

Demand to extend ESI benefits to the Anganwadi workers/helpers

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

My Zero Hour submission is relating to Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi helpers. I hope that the entire House will associate with my submission because the life of Anganwadi workers and helpers is in a very pathetic situation. The salaries and benefits of Anganwadi workers are meagre and they are not able to meet their essential day-to-day expenses. At the same time, the responsibility of the Anganwadi workers and helpers are very high but the benefits available to them are very, very less. It is negligible. Even in my State, salary of the Anganwadi workers is less than Rs. 13,000 per month. This is a meagre allowance being provided to the Anganwadi workers and helpers.

So, my submission is this. A Private Member Bill has already been introduced in which I have demanded for extending ESI benefit to the Anganwadi workers. It has not been considered so far. The responsibility is very high and they have to retire without getting any pension. There is no retirement benefit. Nothing is there. After 20 years or 30 years of service, an Anganwadi worker and helper has to retire without getting a single paisa as pension or gratuity or insurance. Nothing is there. There is no medical benefit. Nothing is there.

So, I request the Government to come out with an official Bill providing a number of facilities. Minimum allowance should be provided to the Anganwadi workers and helpers. Not less than Rs. 25,000 for the workers and a minimum Rs. 20,000 to the helpers should be provided. The second demand is ESI medical benefit may be extended to Anganwadi workers and helpers. The third one is, retired Anganwadi workers and helpers may be provided with a minimum pension of not less than Rs. 5,000. For this, I urge upon the Government to come out with a Government Bill so as to provide all these benefits to our Anganwadi workers and helpers. I request the hon. Government to respond to it. ? (*Interruptions*)

Sir, this is a very important matter. I hope that the Government will respond to it. Cabinet Ministers are here. Unfortunately, they are not even listening to it. It is quite unfortunate. We are seeking a response from the Government regarding

extending benefits to the Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi helpers. That has to be taken very seriously because it is a Central as well as a State-sponsored scheme. They have to be protected. They are a major workforce of our country. ?

(Interruptions)

माननीय सभापति : जो भी माननीय सदस्य इस विषय के साथ एसोसिएट करना चाहते हैं, कृपया वे अपनी स्लिप भेज दें।

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Sir, once again, I urge upon the Government to consider this request. Thank you very much, Sir.