the railway stations, bus stands, junctions where lights are there. The street children are in such

[21 March, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

poverty and are begging. Afterwards, they become anti-social elements. I would like to know if the Ministry is having a plan or a specific scheme to give a new life for street children which is very important.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, the Member has drawn attention to a very traumatic part of children's expressions and their experience. I am very conscious of it. That is why I said that having a diversified approach to this whole thing will not help, only a focussed programme in all these matters, involving all the departments of this Government who have specific responsibility in this regard will ultimately help and that is the kind of thing we would like to bring out.

SHRI FALIS. NARIMAN: Sir, I am a little disappointed with the reply to the question, because I thought that since the questions were very focussed, the reply would also be focussed. I think this House needs to know what the Report of the United Nations say about the children in India. That is what has been asked in the question. If the Minister's reply mentions about it, one would have known — I have that Report with me—about the children in India. The Report makes a very abysmal reading. It does not matter. We can all take it. We know the things are bad in India. We would like to know what concrete steps have been taken in this regard, not just some programmes and schemes. Therefore, I would respectfully ask the hon. Minister that when a question of this importance is raised, the Government should have been given a more focussed reply. The question is perfectly focussed. Since the issue of children is being discussed all over the world, India's children are what we are concerned about. Therefore, we would like to know whether the children of India, according to the assessment of the United Nations, are in a pallor state. I would like to know whether it is a correct assessment. And if it is not, why it is not correct. If it is correct, what do you propose concretely to do about it?

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, some of the statistics that are brought out by the UNICEF and some other agencies — I am ather sorry to state — are not very authentic altogether. But, instead of going into questioning the statistics; what we should try to do is to focus on the issues that have been raised in the Report. Whatever may be the numbers, those issues should become a focus for our action, even though action has been taken. As I said, in these matters, all the avenues that are available within this Department and other departments have to be pooled together so that a very pointed plan of action to take care of these issues comes about. I know it is saying a lot. But the fact is, whether it was a lot or less, it is to be done. Let us try to do it.

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANANAT CHIAPPAN: Sir, a large amount of funds are allocated and the total amount spent on various programmes for children comes to about Rs. 30,000 crores. The hon. Minister may correct me if I am wrong. But, the implementation of various programmes is to be done by the States and Panchayati Raj institutions. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal to have a vigilance and monitoring Committee under the Chairmanship of the Member of Parliament so that the delivery system is properly executed and benefit reaches the people who are in need of it.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, the hon. Member's suggestion is certainly one of the good suggestions. This will involve our hon. Members of Parliament and would certainly bring about more awareness and action.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, my supplementary is in continuation of what Dr. Karan Singh has said. Sir, he said that AIDS is transmitted to newborn babies through their mothers and some special care should be taken in this direction.

Sir, in Tamil Nadu, we have a special scheme called Tribal Child Scheme. The State Government is also providing compulsory education free of cost. We are providing free education for girls and also for school dropouts. In addition to this, the State Government is providing free higher education for SC/ST and also providing free bicycles, etc. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he would provide special funds to the State of Tamil in this regard.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Sir, I was in Tamil Nadu only a couple of days ago. And, I must accept that many of the schemes for education and childcare that *are* being implemented there are being implemented in a very effective manner. But, on this specific suggestion, I would say that we would certainly discuss it with the Government of Tamil Nadu. If it wants us to do anything, we will try to do.

जन शिक्षण संस्थानों को स्वीकृति प्रदान किया जाना

*266. श्री हरीश रावत : क्या मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि लोक सभा चुनाव, 2004 के दौरान आचार संहिता लागू होने के बावजूद कुछ जन शिक्षण संस्थानों की स्वीकृति प्रदान की गई थी;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबंध में ब्यौरा क्या है तथा ऐसे जन शिक्षण संस्थानों के नाम क्या हैं;

(ग) क्या सरकार आचार संहिता के उल्लंघन के लिए कोई जिम्मेदारी तय कर रही है; और: