

### **Need to discuss the legitimate demands of ASHA workers in the country**

**SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA):** Madam, this is the 'Zero Hour' list. As per the 'Zero Hour' list, I have already given this notice earlier about the agitation which is going on for the last 30 days in Kerala. People from all walks of life, except some people, are totally joining them. Why? Why are they joining? It is because the ASHA workers have worked as health warriors of this country. When the UPA was in power, we introduced this system in 2005. Now, what is happening to them? They are getting Rs. 233 per day. They are not getting regularly, even that remuneration also.

Now, they are agitating before the Secretariat. The State Government is totally blaming them. They are being criticized for the agitations. The Central Government is blaming the State Government. The State Government is blaming the Centre and the Central Government is blaming the State Government. Who is responsible for this? There are different pay revisions for remunerations of ASHA workers in different States. The Telangana Government is giving the maximum. The Karnataka Government is giving the maximum. The Sikkim Government is also giving a good amount. Why not Kerala? That is what the people are asking.

After 20 years, these poor ladies of ASHA workers working in the field, when they are retiring, they are retiring with empty hands. Nothing is being given to them. Is there any job which has no remuneration or without any retirement benefit? Therefore, I am suggesting this to you. The Health Minister is saying that we have given everything to the State of Kerala. The State Government is telling us that the Centre has not given anything and they are lying. Whom should the ASHA workers believe? We need an answer from the Central Health Minister. We cannot ridicule the agitators. Those who are coming from the trade union background also are criticizing this agitation. We have to solve this pathetic situation.

I am raising two demands. There should be a proper remuneration and retiring allowance for ASHA workers. There should be uniform allowance of Rs. 21,000 per month for ASHA workers. The Central Government has to convene a meeting. They have to fix it. They have to take initiative to stop this agitation. This is what I wanted to say. Thank you, Madam.

