

Distribution related activities. The project also covers facilitating the operationalisation of the Orissa Regulatory Reforms Commission and undertaking of a variety of demand side measures. The loan is to be utilised by the year 2002 AD. The restructuring exercise of energy sector in Orissa has already started.

Oil Search Projects

4191. SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have abandoned the Oil search Projects in different parts of West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the number and the details of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) No, Sir. Exploratory efforts in West Bengal are continuing in the form of 2D&3D seismic data acquisition, processing and interpretation. Drilling is being carried out for coal bed methane in Durgapur Depression.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Forest Fire in Doda District

4192. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the number of incidents of forest fire reported in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir during the last three years in which timber depots of forest corporation were gutted and estimated loss in each case;

(b) whether investigation work has been assigned to any special investigation agency; and

(c) the name of contractors who were extracting/collecting timber to the depots before getting of such timber?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

People below Poverty Line

4193. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA : Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the expert groups set up to estimate the number of poor people in the country has suggested any guidelines or criteria for identifying such people;

(b) if so, the detail of criteria/guidelines suggested;

(c) whether any assessment about the number of people living below poverty line as per 1991 census has been made; and

(d) if so, the details thereof. State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The guidelines are as follows :

- (1) The Poverty Line recommended by the Task Force on projection of minimum needs and effective consumption demand, namely, a monthly per capita total expenditure of Rs. 49.09 (rural) and Rs. 56.64 (urban) at 1973-74 prices, be adopted as the base line at all India level. This was anchored in the recommended per capita daily intake of 2400 calories per day in rural areas and 2100 calories per day in urban areas with reference to the consumption pattern as obtained in 1973-74. The Group has further recommended that these norms may be adopted uniformly for all States.
- (2) State Specific poverty line should be estimated as follows : The standardised commodity basket corresponding to the poverty line at the national level should be valued at the prices prevailing in each State in the base year, i.e. 1973-74. for updating poverty line to the current prices in a given year, a State—Specific consumer price index is needed. For this purpose, the observed all-India consumption pattern of the 20 to 30 per cent of the population around the poverty line in 1973-74 should constitute the State-specific weightline diagram.
- (3) It is necessary that the deflators chosen should satisfy three main requirements : (1) they should be State-specific, consistent with the adoption of State-specific base year prices, (ii) they should reflect, as closely as possible, prices relevant to the consumption baskets of those around the poverty line, and (iii) the data base for the construction of the deflators should be periodically available, comparable across States and consistent.
- (4) The Group came to the conclusion that it would be most suitable to rely on the disaggregated commodity indices from Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPIAL) to update the rural poverty line and a simple average of suitably weighted commodity indices of Consumer Price Index

for Industrial Workers (CPIW) and Consumer Price Index on Urban Non-manual employees (CPINM) for updating the urban poverty line.

- (5) Given the updated State-wise poverty lines and the corresponding size distribution of per capita consumption expenditure (PCCE) of National Sample Survey (NSS), the number of poor as a percentage of total population or the poverty ratio should be calculated separately for rural and urban areas for each State. The absolute number of poor in each State in rural and urban area should be calculated by applying the poverty ratio to the estimated population as given by the Registrar General of Census. The all-India (rural and urban) poverty ratio should be derived as a ratio of the aggregate number of State-wise poor persons to the total all-India (rural and urban) population. The implicit all-India poverty line may be worked out, given the all-India poverty ratio and the all-India distribution of population by expenditure classes obtained from the same NSS survey.
- (6) The poverty line and poverty ratio in respect of States, where availability of adequate data is a constraint, may be assigned from neighbouring areas on the basis of consideration of physical contiguity of areas and similarity of economic profile as indicated by other economic parameters.
- (7) The NSS consumption surveys which are carried out every 5 years yielding State level estimates of mean per capita total consumption expenditure and the size distribution of population around the mean, should be the basic source of information for estimating, on a quinquennial basis, the proportion of the population below the poverty line and poverty ratios following the recommended method should be worked out for the years 1977-78, 1983 and 1987-88 and onwards, as and when the State-wise results of quinquennial NSS rounds of comprehensive household surveys are available.
- (8) The Group favours exclusive reliance on the NSS data on household consumption expenditure (without any adjustment) for estimating the poverty ratio by States and in rural and urban areas.

(c) and (d). Data on Household Consumption Expenditure released by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are the basis for estimating poverty. Census operations do not cover an assessment of poverty.

Rural Electrification in Assam

4194. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that till date only 60% villages have been electrified in Assam, and heavy load-shedding is going on;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any provision of the Government to supply free electricity to SC/ST people in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to complete rural electrification work in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) and (b). As per available information, out of the 21995 inhabited villages in Assam, 21887 villages (including some of the villages not included in the census 1981) have been electrified by the end of March, 1996. Distribution of electricity supply is within the jurisdiction of the State Government. As per the information available there was no statutory power cut in Assam in July, 1996. State Government/SEB, however, regulates the supply of electricity by the way of load shedding, depending upon day to day availability of power.

(c) and (d). No, Sir.

(e) Rural Electrification schemes are formulated and executed by the respective State Electricity Board according to the priorities fixed by the State Government and the availability of financial and other resources.

MP's Funds

4195. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Area Development Fund Rs. One crore earmarked for Members of Parliament to spend in their constituencies is not sufficient;

(b) if so, whether, any decision has been taken to enhance the Fund of Rs. One crore; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) As per para 1.2 of the guidelines on MP Local Area