

### **Regarding issues pertaining to ASHA workers**

**SHRI SHAFI PARAMBIL (VADAKARA):** Thank you, hon. Chairperson, for this opportunity. We are talking about Accredited Social Health Activists, the ASHA workers. The word 'ASHA' resounds with the word 'hope' in Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi and many other languages. But the condition of these ASHA workers is becoming hopeless day by day, hour by hour. They are on the streets in front of the Trivandrum Secretariat for the last 30 days. They started their protest on February 10<sup>th</sup> and today it is March 10<sup>th</sup>. They are still exposed to the sun; they are still exposed to the rain. Day and night, they are protesting for getting minimum wages, social security benefits and retirement benefits. But neither the State Government nor the Central Government is ready to address their issues.

माननीय सभापति : माननीय सदस्य, आपका विषय यह नहीं है ।

**SHRI SHAFI PARAMBIL:** Madam, I have already submitted a letter in this regard. ....  
(Interruptions)

So, day and night, they are exposed to the sun and the rain, the dust and the heat. There is not even a shade on their head to protect them. No Government is taking responsibility of these people and their demand. Both the Governments are engaged in heated arguments about whom to involve.

Madam, while they are arguing, while they are debating, we, the representatives of the people of Kerala, would urge the Central Government to take action to ensure that they at least get their minimum wages as well as their dues. They must be protected, and must be given their dignity.

As KC ji has rightly mentioned, they are paid Rs.233 a day to work for 12 to 14 hours. They are not allowed to do any other work. They have to take care of the maternal health care. They have to take care of the child health. They have to play a role for proper immunisation of children. They have to play a role in disease surveillance. They have to take care of the palliative care and what not? Still, they are continued to be underpaid and overburdened.

Madam, we term them as Accredited Social Health Activists, and we treat them as underpaid and overburdened activists. This cannot continue like this. The

Government must take an urgent stand on this particular issue. We cannot see them toiling hard for their minimum wages. We all remember the COVID-19 period when no one was ready to visit our homes. Even the relatives were not ready to visit our homes. But these people came to us. They protected us. They served us. They are treated as health professionals but what do they get in return? What are we giving to them in return? This is not an injustice what they are asking for. They are not asking for benefit in millions. They are asking for their minimum wages.

Therefore, I urge the Central Government to listen to them. I urge the State Government to have a sitting with them, and address their issues, address their concerns, and let it be solved because they are very, very important for our Primary Health Care. Thank you.