

1	2	3
Tamil Nadu	65,573	65,573
Uttar Pradesh	29046	29046
Uttaranchal	5	5
West Bengal	344	344
Total	2,89,327	2,69,365

Condition of tea plantation workers

3211. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Netherlands based Centre for research for Multinational Corporations has reported that the tea plantation workers in Assam and Tamil Nadu employed by Tea Suppliers to Unilever are on rolling short term contracts denying them health and pension benefits and are often exposed to dangerous pesticides while working;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps Government is taking to improve the working conditions of the tea plantation workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Workers on short term contract are engaged in almost all sectors of the economy producing goods and services. The report of Netherlands based Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations on workers in tea plantations in Assam and Tamil Nadu has been put on the website of the Centre.

(b) and (c) Statutory safeguards are provided to workers in plantations in India. Under the Plantation Labour Act; 1951, it is mandatory for plantations with tea area of 5 hectares or more and employing 15 or more persons to provide housing, drinking water, sanitation, medical and education facilities, etc. to the tea garden labourers. The Act also provides for safeguards such as limitations by way of maximum hours work in a week, provision of weekly holidays, prohibiting night work for women and children, certification of fitness, annual leave with wages, wages during leave period, sickness and maternity benefits, etc.

Besides the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, the service conditions of workers in the tea industry, are also protected through various industrial and social security legislations such as Workmen's Compensation Act, Payment of Gratuity Act, Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund, Pension Fund and Deposit Link Insurance Fund Scheme Act, 1955 — only for Assam, Payment of Bonus Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Payment of Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Industrial Disputes Act, Factories Act and the Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act, 1946.

A Modified, Personal Accident Insurance Scheme has been, notified in December, 2008 for the benefit of the plantation workers, including tea.

While the tea plantation owners are primarily entrusted with the welfare of the workers, the Tea Board supplements the efforts through the Human Resource Development Scheme under which assistance is provided for various labour welfare measures like capital grant to hospitals/clinics/health centres etc. for construction/extension of buildings in tea areas including purchase of ambulance/medical equipments, drinking water & sanitation, educational stipend/scholarship for wards of workers, book and school uniform grants, capital grant to schools/colleges for construction/extension of buildings etc.

Increasing unemployment due to low production

†3212. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether unemployment is sharply increasing due to low production in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE): (a) and (b) Reliable estimates of employment and unemployment are obtained through quinquennial labour force surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office. Last such survey was conducted during 2009-10 according to which the number of unemployed persons has come down from 3.47 crore in 2004-05 to 2.85 crore in 2009-10 on current daily status basis.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.