

**Amendment in Maternity Benefit Act**

586. SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees already on maternity leave will be eligible for enhanced paid leave under the amended Maternity Benefit Act which came into force on April, 2017;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there was confusion if employees already on maternity leave would get the benefit; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the amended Act requires establishments with over 50 employees to provide creche facilities within a prescribed distance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The working women already on maternity leave are entitled to enhanced maternity leave subject to fulfilment of other conditions.

(c) As per the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, it has been made mandatory for the establishments employing 50 or more employees to provide crèche facility, either separately or along with common facilities within a prescribed distance.

**Covering of Indians working abroad under EPFO**

587. SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indians working abroad can now exempt themselves from their host country's social security scheme and get covered by retirement fund body EPFO;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that an online facility to avail the benefit has been made functional;

(d) whether it is also a fact that EPFO has entered into an agreement with 18 countries in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

This facility is available to Indian workers who are deputed by their employer to the countries with whom India has entered into a Social Security Agreement (SSA) and they take Certificate of Coverage (COC) from Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO).

(c) An online facility to obtain Certificate of Coverage (COC) has been launched by EPFO.

(d) and (e) India has entered into Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with 18 countries, namely: (i) Australia, (ii) Austria, (iii) Belgium, (iv) Canada, (v) Czech Republic, (vi) Denmark, (vii) Finland, (viii) France, (ix) Germany, (x) Hungary, (xi) Japan, (xii) Republic of Korea (South Korea), (xiii) Luxembourg, (xiv) Netherlands, (xv) Norway, (xvi) Portugal, (xvii) Sweden and (xviii) Switzerland.

#### **Abolition of child labour**

588. SHRI NARENDRA KUMAR SWAIN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that child labour problem is still persisting in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government is considering to take in order to abolish child labour from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Child Labour is an outcome of various socio-economic problems such as poverty, economic backwardness and illiteracy etc. As per 2011 Census, the number of main workers in the age group of 5-14 years in the country is 43.53 lakh which shows a decline from 57.79 lakh as per 2001 Census.

(c) Government is following a multi-pronged strategy for elimination of child labour comprising of legislative measures, establishing an efficient enforcement mechanism and project based rehabilitation.

Government has enacted the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 w.e.f. 1.9.2016. The Amendment Act, *inter alia*, prohibits employment or work of children below 14 years of age in any occupation or process and adolescents (14-18 years) in the hazardous occupations and processes.