

**Amelioration of muslim poor**

\*378. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prof. S. R. Hashim Committee has opined that Muslim poor are poorer than the general category poor;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the special efforts Ministry proposes to make in order to ameliorate the condition of Muslim poor in the country, with a particular reference to Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (c) An Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. S.R. Hashim was constituted by the Planning Commission in May, 2010 to recommend the methodology for Identification of Families Living Below Poverty Line in the Urban Areas. The Expert Group in its Interim report submitted in May, 2011 recommended the general approach to capture poverty in urban areas in terms of specific 'vulnerabilities' covering broad categories of residential, occupational and social vulnerabilities in respect of all the poor including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Muslims and other vulnerable sections of the society. The Expert Group also recommended a Questionnaire for collection of information through the on-going Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC)-2011 to get the requisite inputs. The Expert Group is yet to submit its final report.

The Government has initiated various measures to improve the quality of life of the people and to reduce poverty in the country including Andhra Pradesh through direct intervention by implementing specific poverty reduction programmes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, Total Sanitation Campaign, Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) *etc.* For the welfare of the Minorities, the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme was announced in June, 2006 with a view to incorporate programme

specific interventions. The objective of this programme is to ensure that the benefits of various Government schemes for the underprivileged reach the disadvantaged sections of the minority communities. The programme envisages location of a certain proportion of development projects in minority concentration areas so that the benefits of such schemes flow equitably to minorities. It also provides that, wherever possible, 15% of targets and outlays under various schemes should be earmarked for minorities. The Ministry of Minority Affairs is also implementing three scholarship schemes *viz.* Pre-matric Scholarship, Post-matric Scholarship, Merit-cum-means based Scholarship, besides one fellowship scheme called Maulana Azad National Fellowship for the benefit of eligible students from notified minority communities which includes Muslim eligible students in the whole country including Andhra Pradesh. These schemes are aimed at educational empowerment of the five notified minority students from Primary to Higher Education Level including Technical and Professional education. Further, Multi-Sector Development Programme, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme was launched in 2008-09 as an area development programme with the aim to improve the socio-economic infrastructure and basic amenities for uplifting the quality of life of the notified minorities.

#### **Reduction in foreign exchange reserves**

\*379. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the foreign exchange reserves have been reduced considerably in the recent past;
- (b) if so, the details of the foreign exchange reserves in the country during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (c) whether Government proposes to utilise foreign reserves in a more meaningful and productive manner; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) Foreign exchange reserves have declined from US \$ 294.4 billion at end March, 2012 to US\$ 290.2 billion as on August 24, 2012. Details of the foreign exchange reserves during the last three years and the current year are given below.