

Judge in the Supreme Court and 26 women Judges in the High Courts.

The Government have, however, addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts, from time to time, requesting them to locate persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes, Minorities and amongst Women who are suitable for appointment as High Court Judges.

Claim over Taj Mahal

*436. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had received any demand from the Government of UP for handing over the charge of Taj Mahal to Wakf Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir. (b) and (c) Questions do not arise.

Objectives of the ICDS

*437. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that despite full utilisation of funds allocated under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), a large number of children under the age of five die every month due to malnutrition while the main aim of ICDS is to lower the infant mortality;

(b) if so, whether Government have looked into the working of ICDS and if so, the outcome thereof; and

(c) whether Government have identified the factors responsible for failure of the ICDS and the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to improve ICDS and to bring down infant mortality rate?

[25 April, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme aims at holistic development of children below 6 years. Reduction in the incidence of mortality among children is one of the objectives of the Scheme. The Scheme which was launched in 1975 in 33 blocks, on an experimental basis, now covers 5652 blocks in the country. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has declined from 110 in 1981 per thousand live birth to 63 in 2002. Similarly, under-5 mortality has declined from 161 in 1983 to 87 in 2003. Moreover, as per evaluation of the ICDS Scheme by National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 1998-99, there has been a significant impact of the Scheme in reduction of IMR. It would, therefore, not be correct to say that the Scheme has been a failure.

It has, however, been a constant endeavour of the Government to make the Scheme more effective. The steps taken in this direction, in the recent past, include, proposed expansion of the ICDS Scheme to bring uncovered habitations/settlements within its ambit, as per Government's commitment contained in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP); doubling of financial norms for supplementary nutrition; provision of Central assistance to States for Supplementary Nutrition; doubling of honoraria of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers; introduction of Anganwadi Karyakartri Bima Yojana; a scheme of Awards for exemplary work done by Anganwadi workers; better coordination and monitoring at State, District, Block and Village level amongst ICDS, Health and Elementary Education functionaries, etc.

Government is also implementing several other programmes/schemes viz. National Diarrhoea Disease Control Programme; National Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Control Programme; Vitamin-A Supplementation; Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation; Promotion of Breast feeding; Complementary feeding from six months of life; Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness etc. to address the problem of infant and child mortality in the country.

Investment in Automobile Sector

438. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES be pleased to state: