

in this connection to improve the water.

SHRI KAMAL NATH: There are various levels of pollution in all rivers. There is no river which is not polluted. So, the degree of pollution is the question. Some are more highly polluted and some are less polluted. I have no information available with regard to the river the hon. Member has mentioned. But I shall look into it.

[*Translation*]

National Commission on rural labour

*735. **SHRI JANARDAN MISHRA:**
SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission on Rural Labour in its report has recommended minimum wages of Rs. 20/- per day for rural labourers on the basis of prices prevailing in December 1990;

(b) if so, the decision taken by the Government in this regard ; and

(c) if not, the time by which the decision is likely to be taken?

[*English*]

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) Yes, Sir, and

(b) and (c) The recommendation will be examined in consultation with the State Governments.

[*Translation*]

SHRI JANARDAN MISRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in parts 'B' and 'C' I had asked as to what decision has been taken in this regard and

when it is likely to be taken, but no clear answer has been given in this regard. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to by which time decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

[*English*]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: The fixing of minimum wage is always done by the State Government. The Commission on Rural Labour has submitted their report. We are sending the copies of the report to the concerned Ministries for their comments and after getting their comments, we will take a decision.

[*Translation*]

SHRI JANARDAN MISRA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how long it will take to have a discussion with State Governments in this regard?

[*English*]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: This will be one of the subjects in our next State Labour Conference.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I do not understand why it is necessary to have consultation with the State Governments because when the National Commission on Rural Labour was constituted, then the views of the State Governments were obtained and we have been demanding since long that there should be a comprehensive legislation on rural labour not only on payment of minimum wage. The wage that was fixed four years back was only Rs. 11/-. Agricultural labour constitutes 41 per cent of the rural labour. The number of agricultural labour is 110 millions. In some of the States, they do not get even the minimum wages fixed four years back. There are other aspects like guarantee of work etc. The em-

ployment opportunities in rural areas are declining. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia, you must ask a question, not to make a speech.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: The rural labourer is being affected due to modernisation and technological upgradation also. That aspect is also there. This Commission was constituted in 1987. After four years, they submitted their report.

MR. SPEAKER: There are many other Members who want to ask questions. Please be brief.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is going to enact a comprehensive legislation on agricultural labourers so that the agricultural labourers including the female labourers can get the minimum wages and get employment in rural areas. Further, the other aspect which is related to this is the land reforms. Will the Land Reforms Act be amended? I am asking this question because the employment opportunities in rural areas are connected with the Land Reforms Act. (*Interruptions*)

SHRIPABAH SINGH GHATOWAR: The National Commission on Rural Labour have taken more than three years to prepare their Report. They have prepared a very exhaustive and voluminous Report. That concerned many Ministries of our Government. We are sending the copies of the Report to the Ministries concerned for their comments. After receiving their reply, the Government will be in a position to take any decision.

For fixing the minimum wages, hon. Basu Deb Achariaji knows that in the case of

agricultural workers, the State Government is the appropriate Government for fixing the minimum wages (*Interruptions*)

SHRIBASUDEBACHARIA: What about the comprehensive Act?

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: After receiving the comments and report from the various Departments, the Government will look into that. Further, we have to discuss it with the State Governments also for taking any decision.

[*Translation*]

KUMARI UMA BHARTI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the national commission on rural labour has recommended that maternity leave be granted to rural-women-labourers? If so, will the Government implement it?

[*English*]

SHRIPABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: The National Commission on Rural Labour have given many such recommendations. They have given the recommendation on child labour, on women labour and the rural labour. So, these are under the consideration of the Government. At the appropriate time, after discussing with the State Governments, the Government of India will think of it.

KUMARI UMA BHARTI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the number of women labourers is quite large and it is not that they don't get pregnant. Therefore, this matter should not be taken lightly. Will the Government implement it?

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The answer is in positive and not in the negative.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: He has not said 'no'.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, I was a Member of the National Commission on Rural Labour. The question was about giving an interim report on minimum wages. I should not take much of your time. So, I would only like to submit that the National Commission on Rural Labour went round the country, when I was a Member, and after due consultation they have already prepared an interim report. If this is the situation, then the terms of reference would not have been related to giving an interim report. I would like to know what happened to the interim report. This was the term of reference. If this was the term of reference, then the Government should be in a position now to come out with its own recommendations to the State Governments. Then only it should be discussed. Is it not so.

SHRIPABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: We have already received the complete report of the National Commission on Rural Labour. I have already said that very recently we have received the report. Even the Hindi translation of the report is not yet completed. We are taking steps to send it to various State Governments and to the various departments. After getting that, I think, the Government will be in a position to say something definitely in this regard.

[Translation]

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir it has been decided that agricultural labourers will be paid twenty rupees per day as daily wages. Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state the working hours, the agricultural labourers will have to work in the fields for getting the payment of twenty rupees per day as wage?

[English]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Hon. Member knows that still in many States the wage of an agricultural worker is more than Rs.20. It is the responsibility of the State Governments to look after the implementation of the minimum wages at the State level. We are still not up to the mark in this respect.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that in many cases, the labour employed in the rural areas on Government projects is not paid its due because of the intervening contractors. Contractors, in connivance with the Government officials take the work and pay much less to the labour employed on the project. If so, what action would be taken in that regard?

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: I will request the hon. Member if he has any specific case like that he should forward that to us and definitely we will look into that
(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: As this is the decision of the National Commission on Rural Labour to pay at the existing rate of price level of December, 1990, will the Government see that not less than this wage is given in any case to the rural labour?

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: I have already stated that the implementation part is the responsibility of the State Government.

MR. SPEAKER: Let it be clearly understood.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSEELA GOPALAN: What is the use of having a Commission? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SARAT CHANDRA PATANAYAK: I would like to know from the hon. Minister through you, the names of the States where the minimum wage is lower than the recommendation of the Government. If so, whether the Government is considering to write to the Chief Ministers of the States?

SHRIPABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, is the hon. Member asking about the minimum wage for the agricultural workers ?

SHRI SIVAJI PATNAIK: I would like to know whether the minimum wage is lower than the recommendation of the Central Government and, if so, whether the Government will write to the Chief Ministers of the States?

MR. SPEAKER: He wants to know the names of the States where the minimum wage is less than that of the recommendations of the Government.

SHRIPABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: The Government will definitely write to the States to implement the minimum wages for the agricultural workers. This is the recommendation of the National Commission and Rural Labour (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI PHOOL CHAND VERMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, twenty rupees have been fixed as daily wages to be paid to rural labourers. I would like to bring to you notice that Labour Commission had recommended Rs. 17.75p. as daily wages for rural labourers, but it has been noticed that State Governments have not followed the recommendations sincerely. As a result, the number of bonded labourers is on the increase and they are being exploited in the villages. Will the government direct the State Governments to ensure the payment of rupees twenty as daily wages to labourers as per present recommendations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has said that the matter is proposed to be discussed with State Governments.

[*English*]

Do you have any specific information?

[*Translation*]

SHRIPABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we would certainly like the State Governments to implement minimum wages for agricultural labourers. So far as Central Government is concerned, we would make every effort in this regard.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. REDDAIAH YADAV: Does the hon. Minister know that industries, like Sugar industries, KCP limited etc., located in the rural areas are employing rural labourers and they are being paid at the rates fixed by the Commission, which is at the rate of Rs. 20/- or so? Will the hon. Minister inform us whether the rural labourers employed in those industries are eligible to get the other benefits, which the industrial labourers are getting? The employers of the sugar industry, simply say that because they are rural labourers, they will be paid the wages of Rs.20/- only and no other benefits will be extended to them.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: It cannot be an argument because when a worker, whether he is from rural area or urban area, if he works in an industrial establishment then he becomes an industrial worker of that establishment and he gets the benefits accordingly.

SHRI K.P. REDDAIAH YADAV: The labourers are being paid Rs. 20/- only and they are not getting any other benefits!

MR. SPEAKER: Please do understand that the implementation is the responsibility of the State Governments.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: I have already stated that this is the responsibility of the State Government and it is for them to take action.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that when this is to be implemented through State Governments, they have their own problems. I would like to know whether the Government proposes to ensure payment of minimum wages of Rs.20/- per day with immediate effect at places where rural workers are employed in the projects of the Central Government particularly in Union territories from Lakshadweep to many areas in eastern part of the country?

[*English*]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: This is a very good suggestion from the hon. Member. I have already stated that this is a recommendation. The Government is yet to make a decision on the recommendation. After taking a decision on the minimum wages, the Central Government will definitely implement it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The hypocrisy of the Government has come into open.

[*Translation*]

Why do you cover your weakness in the name of State Governments?

SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that very small children work as labourers who are paid half the wages. Government had imposed a ban on the employment of children below the age of eighteen years. I would like to know as to what action is being taken by the Government at places where such children are working?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, Is the Government taking some action about child labour?

[*English*]

Would you implement the provisions relating to the child labour or not?

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Sir, we will look into that.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Is the hon. Minister aware of the fact that almost twelve lakh agricultural labourers from rural areas of northern Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh have migrated to other states such as Assam, Haryana, Punjab and Delhi, because they do not get minimum wages in Bihar and U.P. and agriculture has become a non-beneficial profession. I would like to know from hon. Minister whether the Government propose to make any concrete arrangements to stop migration of agricultural labourers to other states and to provide them employment as also minimum daily wages in their own states?

[*English*]

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: It is the responsibility of the State Government to implement the minimum wages for the agricultural labourers.