

(b) The Government has formulated the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 to meet the challenge of skilling at scale with speed and standard (quality). The national policy aims to provide an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, to align them to common standards and link the skilling with demand centres. In addition to laying down the objectives and expected outcomes, the effort will also be to identify the various institutional frameworks which can act as the vehicle to reach the expected outcomes. The national policy will also provide clarity and coherence on how skill development efforts across the country can be aligned within the existing institutional arrangements. This policy links skills development to improved employability and productivity.

The Government is implementing the National Career Service (NCS) Project, in the Twelfth Five Year Plan, for transformation of the National Employment Service to provide a variety of employment related services like Job matching, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, etc. these services are available online on the National Service Portal (www.ncs.gov.in) and supported by Call Centre/Helpdesk. The services under NCS are accessible from multiple delivery channels like NCS Portal, Employment Exchanges (career Centres), Common Service Centre.

Bonded labour in cotton seed farms in Andhra Pradesh

2505. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that lot of child labour are employed in cotton seed production and cotton seed farms as bonded labour in various States of the country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government has any strategy to tackle this situation and rehabilitate these bonded child labourers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA): (a) to (c) The Constitution of India *vide* Article 23 prohibits, *inter-alia*, beggar and other similar forms of forced labour. Further, Article 24 of the Constitution provides prohibition of employment of children in any factory or mine or in any other hazardous employment.

In pursuance of these provisions of the Constitution, Government has enacted specific laws.

The bonded labour system has been abolished by law throughout the country with effect from 25th October, 1975 under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance which was replaced by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

Under the Act, identification, release and rehabilitation of freed bonded labour is the direct responsibility of the concerned State Government/Union Territory.

In order to assist the State Governments in the task of rehabilitation of identified and released bonded labourers, a Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour was in operation since May, 1978. The Government has revamped the Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers with effect from 17th May, 2016. The revamped scheme is known as the 'Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers, 2016'. Under the revamped Schemes, financial assistance has been increased from ₹ 20,000/- to ₹ 2 lakh for special category beneficiaries such as children or other forms of forced child labour, and ₹ 3 lakh in cases of bonded or forced labour involving extreme cases of deprivation or marginalization such as children rescued from ostensible sexual exploitation.

Special care is made available by the State for addressing the needs of the bonded child labour by providing safe and secure environment for the capacity building, facilities for ensuring their proper education, short stay home till education upto class 12th, skill development, marriage assistance etc.

The benefits prescribed under the Scheme shall be, in addition to, other cash or non-cash benefits which a beneficiary (including bonded child labour) under this scheme is entitled to, by or under any other scheme or law applicable for the time being in force.

Further, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 prohibits the engagement of children in all occupations and engagement of adolescents in hazardous occupations and processes.

Employment and unemployment survey

2506. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the annual employment-unemployment survey released by Labour Bureau recently, during 2015-16, unemployment rate has risen to five per cent which is highest during last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;