

count ratio for 2004-05 was placed at 41.8 percent, urban poverty head count ratio at 25.7 percent and 37.2 percent at all-India level. The poverty lines for rural and urban areas as per capital consumption expenditure of rs. 446.68 and Rs. 578.80 per month respectively for the year 2004-05 recommended by the Tendulkar Committee have been accepted by the Planning Commission.

The large sample surveys on Household Consumer Expenditure which are the basis of calculating poverty are carried out by the NSSO every 5 years. After 2004-05, this survey has been conducted in 2009-10. The Planning Commission has updated the poverty lines for the year 2009-10 as per the recommendations of the Tendulkar Committee using NSS 66th round (2009-10) data of Household Consumer Expenditure Survey and released poverty estimates for 2009-10 on 19th March 2012. According to this Press Note poverty line at all India level is estimated at MPCE of Rs. 673 for rural areas and Rs. 860 for urban areas in 2009-10. The head count ratio (HCR) for 2009-10 is estimated at 29.85% at all India Level, with 33.8% in rural areas and 20.9% in urban areas.

The variation in estimates of poverty is due to the differences in data and yardsticks used. The methodology for estimation of poverty followed by the Planning Commission has been based on the recommendations made by the experts in the field from time to time. Government has since decided to set up a Technical Group to revisit the methodology for estimation of poverty and identification of poortaking into account multiple dimensions and indicators of poverty so that the poor and deprived households can obtain the benefit of different government programmes and schemes. The composition of the Technical Group and its terms of reference are being finalized.

Latest Poverty Estimates

2386. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Planning Commission has recently released the latest poverty estimates for the country and stated decline in the incidence of poverty during the last five years;

(b) if so, the details of new poverty estimates released by the Planning Commission;

(c) whether the recommendations of the various committees set up by Government earlier to work out methodology for identifying the BPL households have been examined;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the concrete steps Government proposes to take to ensure that poor BPL households in the country gets adequate benefit of the schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Planning Commission has recently computed estimates of poverty for the year 2009-10 based on the household consumer expenditure data collected by NSSS in its 66th round conducted during 2009-10. The State-wise poverty lines and poverty ratio for 2009-10 have been computed following the methodology recommended by Tendulkar Committee which is the latest methodology being followed for the purpose. The Planning Commission has released these estimates through a Press Note issued on 19th March 2012. As per this Press Note, the poverty ratio in the country has come down from 37.2% in 2004-05 to 29.8% in 2009-10. During this period, the all-India HCR has declined by 8.0 percentage points from 41.8% to 33.8% in rural areas and declined by 4.8 percentage points from 25.7% to 20.9% in urban areas.

(c) to (e) While estimation of poverty is undertaken by the Planning Commission, the identification of BPL families who could be assisted under various programmes of the Government is done by conducting census in rural and urban areas by Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation respectively. The BPL Census to identify the rural households living Below the Poverty Line is generally conducted at the beginning of a Five Year Plan. The last BPL Census was conducted in 2002 based on the methodology of Score Based Ranking of rural household based on 13 socio-economic parameters. The Ministry of Rural Development, in August 2008, constituted Saxena Committee to recommend a suitable methodology for conducting next BPL Census for identification of rural households. Based on the Saxena Committee Report pilot studies were carried out and the new methodology for identification of BPL households in rural areas has been finalised.

The Planning Commission has constituted an Expert Group under the chairmanship of Prof. S.R. Hashim to recommend a suitable methodology for identification of BPL families in the urban areas. The Hashim Committee has submitted interim report recommending a questionnaire to be canvassed along with the caste enumeration to collect relevant information on socio-economic indicators in order to determine BPL status of urban households. Accordingly, A Socio-Economic and Caste Census has been launched on 29th June 2011 in the country which would be carried out by the respective State/UT Governments with the financial and technical support of the Government of India.

The SECC-2011 census being conducted to identify poor families is based on a number of socio-economic indicators. As these two measurements are based on different criteria, there may be need for reconciliation. Further, the Food Security Bill has also stipulated certain criteria for the "priority" segment.

To address these issues, the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and Union

Minister of Rural Development, in their joint statement issued on 3rd October 2011 had announced that

"The Government of India will take into account multiple dimensions of deprivation based on the indicators that are being collected through the SECC, 2011 for arriving at specific entitlements that rural households will receive under various central government programmes and schemes. The present state wise poverty estimates using the Planning Commission methodology will not be used to impose any ceilings on the number of households to be included in different government programmes and schemes.

The eligibility and entitlements of rural households in the country for different central government programmes and schemes will be determined after the SECC, 2011 survey results are available and have been analysed. The Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Planning Commission will consult with states, experts and civil society organisations to arrive at a consensus on the methodology by the time the SECC, 2011 is completed. This methodology will seek to ensure that no poor or deprived household will be excluded from coverage under different government programmes and schemes. An expert Committee will be appointed to ensure that this methodology is consistent with the provisions of the Food Security Bill as it finally emerges."

The methodology for estimation of poverty followed by the Planning Commission has been based on the recommendations made by the experts in the field from time to time. Government has since decided to set up a Technical Group to revisit the methodology for estimation of poverty and identification of poor taking into account multiple dimensions and indicators of poverty so that the poor and deprived households can obtain the benefit of different government programmes and schemes. The composition of the Technical Group and its terms of reference are being finalized.

New CESS for Funding Universal Healthcare

2387. SHRI S. THANGAVELU : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Planning Commission had recommended introduction of a new cess for funding its plan to provide universal healthcare in the country aiming to offer cashless healthcare to all sections of the society in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The question does not arise.