

(b) if so, whether Government will also propose to increase the wages and the number of working days under this programme to make the scheme more beneficial and effective; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is demand based legislation and not an allocation based programme. Central Government releases funds to the States as per the projections made in the approved labour budget for the year. First installment is released in April/May subject to a minimum of 50% of agreed labour budget after adjusting the opening balance available with the State/districts. For second installment, the States are required to submit their release proposals in prescribed format alongwith Audit Report of the Chartered Accountant and Utilisation Certificate showing utilisation of atleast 60% of the available funds. In case a State needs more funds, it may submit a revised labour budget and accordingly demand more funds to meet the labour demand.

(b) and (c) The Government has enhanced the wages for unskilled manual workers under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA by indexing the notified wage rate to the Consumer Price Index for agricultural labour. However, there is no proposal, at present, to increase the number of working days under the Act.

Failure in delivery system of MGNREGS

1390. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been considerable failure in the delivery system of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS); and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) and (b) The shortcomings in the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA as noticed during its monitoring are due to the following reasons:

- (i) Lack of awareness among rural population about their legal rights under the Act leading to lesser number of households demanding work as compared with the total population of an area.
- (ii) Lack of dedicated staff in the Gram Panchayats who have been assigned a pivotal role in the implementation of the Act leading to improper records keeping.

- (iii) Inadequate technical/non technical staff with the implementing authorities resulting in delayed measurement of works leading to delayed payments to the workers.
- (iv) Lack of banking/postal infrastructure in remote areas also leading to delay in payments to the workers.
- (v) Lack of internet connectivity resulting in delayed reporting on MIS by the States.

To rectify the shortcomings, the Ministry has taken the following steps:

- (a) Awareness generation through intensive IEC activities using print as well as electronic media have been taken up.
- (b) States have been asked to deploy adequate dedicated staff (both technical and non-technical) with the implementing authorities. Administrative expenses had been enhanced to 6% for meeting the expenditure towards salary of such dedicated staff. Instructions have been issued to the States to fully utilize the funds provided for the purpose.
- (c) In areas not served by banks/post offices, use of rural ATMs, hand held devices, smart cards and business correspondent models for disbursement of wages have been initiated.
- (d) Construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra (BNRGSK) at Gram Panchayat and Block level has been included as a permissible activity under MGNREGA. BNRGSK will function as a knowledge resource centre to facilitate operation of ICT based NREGS MIS.

Special funds for development of hilly rural areas

1391. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that some rural areas in hilly States like Himachal Pradesh, have remained neglected for several years and are still out of sight;
- (b) if so, whether Government is considering to set-up a special fund for promoting development activities in such neglected rural areas; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing a number of rural development programmes/schemes. These schemes are implemented through State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in rural areas including hilly areas of the