

Machil, Karnah and Keran remain cut off for months from Kashmir valley. In order to improve their living conditions, the first measure would be to make these areas accessible during winter months when the people suffer the most.

When winter sets in and these areas get cut-off, the suffering sets in making people's life miserable. The system of communication is already non-existent, or, dilapidated in these areas, and, once these places get cut-off, the otherwise fragile health-care system crumbles down completely and people suffer severe hardships. Many deaths are reported every year due to absence of transportation facilities for patients in critical condition, who can be saved if they are provided medical treatment in hospitals in Kashmir valley.

The relief of all kinds will be available only when these areas become accessible. I, therefore, urge the Minister for Civil Aviation to examine my proposal to provide air service to all the five places, namely, Gurez, Tulail, Machil, Karnah and Keran, and, connect these areas with Srinagar. It can be a helicopter service thrice a week, if not daily. A single air craft, say, a large helicopter is needed to connect these places with Srinagar. For a dynamic Minister of Civil Aviation, it should not be difficult to provide air-service in these areas in the near future.

Need to formulate schemes to solve the problems of beggars in the country

SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR (Assam): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I want to mention about the problems of beggars in the country. Begging is a serious problem in our country. We should not only discourage people from becoming beggars, rather our objective should also be to provide gainful employment to all able-bodied men and women. However, there are people who are incapable of being gainfully employed, and, for this specific group who are in danger of becoming beggars, the society must lend a helping hand.

After independence, the Government have made some plans for the development and also for the eradication of poverty. The Panchayati Raj has also done much by implementing the schemes like 'Food for Work', DRDA, IRDP etc. But still there are hundreds of beggars in most of the

States in India. Apart from handicapped and blind beggars, there are aged and ill-health beggars also.

The Department of Social Welfare is providing beggars' asylums in some of the States where training-cum-production centres have also been set-up. I think such asylums should also be made in those States where there are more beggars. The money allocated to help these specific groups should fully reach the target group. Further, some schemes should be made to help these beggars to become self-reliant. The main problem is that the money allocated under these schemes for these poor and helpless people does not reach them fully. So, the Government should monitor it strictly.

I, therefore, strongly urge upon the Government to formulate more schemes to mitigate the sufferings of homeless, aged and old beggars by making special plans to eradicate the beggars' menace in our country.

Demand for removal of central excise duty exemption on unbranded beedies

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government of India the gross misuse of Central excise duty exemption given to the unbranded beedi manufactures in the country. Unbranded beedi manufacturers are exempted from excise duty, provided they manufacture less than 20,00,000 beedies per annum. The problem is, no customer purchases unbranded beedies because literally there is no trade for unbranded beedies, since each trader has his own flavour which is represented by his brand. What the unscrupulous traders do is, they get beedies rolled, claim exemption and, by coercion, get counterfeit labels printed on popular brands and sell them in the market. Thereby, they are evading Central excise duty and the benefits to be given to the labourers under the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act. The unscrupulous traders act cleverly by saying to the labourers that beedi labelling is a specialised skill and hence you will not be able to do it. Hence, exemption granted to small beedi manufacturers becomes redundant. It is because the real beedi roller is not benefited from the exemption since duty is not collected. As a result, facilities extended through Labour Welfare Cess which, otherwise, is given to the statutory labourers, will not reach them.