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Title: Further discussion on the Agricultural workers welfare Bill, 2005 moved by Shri Hannan Mollah on 24.11.2006.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House would now take up item no. 46 – further consideration and passing of the Agricultural Workers Welfare Bill, 2005.

Shri T. K Hamza -- Not present

SHRI KIREN RIJJU (ARUNACHAL WEST): Sir, I rise to support the Bill meant to provide for the welfare of agricultural workers and to regulate their employment and conditions of service and for matters connected therewith. This is a very important Bill that has been introduced in this House. I would like to request the Government to consider this Bill at full length and see to it that it reaches its logical conclusion thereby serving the cause of the millions of people working in this sector in this country who are left to fend for themselves. The Government, so far, in the 60th year of India's Independence has not been able to take proper care of their welfare and provide them with basic needs and has been unable to protect their interests. A majority of people in this country comes under this category. This unorganized sector has not been treated as a priority sector. Today, the hon. Minister for Labour and Welfare is present here and I believe he has taken some steps in the right direction about which I would not like to elaborate here. [\[R15\]](#)

The Krishi Shramik Samajik Suraksha Yojana which was introduced in 2001 covered only some districts. Initially, it was targeted to cover 50 districts all over the country. But I feel when we launch such important schemes, we should see to it that they should not be district-specific or State-specific. These are to be country-specific or the country as a whole. The unorganized sector is prevalent throughout the country. The labourers are spread out mostly in remote areas and 60 to 70 per cent area of India, as we all know, are inhabited by rural people. If we specify important programmes of the Government only for some districts, then this will not fulfil the basic idea and objective of those programmes. This programme also includes provision of life-cum-accident insurance, money back pension, superannuation and other benefits to the agricultural workers. This is very important but how far will this policy percolate down to those people who are actually looking for the benefits to come to them personally? We must develop a mechanism whereby this kind of an important programme launched by the Government reaches them.

Today, the workers of the unorganised sector are the most depressed and most tortured people in the country. We have many unions and organizations which claim to be representing those unfortunate people. But I do not see much of the problems being resolved by the so-called unions and organizations. Some union leaders today happen to be my colleagues, the hon. Members of Parliament also. Some Members have rigorously raised this issue many times but unfortunately, the Government of the day has not come up to the expectations of those downtrodden people.

How many people in India are covered under this sector? Around 91 per cent of the total population of the country are unorganized labourers. From time to time, the Government has been telling about setting up of Committees to look into these particular problems. But these always remain in pieces of paper or in the stage of planning and the process always continues without any end. Today, the agricultural labourers particularly are one of the most deprived citizens of the country and I feel the hon. Labour Minister may discuss comprehensively with the Minister for Agriculture on how to take care of agricultural workers particularly. There are other sectors as well. Shri Oscar Fernandes can discuss with the various related Ministries dealing with this issue. He can discuss with the Minister for Industry, the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Food Processing and other Ministers concerned with the subject. Shri Subodh Kant is also present here. Many Ministries are involved in the matter. So, a group of Ministers who are involved and affected by the problems faced by such workers can come together and work out a mechanism whereby we can deliver some kind of justice to these people who have been neglected for all these years. The Government may be doing something for them but it seems that they are not doing anything in reality. Of course, they are doing something for this sector but that is not enough. They talk about constituting a committee of experts dealing with the subject. We must be able to give more time for these labourers and I believe the hon. Minister is giving time for this sector. He has been negotiating with the labour unions and all that. But he needs to give some more time. Shri Oscar Fernandes is involved in his party matters. He is involved in the negotiations with NSCN. Being the General Secretary of AICC, I really wonder how much time he can really give for the poor workers of the unorganized sector. [\[MSOffice16\]](#)

I hope that he will be able to devote some time towards this. We hope that some good results will definitely come out in the form of practical benefits. So many announcements and schemes are being made in this House and outside. Why I said practical benefits is that, until and unless it percolates down or reaches the people, then it does not have any meaning.

I must thank the hon. Member, Shri Hannan Mollah, for bringing this important piece of legislation in this House. Every Member of this august House, I believe, is with him and is supporting the whole move and the objective of this Bill.

I sincerely request the Government not to ask the hon. Member to withdraw the Bill, but to give its support with full force to the Bill in the interest of millions of workers, who are suffering from the neglectful attitude of all of us. I am not blaming only the Government. All of us are responsible for the whole system that is prevailing in the country.

We hope that the growth rate of nine per cent will really benefit the people who are actually the main force behind this growth.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार (चायल) : सभापति महोदय, आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद कि आपने मुझे कृषि कर्मकार कल्याण विधेयक, 2005 पर बोलने का अवसर दिया। हमारे साथी हन्नान मोल्लाह साहब ने जो विधेयक प्रस्तुत किया है, उस पर बल देने के लिए मैं खड़ा हुआ हूँ। यहां माननीय मंत्री जी बैठे हुए हैं और यह हमारे बहुत ही वरिष्ठ और सीनियर मोस्ट मंत्री हैं। अभी हमारे साथियों के विचार इसमें आए हैं। कृषि कर्मकारों को रोजगार और उनके कार्यों की दशा विनियमित करने के विषय में यहां जो विधेयक प्रस्तुत किया गया है, उस पर तमाम सुझाव आए हैं।

सभापति महोदय, आपको मालूम है कि इसके पहले भी इस सदन में इस पर बहुत विस्तार से बहस हुई है - चाहे वह कृषि मजदूरों की समस्या हो या कृषि कर्मकारों की समस्या हो। आपने देखा होगा कि आज भी भारत कृषि प्रधान देश है। आज भी ग्रामीण स्तर पर 75 प्रतिशत जनता कृषि पर निर्भर है। इस समय गेहूं की कटाई हो रही है, चूंकि उत्तर प्रदेश में चुनाव भी हो रहा है, भारत का हृदय प्रदेश उत्तर प्रदेश है। आज देखा गया है कि बड़ी संख्या में काश्तकार कोई भी अनाज बोता है तो जब उसकी कटाई-मढ़ाई होती है तो सबसे बड़ी समस्या कृषि कर्मकारों के सामने होती है कि उसकी कटाई-मढ़ाई कैसे हो। चाहे कोई भी अनाज हो, वह कैसे किसानों के घर तक पहुंचे, यह बहुत बड़ी समस्या है। यह देखा गया है कि कृषि कर्मकारों की दशा बहुत ही दयनीय है। इस सदन में समय-समय पर बड़े विस्तार से इस पर चर्चा हो चुकी है।

सभापति महोदय, आज मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से मांग करूंगा कि जो कृषि कर्मकार हैं, उनका भी बीमा होना चाहिए, क्योंकि वे भी देश के विकास में बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण अंग हैं। कृषि कर्मकार देश में उत्पादन को बढ़ाने और देश की इकोनोमी में बहुत महत्व रखते हैं, इसलिए इनका भी बीमा होना चाहिए। सरकार ने राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना लागू की है, हमारे जो कृषि कर्मकार या मजदूर हैं, उन्हें आपने खासकर ग्रामीण स्तर पर, गांव का जो कर्मकार है, उसे आपने सौ दिन का रोजगार दिया है, लेकिन वया आज तक हमने कभी यह भी देखा या सोचा है कि 265 दिन वह मजदूर या कर्मकार वया करेगा? अगर उसे सौ दिन रोजगार मिला तो वह सौ दिन के रोजगार पर अपने पूरे परिवार का भरण-पोषण नहीं कर सकता है। आज जरूरत इस बात की है कि अगर राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर कृषि कर्मकार कल्याण पर जब इस सदन में चर्चा हो रही है तो इस बात को भी प्रस्तुत किया जाए कि जो गांव का कृषि कर्मकार है, उसके सौ दिन के रोजगार के अलावा पूरे साल की, 365 दिन के रोजगार की गारंटी लेनी पड़ेगी, तभी हम उनके कल्याण की बात कर सकते हैं और कृषि कर्मकारों के रोजगार से संबंधित जो समस्या है, वह दूर हो सकती है। आज देखा गया है कि इस योजना में तमाम जॉब कार्ड बनाए जाते हैं, वे ज्यादातर ग्रामीण स्तर पर, हमारे पंचायत के जो प्रमुख या प्रधान होते हैं, वे बनाते हैं, लेकिन उसमें भी बड़ी अनियमितताएं हैं। गांवों में अगर देखा जाए तो पता चलेगा कि वहां कृषि कर्मकारों की संख्या बहुत ज्यादा है, लेकिन वहां लिमिटेड लोगों का ही केवल जॉब कार्ड बनाया जाता है, जिससे वे रोजगार से वंचित रह जाते हैं और खासकर उसमें महिलाओं की भागीदारी बहुत कम है।[\[rep17\]](#) जबकि राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना में इस बात की व्यवस्था की गई है कि महिलाओं को प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी। आज जरूरत इस बात की है कि हमें सख्ती से इस कानून को लागू करना पड़ेगा, तभी जाकर हम कार्यदे से उनके कल्याण की बात कर सकते हैं। अवसर देखा गया है कि कृषि कर्मकारों का बहुत शोषण होता है। ग्रामीण स्तर पर देखा गया है कि तमाम लोगों को इकट्ठा कर के कहीं ले जाते हैं और वहां जाकर उनसे काम कराया जाता है, लेकिन जो न्यूनतम मजदूरी केन्द्र स्तर पर और राज्य स्तर पर घोषित की गई है, वह भी उन्हें नहीं दी जाती है।

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Shailendra Kumar, please conclude. You have already spoken on the Bill. It was due to some omission that your name was called. I am sorry. Please be seated. It is enough. You have spoken well. Now, Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy to speak.

श्री शैलेन्द्र कुमार : सभापति महोदय, मैं इसे समाप्त कर रहा हूँ। कृषि कर्मकारों का जो शोषण होता है, वह रूकना चाहिए। गांवों से शहरों की ओर इस्तीफा पलायन हो रहा है कि उन्हें गांवों में काम नहीं मिल पा रहा है। इसलिए आज जरूरत इस बात की है कि उन्हें गांवों में ही रोजगार देने की विशेष व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। उनके आवास की भी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। गांवों में आवास की बहुत प्रॉब्लम है। उनके बच्चों का भी भविष्य बहुत अधर में है। उन्हें कंपलसरी स्कूल में भेजने की व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए। कृषि कर्मकारों के स्वास्थ्य पर विशेष ध्यान देना चाहिए। ज्यादातर कृषि कर्मकार टी.बी. रोग से पीड़ित पाए जाते हैं। मैं इन्हीं बातों के साथ अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूँ और इस विधेयक का पुरजोर समर्थन करते हुए, अपना स्थान गृहण करता हूँ।

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (NALGONDA): Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Bill.

I would congratulate my colleague Shri Hannan Mollah for bringing forward this important Bill to provide for the welfare of agricultural workers and to regulate their employment and conditions of service and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, to be taken into consideration by the House. I believe that the discussion on the Private Members' Bill will help the Government to bring forward a comprehensive legislation for the agricultural labour. In fact, this is being discussed again and again for almost three decades. Out of the total unorganized labour force which is more than 480 million in this country, I think about 50 per cent is agricultural labour force. The entire peasantry in this country is about 12,30,00,000 whereas the landless agricultural labour is more than 24 crore in this country. These workers are helping the agricultural operations. This agricultural labour force is asking for land to cultivate. The agricultural labours need a legislation which will give them some sort of a social security for them. First, when the agricultural operations are not there, they get very low wages. In spite of the labour laws, there is a gender discrimination in many parts of the country. Women workers are paid lesser amount than the men for the same type

of work which they are doing.

14.29 hrs.

(Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil *in the Chair*)

The second thing is that though several State Governments have divided their States into some special zones and in each zone there is a declaration about the minimum wages that are to be paid for the agricultural labour, yet, unfortunately, the minimum wages are also not paid. For the last several years, I do not know why the State Governments refuse to update the minimum wages for agricultural workers. Sometimes, it is taking more than a decade. Really, the prevailing market wages are much higher than the minimum wages announced by the Governments in various States. But that is only seasonal. In the non-seasonal period, the wages are very much less.[\[R18\]](#)

That is the reason why the Left Parties and many other political parties demanded for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. But the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which has been enacted by this Parliament, has its limitations. In fact, it will be doing justice if more than 200 days work is provided because most of the cultivation in India is dependent on rains. So, out of 365 days in a year, hardly 125 days or 150 days work is there for agricultural labour. For more than 200 days they do not get employment. Now, 100 days work for agricultural labour through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is not really proving to be an alternative for them.

Secondly, the agricultural labour do not have any social security like ESI or provident fund. There is an Act in Kerala. That is a model Act. On the lines of the Act in Kerala, a comprehensive Bill is possible at the national level. Earlier, the Committee headed by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta had recommended that a comprehensive Central legislation should be brought. A legislation had also been proposed, but as several States did not agree, that legislation has been kept in cold storage. The States will not agree. It is not possible to go and request the States again and again. The Central Government has to take a decision about this. About 250 million agricultural labour are in a very difficult situation. We cannot depend on the mercy of some State Government Labour Ministers to give permission for this. The Central Government should immediately bring a comprehensive legislation for the welfare of these people.

Sir, in the National Common Minimum Programme also, it has been mentioned that a comprehensive legislation for unorganized labour would be passed. Amongst the unorganized labour, the agricultural labour is the biggest chunk. So, I demand that the Labour Ministry should take the initiative to get a unanimous resolution passed in this House. This will help the Labour Ministry to bring such a legislation which should include pension for all the agricultural labour over 65 years. It should provide for regular employment or compensation for agricultural labour during the days when they do not get any work, they should have health insurance and life insurance facilities. Then, this legislation should also provide equal wage for equal type of work and also maternity benefits for the women among the agricultural labour.

These are the few minimum things that are necessary and this will help this largest section of unorganized labour in our country. About 25 per cent of the population of the country will get benefited by this type of legislation and I hope the Government will agree to pass this Bill. Finally, I, once again, congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah for bringing this Bill and I extend my full support to this Bill.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to participate in this Private Member's Bill which has been piloted by our friend Shri Hannan Mollah relating to the welfare of agricultural workers.

The crux of this Bill is to have a law enforcing agency to implement the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and to have a law applicable on all India basis through which security of their employment, regulation of hours of work, provision of provident fund, settlement of disputes relating to agricultural operations etc. could be enforced.[\[R19\]](#)

[T\[r20\]](#)These are the five major points in the Bill which Mr. Hannan Mollah has enshrined. The mover of the Bill presumes that by this enactment, it will go a long way in alleviating the measures of the agricultural workers and it would reduce their exploitation by land owners and other richer sections.

Mr. Chairman, you hail from a rural background and you are very much aware about the problems agriculturists face and what agriculture workers also face. I would rather extend the discussion to the unorganized sector about which we had also discussed earlier and agricultural worker is also a part of the unorganized sector.

The welfare of workers in the unorganized sector constitutes 93 per cent of the total workforce which has also been discussed today and our predecessor, Mr. Kiren Rijju also mentioned this percentage. I will give you how we have arrived at this

percentage. Who manufactured this 93 per cent? Reports are there, of course.

Among the several important failures of India's development of last six decades, so far the complete neglect of working conditions and social security for most of our citizens is one. That is especially marked. The National Labour Commissions, both, first and the second, did highlight the special and continual problems faced by workers in unorganized activities. But these have mostly been treated as reflecting a depressing reality rather as objects of policy intervention.

There have been some minor measures by the Central and respective State Governments towards some social security provisions to the deprived and marginalized categories, such as pension for widows, for instance. But these have been so limited in scope and so paltry in amount that they have amounted to little or to nothing.

The first issue today is to define the term 'unorganized'. The May 2006 Report of the National Commission on Enterprise in the unorganized sector, which was chaired by Prof. Arjun Sengupta, focused on the 340 million workers in the informal sector. They constitute 86 per cent of the total employment in the country. According to that report, I am quoting. "They sweat for the livelihood, mostly on aided and uncovered by any social security measures". Beginning with Prof. P.L. Mahalanobis, the planners have been aware of the size and significance of the informal sector.

The Sengupta Commission was appointed by this UPA Government. The Commission's 281 page report and recommendations are worthwhile, no doubt, but misses the mark altogether. The Commission has failed itself in devising appropriate instruments for operationalising its benign social security package. It lost sight of the fact that its constituency comprises an awesome number, 340 million or 34 crores of workers or 1,700 million persons at five per worker per family and that they are unorganized.[\[r21\]](#) This is the figure. That is how he has arrived at it. I am of the opinion that any external supply of care and cash to them can succeed in its mission only if the recipients are first encouraged to form their own associations. This is a precondition. On the contrary, what the Commission has proposed is a top down bureaucratic nightmare, a National Social Security Board with State counterpart Boards; then comes District Committees and subsequently the local Committees. The process is to start with registration of individuals by District Committees. Imagine, 340 million workers being so registered by the official apparatus. I need not mention the amount and extent of corruption inherent in all types of official registration mechanism. The unorganized sector is defined by the Commission as referring to all unincorporated enterprises owned by individuals or households employing less than 10 people. The Commission estimates the number of workers in the unorganized sector to stand at 340 million in January 2000, and the total informal workers including those workers working without protection in the organized sector is at 362 million. This amounts to 86 per cent and 91 per cent respectively of the total employment in India at that time, that is seven years back.

The Commission divides – and this is very interesting – the social security problem of all informal workers into two categories. The first is seen to arise out of the capacity deprivation and basically relates to the terms, conditions and remuneration of employment about which this Bill very rightly speaks. The second category are problems those arising from both predictable and unpredictable or unforeseen adversity because of the absence of any safety nets to meet ill health, accidents, old-age and death. My suggestion is that there is no alternative to a very proactive role of the State in providing such security. There are very interesting international experiences also especially in some developing countries. Take the instance of China, Indonesia, Tunisia and Brazil. These are the four countries that I would like to mention. I think the Government can look into what measures those countries have taken relating to social security which helped to increase aggregate economic growth. The country need not wait until it is fully industrialized with high levels of *per capita* income to extend social security to those who have so far been excluded. There is a need for bold schemes. The question is whether it should be the rights based or it should be voluntary or contributory. My option is that whatever method in which it may be enforced, the scheme should be legally enforceable. Social security, after all, is a protective measure. It does not solve chronic problems. It is widely accepted internationally that the absence of social security debilitates workers, affects labour productivity and has implications that extend far beyond the workers and their families themselves. Therefore, I am of the opinion that providing social security is a welfare measure for the unorganized agricultural lab[\[r22\]](#)our.

I would very humbly mention here that today's official social security mechanism will be of little use. The problem is manifold, which the organized workers face today. For mitigation of the problem of the unorganized workers, especially the agricultural labour, the bureaucratic method will be of little help.

My suggestion is that you kindly adopt the model of Japan. Japan model should be inculcated. Japan has been a place of pilgrimage for India, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to study how its unorganized sector has been performing with notable economic efficiency. Japan has two types of associations. One is geographical and the second one is trade-wise.

Sir, I am opposed to a Central legislation, rather a Multi-purpose Service Centre will be of much help to the unorganized agricultural workers.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

SHRI K.S. RAO (ELURU): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah for bringing such an important Bill. I wish that the hon. Minister will take it up on his own and bring forward a Bill. I wish that instead of discussing this Private Member's Bill we discuss it as the Government Bill.

I remember that the hon. Minister had also promised that he would bring a comprehensive Bill to take care of the security and welfare of the unorganized workers particularly in the agricultural sector. I am happy about that.

As my colleagues have already mentioned, agricultural workers are not organized. They are not aware of their rights, and they do not have Unions. They do not have negotiating power or the bargaining power. They do not have any control. They are at the mercy of the society. There is absolutely no obligation on the part of the employer who utilises the services. They do not know as to whom to approach and from where to get the security. I am happy that the Government is thinking in terms of going to their rescue. I am of the opinion that – it is not their asking – it is our responsibility to provide at least basic things and not that we give lakhs and lakhs of rupees to them. As a part of the commitment made in the National Common Minimum Programme, the UPA Government is obliged to bring forward this Bill at the earliest, and the hon. Minister is also thinking in terms of bringing it soon. I am happy about that.

I would like to mention some of the observations made to us when we go to the villages. We are all aware that agricultural labourers are having only seasonal work. They do not have work throughout the year. They have work only when the crop comes up. At best, possibly in the villages, work is available to them only for about four to five months in a year. If there is a second crop, then they may have work for another three months. If there is no second crop and if it is a dry land, then they have work only for four months. Who will take care of them during the remaining eight months? The Government has to take care of them. I wish that the Government takes care of them by providing at least minimum basic things. It is for them to work hard, to educate their children and change their living standard once for all and for generations to come.

The minimum thing that I expect from the hon. Minister is this. At the moment we are supplying food grains at a subsidised price. It is a good thing. We are now providing rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene and edible oil. Some of the basic things that are required are *daal*, tamarind, chilly and onion. If some of those things are also supplied through the Public Distribution System, then we are providing the basic minimum things to them at a price which they can afford. I am sure that the hon. Minister is also thinking in terms of increasing those commodities.

[r23] The next important thing, which they want, is shelter. [R24] For thousands of years these poor people are working, but they are not in a position to save even a little money to have shelter on their heads. Now, the Government has also realized to provide them with permanent housing and also to increase the provisions from Rs. 25,000.

In Andhra Pradesh, apart from your increasing it to Rs. 33,000, the State Government is providing Rs. 10,000 extra as a loan at three per cent rate of interest. That means, now most of the poor people are coming forward to construct their houses. Without this help, they could not afford. But with only just Rs. 33,000 they could not construct their houses, and their dreams would have remained only the dreams forever, for generations. So, that is the way we are providing housing to the poor people in our State of Andhra Pradesh.

Sir, in this particular case, I wish to mention that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken *Indramapadakam*, where every poor man, who has no house, who is living below poverty line is being provided money irrespective of his caste, creed, religion or party affiliation. We are giving them house sites, we are giving permanent houses to all those people. I wish the hon. Union Minister to make a study on this aspect. If that has become possible in Andhra Pradesh, how is it that the same thing cannot be done in other States?

Madam Seljaji, you are also here. In fact, I have told some of my friends also about the reverse hypothecation. We are providing house sites to the poor people, say in the urban areas. Take the case of Delhi. The cost of the house site is too much. We are providing 50 square yards, which is costing a couple of lakhs. If that being so, what is the difficulty in increasing the money by a little more amount for construction of houses? All right, presuming that the poor man is not in a position to pay; if it were to cost Rs. 1 lakh for reverse hypothecation, bankers are prepared to finance even on installments on behalf of the poor man. If he would rise to the occasion and pay back the loan over a period of 15 to 20 years, he would retain the house; if he is a lazy man and if he does not want to have that house, which has been provided by the Government economically, he would lose it after 15 years. Then, it would become the property of the bank, and the bank would fix the price and auction it. We know what is the price of a small house nowadays. It is Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh. But here, we are providing the poor man a permanent *pucca* house, where he can live for 100 years. Mr. Minister, you may also think in those terms and please do not leave it to the fate of

the poor man by giving him just Rs. 25,000 or Rs. 30,000 and think that your responsibility is over. The poor men cannot plan, they cannot visualize, they cannot think, and therefore, it is our duty to take care of them as regards their housing problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think, this is the scheme of the National Housing Bank also.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Yes, Sir. All of them are there. That is why I am telling to them.

Madam Seljaji, it is not the question of just one house or 10,000 houses. You can take up millions of houses in Delhi and other cities. There is no shortage of money. All that is required is the planning. The banks are also ready to finance for reverse hypothecation. HUDCO and all the nationalized bank can finance. So, through that way we can provide permanent houses to all the poor people, where they can live for 100 years.

Sir, the other issue relating to the agricultural labourer is education. What an agricultural labourer expects is a free education to his children. I am happy that at least, we have realized that their dropouts have gone to 94 per cent by the time they reach college, and only six per cent of them are remaining in the colleges. So, to prevent their dropouts, all of us have provided an extra cess and Rs. 11,000 crore for primary education of those poor people. But I caution that this scheme would prove to be a flop unless the education that we are giving even at the primary stage, even at the secondary stage, is vocational. We need to give them vocational training. Suppose, we are giving them the education to the level of 10th class, and we force them to go for Intermediate, BA and MA. But there is no employment. And they do not have the confidence to live on their own. They would not get employment elsewhere also. That is why the parents of the poor families are thinking that when even after educating their children up to the level of MA, there is no job availability, why should they send them to schools at all? They think that instead of sending them to the school and colleges after which there is no job, why should they not send them to earn one more wage, and it would be helpful to their families also! That is the reason why the dropouts of the children of the poor men are going up.

That is why I would submit that if the quality of education and the type of education that we are imparting, do not enthuse confidence and skills in them, the rate of dropouts would go on rising. So, I want the Government to think in this direction in giving vocational education to all those poor people.[\[r25\]](#)

[\[MSOffice26\]](#) Sir, the other thing is healthcare. If a poor man were to go to a Government hospital, there is no doctor to take care of him. There is nobody to whom he can go to. If he wants to go to the corporate sector, he cannot pay the bill. What I am saying to the hon. Minister is this. Please bring a health insurance to all those people who are below poverty line. I am not asking for those who are living above the poverty line. That does not cost much. I gave the statistics. It does not cost more than Rs. 10,000 crore. This amount of Rs. 10,000 crore can be shared by the Central Government and the State Governments by which we can provide a minimum amount of Rs. 30,000 for each year to a family. Everybody will not come. But it will give a confidence to the poor man that 'I am also taken care of by the Government in case of any eventuality of health hazard and accidents are also taken care of! This is possible. More particularly, even the private sector is prepared to come to insurance and health sector.

The last aspect is the old age pensions. You have started this on a pilot project basis. But I do not want a pilot project. It must be universal. Earlier also I told in the House. As a Member of Parliament, if I were to be a one-term Member of Parliament, I am getting pension all my lifetime. What great service I have rendered to the society? Whether I do service or no service, still I am eligible for getting pension all my lifetime. Similar is the case with those who are in service. If they put in 20 years or 25 years of minimum service, apart from all the privileges they get protection in the shape of pension all their lifetime.

But what happens to these people? What is the crime that these poor people, agricultural labourers have committed? They work from the age of 10 to the age 60. They do not work not for six hours or eight hours; but sometimes they work for ten hours or twelve hours in the rural areas.

MR. CHAIRMAN : They work day and night.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Yes, Sir. It is a matter of right for them. We must think first about them and then about us. I would request the hon. Minister to make it a universal pension scheme to all those people living below the poverty line throughout the country. Once again it does not cost much. What I would like to say is this. The statistics which you gave after the national sample survey are there. You said that about 23.7 crore poor people, agricultural labourers are there in rural areas. Out of them at least some marginal farmers are also there. So, presuming that there are 11 to 12 crore of people living below poverty line in agricultural sector, it does not cost more than Rs. 20,000 crore in a year. You share it with the State Governments. You ask them – 'Can we not provide Rs. 10,000 crore for the work that they have rendered to the society?' Please give some thought to that also.

सभापति महोदय : अभी बिल का समय तो खत्म हो गया है। If the House agrees, can we extend the time by half-an-hour or so, so that it can be completed?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Thank you. Mr. Rao, kindly go ahead and try to conclude also. It is a very simple Bill.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Yes, Sir. In Andhra Pradesh we are giving insurance to all those poor people who are living below the poverty line, not to one or two persons. Earlier, in Andhra Pradesh, during the Telugu Desam Government, when a poor man were to go to the politician or to the officer, where about ten pensions are being given in a village, they used to say that 'if one man were to die, then I will give you pension'. That means this man must see that one or the other must die. It was a very pathetic state of affairs. But today, no death is required. Irrespective of the number of people who have no land, who are living below the poverty line and whose children are not in a position to take of their parents, all of them are being given pension at the rate of Rs. 200 per head. Earlier it was Rs. 75. They are happy now. We do not need to provide Rs.1,000 or Rs. 500. The payment of Rs. 200 to the old age people, living in the villages and in the agricultural sector makes them so happy and it takes care of them. I humbly request the hon. Minister to provide this pension on a universal basis to all those people living below the poverty line and who cross the age of 60 years.

Sir, I do not want to take much time. The few schemes that you have provided already like Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana, Sampurna Grameena Rojgar Yojana and finally the National Rural Employment Programme did help definitely. But it is being done only in specific districts and not the entire country. More than that, if these minimum things are provided towards health insurance, towards old age pension etc. all these things will go a long way to help them and there will not be an opportunity for any middleman to cheat or to make them corrupt because universal insurance help.[\[MSOffice27\]](#)

15.00 hrs.

Nobody can change it and nobody can make money out of it. So, I would like that the legislation is brought in such a manner that these minimum things are taken care of in respect of these agricultural workers who are in the unorganised sector and who are living like orphans now at the moment. It is a crime for us also not to look after them. It is our responsibility to look after their needs. I wish that the hon. Minister brings legislation, if not in this Session, at least before the next Session. If he brings it in this Session, hats off to him. I would request him to please bring it in this Session itself. We will be extremely grateful to him.

SHRI M. APPADURAI (TENKASI): Hon. Chairman, the House has taken up the discussion on the Agricultural Workers' Welfare Bill moved as a Private Member's Bill by my esteemed colleague Shri Hannan Mollah. I support this Bill. We have been discussing about this for the past thirty years. A comprehensive Bill is yet to be formulated. About 48 crores of people in our population are in the unorganized sector. Among them about 28 crores of them live below the poverty line. When this United Progressive Alliance Government came to power, the Common Minimum Programme had spelt out that a comprehensive Bill for the welfare of the labour force in the unorganized sector would be brought before this House. Three years have elapsed. I feel it is unfortunate that there is a delay still. Most of the people in the unorganised sector especially the agricultural workers are Scheduled Caste people and tribal people. They do not have job guarantee in an adequate measure. It is a question still whether they get jobs through N.R.E.G.A. under which a hundred days of job is guaranteed to the rural poor. I learn that some States do not implement it fully. Even the daily wage of Rs.80/- is also not paid properly. This has resulted in the defeat of ruling party in certain States in the recent polls. I consider it my duty to bring it to your notice. A comprehensive Bill what we contemplate now has been brought about in Kerala. Such a Bill must be brought before this august House. All India Kisan Sangam under our Communist Party of India has been agitating for this move for the last 20 years. Whether Chennai or Delhi or for that any metropolitan city we find these unorganized labour. They are migrant workers from rural areas. They reside on the foot paths on the road sides. They have shifted or find themselves displaced from the rural areas in which they lived for years. These migrant labour do not have education and hence they do not get proper jobs and reasonable wages and so they do not get adequate food and live in unhygienic conditions. The living conditions of these people must be improved.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

This was pointed out by my colleagues who spoke ahead of me. We are to celebrate 60 years of our Independence soon. But who has got freedom? Even after 60 years even the basic facilities have not reached the poor, especially the SCs and STs, the downtrodden people who suffer a lot. A suitable legislation must be in place to ensure social security measures to these hapless people. My colleague has brought this Private Member's Bill to emphasize the need to provide social security in adequate measure to the labour class, especially those who are in the unorganized sector and agricultural sector in particular. This is the right time

to legislate a comprehensive Bill because the entire House is in favour of it and the Government is also enjoying the support from the majority of parties and groups. I urge upon this Government to make use of this conducive atmosphere and bring forth a comprehensive Bill to benefit the Agricultural workers.

श्री. सत्यनारायण जटिया (उज्जैन): माननीय सभापति जी, आज एक ऐसे वर्ग के बारे में विधेयक के माध्यम से विचार-विमर्श हो रहा है, जिस के बारे में काफी कहा जाता है किन्तु उसके परिणाम लाने में हम हमेशा विफल हो जाते हैं।

महोदय, हम जानते हैं कि हमारा आज भी कृषि प्रधान देश है। देश के 70 परसेंट लोगों की निर्भरता इसके ऊपर है। दिन प्रतिदिन खेती का रकबा कम होता चला जा रहा है। वह दिन दूर नहीं जब खेती कम होगी और उस पर काम करने वाले लोग ज्यादा होंगे। खेतिहर मजदूर के बारे में काफी कुछ कहा जाता है। आज इतनी खेती भी नहीं है कि वह अपना गुजारा कर सकें क्योंकि उनके पास छोटा रकबा है। सिंचाई के साधन न होने के कारण भी आमदनी कम है। 2-4-5 बीघा जमीन होने से गुजारे के लिए उसे जो कुछ चाहिए वह भी नहीं मिलता है। केवल खेती का एक आसरा है। अब उन्हें काम भी नहीं मिलता है। हम उसे खेतिहर मजदूर जरूर कहते हैं लेकिन खेतों में काम भी ज्यादा उसके लिए नहीं बचा है क्योंकि मशीनों ने काम ले लिया है। मशीनें जुताई और बुआई करती हैं। निराई के लिए कुछ लोग लगते हैं। वैसे वह भी अब मैकेनाइज्ड हो गई है। उसमें यंत्रकरण आ गया है। ऐसे हालात में वे लोग गांवों में क्यों रहें? अगर गांवों में रहे तो क्या करें? जब गांवों में काम कम रहता है तो वे शहरों की ओर दौड़ते हैं।

यहां काफी अनुभवी लोग बैठे हैं जो सारी परिस्थितियों को जानते हैं। यदि पास में कोई थोटा-मोटा जंगल है तो शहर में लकड़ी लेकर आ जाते हैं और मजदूरी के लिए शहर में आ जाते हैं। बसने के लिए गंदे नालों के पास रहने लगते हैं जहां किसी को कोई विरोध नहीं होता है। वे ऐसे स्थानों पर अपना आसरा बनाने की कोशिश करते हैं। देश में हजारों-लाखों में नहीं, करोड़ों की संख्या में ऐसे लोग हैं जिन की तरफ हमारा ध्यान नहीं जा रहा है। एक तो वे सामाजिक रूप से कमजोर वर्ग के लोग हैं। सामाजिक परिस्थितियां उनको कुछ करने का मौका नहीं देती हैं। उनके पास आर्थिक स्रोत भी नहीं हैं कि कोई छोटा-मोटा कारोबार कर सकें और उनमें इतनी समझ भी नहीं है। वहां अशिक्षा भी है। इस कारण वे क्यों तो क्या करें? मानवीय श्रम करने के अलावा उसके पास कोई साधन नहीं रहता है। वहां श्रम नहीं है। अगर वहां छोटी-मोटी सड़कें बन रही हैं तो उसके लिए मशीनें हैं। सड़क बनाने के लिए जिन चीजों की जरूरत होती है वे सब वहां हैं। बांध वगैरह बनाने के लिए भी उनकी जरूरत नहीं पड़ती है।

पिछले दिनों हमने रोजगार गारंटी योजना बनायी। इसके माध्यम से हम सौ दिन का रोजगार देते हैं। रोजगार नहीं मिलने पर भत्ता देने वाले हैं। सौ दिन का रोजगार देने से उसे कुछ आसरा जरूर मिला होगा और मिला भी है लेकिन कुल मिला कर उसका गुजारा नहीं चल रहा है। बरसात के दिनों में वे सबसे ज्यादा मुश्किल में रहते हैं क्योंकि उनके पास मकान नहीं है। सरकार की भी ऐसी कोई योजना नहीं है जिसे के द्वारा वह उनको पक्का मकान बना कर दे। इन्दिरा आवास योजना के माध्यम से उसे जो सहायता दी जाती है उसमें मकान नहीं बन रहा है। मैंने प्रत्यक्ष रूप से देखा है कि इन्दिरा आवास योजना के माध्यम से जो मकान बना कर दिया जाता है वह तेज बरसात में उड़ जाता है जिससे कभी-कभी मकान गिरने से उसके परिवार के लोग दब कर मर जाते हैं। ऐसी परिस्थिति में वह बेसहारा और लाचार हो जाता है। ऊपर से बारिश होने पर बच्चे उसमें दब कर जखमी हो जाते हैं। उनके इलाज की कोई व्यवस्था नहीं है, सड़कें बराबर बनी नहीं हैं। ऐसी विवशता में आदमी को जो कष्ट हो रहा है, आपने उनके क्या उपाय किए हैं? इस दृष्टि से भी सारी बातों पर सर्वांगीण रूप से विचार करने की आवश्यकता है। देश की आजादी के इतने सालों के बाद भी हम केवल विचार-विमर्श करते चले जा रहे हैं। जब [a28] में इस काम में था तब कृषि श्रमिक सामाजिक सुरक्षा योजना, 2001 बनाई थी और कुछ जिलों में यह योजना लागू भी की थी। यह योजना लाइफ इंश्योरेंस कांपैरिशन के माध्यम से बनाई थी, यह तब बनी और अब उसका पता नहीं है। हर सरकार अपनी तरफ से कुछ शुरू करती है, थोड़ा किया और कुछ नहीं किया, ऐसा समझकर उसकी इति शुरू हो जाती है। इस स्थिति में उसकी कोई कार्य दशा होगी? जो बिल आया है, इसमें कुछ कार्य दशा होगी? उसकी क्या कार्य दशा है? उसकी वर्किंग कंडीशनस क्या हो सकती हैं? उसे जो कहा जाता है वह उसे करना ही करना है। सुबह आठ बजे जाएगा और शाम को तब नहीं जाएगा जब तक उसका काम नहीं हो जाता। ऐसे कामों में हम देख रहे हैं कि जैसे यह ठेका पूरा हो गई है, इसमें फिर से बंधुआपन आ रहा है। उसे यदि पत्थर फोड़ कर वयासी बनानी है, हाथ से पत्थर फोड़कर वयासी बनानी है तो जब तक पत्थर नहीं फोड़ेगा उसे पैसा नहीं मिलेगा। इसका मतलब है कि उसे उतना पत्थर तो फोड़ना ही है, अब पत्थर फोड़ने की जगह पर उसकी पत्नी और अगर छोटे बच्चे हैं तो आसपास वहीं होंगे, धूप या बरसात में वहीं होंगे। इस तरह से उनकी कार्य दशा काफी असुरक्षित है। शहरों में पालना घर या एनजीओ भी मिल जाते हैं। लेकिन गांव में एनजीओ कहां जाते हैं? वहां सड़कें ही नहीं हैं, पड़ोस का रास्ता ही नहीं है, वहां ऐसे हालात हैं। इसलिए इन पर सर्वांगीण विचार करना हमारा दायित्व है।

माननीय मंत्री जी यहां पर हैं और उनकी कार्यकुशलता और क्षमता पर किसी को संदेह नहीं होना चाहिए। यदि वे गंभीरता से सोचते हैं तो मैं उन पर विश्वास कर सकता हूं। अभी सरकार को तीन साल हो गए हैं, दो साल बाकी हैं, तीन साल तो चले गए हैं लेकिन दो साल में क्या करना है? अब पूछेंगे कि आपने क्या किया? हमने शुरूआत की थी और उसे बढ़ाने के लिए कोई मिला या नहीं मिला इसका कोई मिला नहीं है लेकिन कुल मिलाकर जो हो गया है, वह हो गया लेकिन उनकी कार्य दशा बहुत कठिन है, इसमें उनका गुजारा होता नहीं दिख रहा है। बरसात के दिनों में उसे मजदूरी या दिहाड़ी नहीं मिलेगी तो शाम को वह कहां से खाएगा? गांव में किरयाने की दुकान से रोजमर्रा का जो सामान लेना होता है वह सामान उसे नहीं मिलता है। उसको छाया के लिए कुछ नहीं मिलता है, यह हम और आप प्रत्यक्ष रूप से अनुभव करते हैं। इस दृष्टि से, इस अनुभव से हम

उनके लिए वया निकाल सकते हैं? वया गांव में ऐसे स्थान, ऐसे आश्रय स्थल उनके लिए बना सकते हैं जो इस प्रकार के हों कि जब बहुत बरसात में उसका घर टूट जाए या कोई मुसीबत आ जाए तो उसके नीचे आकर सहारा ले सके? हम एक लाख या दो लाख की लागत से उसके लिए गांव में आश्रय स्थल बना सकें जहां गरीब आदमी का मुश्किल के समय गुजारा हो सके, अगर मुश्किल नहीं है तो भी गांवों के बाकी के सामूहिक कार्यक्रम, जो हो सकते हैं, उन कार्यक्रमों को करने का अवसर दिया जाए। लेकिन मुश्किल यह है कि ऐसे जो लोग हैं वे कमजोर वर्ग के लोग हैं, अनुसूचित जाति के लोग हैं यदि इस पर बाकी लोगों का कब्जा हो गया और उन लोगों को दर्जा मिल गया तो उन्हें रहने का मौका भी नहीं मिलने वाला है। इसलिए इसे उनकी बस्ती के पास बनाया जाए और पीने के पानी का प्रबंध किया जाए। ऐसी स्थिति में, ऐसे कठिन समय में जब उसका मकान बारिश के समय में गिर गया है, हम ये सारी सुविधाएं देने का काम कर सकते हैं। आप जिसे कार्य दशा कह रहे हैं, कार्य दशा के नाम पर उसके पास कार्य नहीं है, उसकी दशा बहुत गंभीर है, चिंतनीय है और परेशान करने वाली है।

आप सब गांवों के बारे में जानते हैं कि सड़कें गांवों में पहुंच रही हैं। प्रधानमंत्री सड़क योजना के अंतर्गत सड़कें पहुंच रही हैं और बीस से पच्चीस लाख रुपए एक किलोमीटर के लिए खर्च हो रहा है। माननीय सभापति जी, आप इस बात से इतफाक करेंगे कि ये सड़कें बनते बनते बन रही हैं और इसके लिए बहुत ठेकेदार भी नहीं मिल रहे हैं। बड़े-बड़े ठेकेदार दिल्ली में रहने वाले हैं, वे वहां जाकर छोटे ठेकेदारों को अपना काम दे देते हैं और छोटे ठेकेदार और छोटे ठेकेदारों को अपना काम दे देते हैं इस तरह से चार आदमियों के पास काम जाता है और पच्चीस लाख रुपए का हिस्सा नीचे जाता है जो वास्तव में लगते-लगते पांच-सात लाख रुपए जहां लगना चाहिए वैसे ही लगता है, यह मेरा अंदाजा है। हम पच्चीस लाख जरूर भेज रहे हैं लेकिन प्रदेशों में, जिला में, साइट में जो विभाजन हो रहा है, इस संबंध में मेरा कहना है कि आप पंचायतों को सड़क बनाने के लिए, पंचायत से पंचायत की सड़कों को जोड़ने के लिए पांच लाख प्रति किलोमीटर के लिए दे दें और वे इसमें अच्छी डब्ल्यूवीएम सड़क बना लें तो अच्छी एपूव होगी और आवागमन के अच्छे साधन हो जाएंगे। गांवों में सड़कें अच्छी नहीं हैं इसलिए वहां पब्लिक ट्रांसपोर्ट भी नहीं मिलता है। वे पब्लिक ट्रांसपोर्ट के माध्यम से शहर में भी काम कर सकते हैं और विपदा के समय सबको तो नहीं ले जा सकता लेकिन परिवार और मां-बाप को ले जा सकते [r29] हैं। [r30] इसलिए जो उनकी विसंगति की कार्यदशा है, क्योंकि अब गांवों में खेतिहर मजदूर यानी खेत में काम करने वाले लोगों के लिए रोजगार के अवसर कम हैं। इसलिए हमारी चिंता यह है कि बेरोजगारी की मार से परेशान ऐसे लोगों को राहत देने के लिए, वैकल्पिक उपाय देने के लिए हम क्या कर रहे हैं? उनको रोजगार देने के बारे में हमारे दिमाग में क्या है? यह बात सामने आनी चाहिए। एक समय था जिसमें सब लोगों को कहा जाता था कि सम्मिलित खेती करने का काम होगा। लेकिन वह हमारे यहां सफल नहीं हुआ और इसलिए खेती के बड़े-बड़े रकबे जो हुए होंगे, वे बंटते-बंटते और भी कमजोर होते चले गये।

अब मैं शिक्षा के बारे में कहूंगा कि जो उनके छोटे बच्चे हैं, सरकार ने उन बच्चों की शिक्षा के लिए क्या किया है? उनके बच्चों को वहां से निकालकर एक छोटे आश्रम में वया उनकी शिक्षा के लिए हम कुछ व्यवस्था कर सकते हैं? यदि बच्चा इतना बड़ा हो गया है कि वह अपने रोजमर्रा के काम करने लायक है तो उसी गांव के ऐसे आश्रमों में या पंचायत स्थान पर छोटे आश्रम बनाकर उनके पढ़ने की व्यवस्था की जानी चाहिए। चूंकि उसके मां-बाप पढ़ नहीं पाये हैं। अब जैसे हमने सर्व शिक्षा अभियान चलाया हुआ है। यह ठीक है कि सर्व शिक्षा के नाम से शिक्षा का संदेश गांव-गांव तक पहुंच गया है। लेकिन शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता अभी नहीं पहुंची। इसलिए इस दृष्टि से भी सबको शिक्षा देने के लिए वया हम ऐसा स्कूल बना रहे हैं जिसमें ऐसे कमजोर वर्ग के लोगों को ठीक प्रकार से सहायता मिल सके? आप बहुत बड़ी-बड़ी योजनाएं बनाएं, आप बहुत बड़े-बड़े काम करें और करोड़ों रुपये उसमें खर्च करें और देश के लिए और भी अच्छी बातें करें तो आप जरूर करिएगा लेकिन आज भी बीस करोड़ लोग ऐसे हैं जो खेती पर निर्भर रहने वाले लोग हैं और जिनके पास खेती का टुकड़ा नहीं है। ऐसे लोगों के लिए आप क्या योजना बना रहे हैं?

विकित्सा के बारे में भी यही बातें हैं क्योंकि सड़क नहीं है तो विकित्सा की कुछ सुविधाएं नहीं हैं। मैंने अभी कोशिश की कि अभी एमपीलैंड से हम कुछ पैसा देकर संस्थाओं को कहें कि विकित्सा के क्षेत्र में आप गांवों में जाकर कुछ काम करिए। इसके लिए कुछ संस्थाएं तैयार होती हैं परंतु सारी बातों को करने के लिए उनके पास विकित्सा की कोई सुविधाएं नहीं हैं। इस प्रकार से खेतिहर मजदूरों के पास आवास नहीं है, शिक्षा नहीं है तो फिर इनके पास क्या है? इनके पास असहायता है, बेबसी है और इस बेबसी को दूर करने के लिए सरकार कौन सी योजना लेकर आ रही है? आप कहेंगे कि ठीक है, विधेयक है और इस विधेयक पर हम विचार करेंगे और इसमें कुछ अच्छा करके हम लाने वाले हैं। इसलिए इसको छोड़ दीजिए। हन्नान मोल्ताह जी ने एक प्रस्ताव लाने का काम किया है और हम उसे छोड़ देने वाले हैं। लेकिन आप उसे कब पकड़ने वाले हैं? आप उसे किस प्रकार से लेने वाले हैं? आपकी योजनाएं क्या हैं? आप किस तरह से उस योजना को देखते हैं? वया श्रमिक सामाजिक सुरक्षा योजना जो बनाई गई थी, वया उसको आगे बढ़ाने का काम किया गया है? यदि यह काम किया गया होता तो बहुत सारे जिलों से मैंने पास उसका उत्तर आया हुआ है और अनेक जिलों में उस योजना को लागू करने का काम हुआ जिसमें मजदूर को एक रुपया जमा करना होता था और एक रुपया सरकार जमा कराती थी और ऐसे जमा कराते-कराते उसकी वृद्धावस्था आने तक एक लाख रुपये से ज्यादा रुपये उसे मिल जाते थे। ऐसी कुछ योजना को लेकर आप आए और गांवों की परिस्थिति के लिए जो बाकी की योजनाएं चलती होंगी, जिसमें ज्यादा खर्च होता होगा, उसमें से पैसा जुटाने का काम करें। पैसा कहां से सरकार के पास आए, इसका उपाय आप करें। ऐसे लोगों के लिए ठीक प्रकार के आवास की व्यवस्था हो जाए, इस बारे में सरकार को विचार करना चाहिए। उनको रोजगार देने के लिए सरकार क्या कर सकती है, इस प्रकार की संभावनाओं पर विचार करते हुए, क्योंकि रोजगार गारंटी योजना सौ दिन की गारंटी की योजना है और सौ दिन से 365 दिनों का गुजारा नहीं हो रहा है। इस दृष्टि से भी हम क्या करने वाले हैं? इन सारी बातों पर विचार-विमर्श करते हुए नियमित रोजगार के बारे में कुछ प्रबन्ध करेंगे तो ज्यादा अच्छा होगा।

जो उसके पास समय बचता है, वया उस समय का उपयोग करते हुए उसको हम किसी प्रकार की रिक्लड प्रशिक्षण दे सकते हैं? यह ठीक है कि उसके लिए कुटीर उद्योग है लेकिन उसकी मार्केटिंग करने की कुछ व्यवस्था नहीं है। अब कुटीर उद्योग में बांस से या कुछ और चीजें वह बना लेता होगा तो उन चीजों को बाजार में बेचने के लिए उसके पास साधन कहां हैं? आजकल प्लास्टिक तथा अन्य इसी प्रकार की चीजें चल पड़ी हैं कि उनकी चमक के आगे उसकी टोकरी कहीं टिकती नहीं है और बिकती भी नहीं है। ऐसे कामों के बारे में, गांवों में रहने वाले व्यक्ति के लिए उसको कौन सी चीज दें या सरकारी इस्तेमाल की या बाकी के स्थानों के उपयोग के लिए जो वस्तु बनती होगी, इसके लिए उसको प्रशिक्षण दें जो उसकी क्षमता के हिसाब से हो, वया ऐसे कुछ उपाय किये जा सकते हैं? उनके बच्चों के लिए ठीक प्रकार की शिक्षा और विकित्सा के उपाय हम कर सकें तो निश्चित रूप से ऐसे खेतिहर मजदूरों के लिये हम

अवश्य ही कुछ कर पाएंगे, ऐसा मुझे विश्वास है। ऐसी बेबसी से उन्हें बचाने के लिये हमारा जो राष्ट्रीय दायित्व है, यह दायित्व सामाजिक और आर्थिक न्याय के अंतर्गत भी है और हम लोगों का इस देश के लोगों के लिए सामाजिक और आर्थिक संकल्प है, उसे पूरा करने में सरकार कार्यवाही जरूर करेगी, ऐसा मेरा विश्वास है।

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI (NIZAMABAD): Sir, I thank you for the opportunity given to me to speak on the most important subject, which is dear to my heart.

At the outset, let me congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah for bringing this Bill to protect the agricultural workers and to look after their wellbeing. I had an opportunity to meet him in New York when he came with the former Speaker, Shri Balayogi.

As we are all aware, the biggest chunk of agricultural workers in the country is living in a pathetic condition.

Let me share my little experience for a minute, the reason for my coming back to India from the US, after living there for about 15 years. There is one *mandal* in my District of Nizamabad called Machareddy *mandal*; highest number of farmers committed suicide in that *mandal*. Hon. Leader of the TDP is present here; his leader Shri Chandrababu Naidu once said that agriculture is a waste.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Never.

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI : It is a fact and I can quote it. At that time, the then Central Minister from my State said: किसान आत्महत्या इसलिए करते हैं क्योंकि उन्हें खाना हजम नहीं होता है ' हम जानते हैं कि more than 162 million people in the country are living with one meal a day. The average income of a farmer – according to the NSSO survey – is Rs.2115 a month. The National Commission on Farmers states that in UP, the most populous State in the nation with the highest number of farmers in the country – the average income of farmers drips to Rs.1630 per month. If this is the case of farmers, imagine the plight of agricultural workers. Many of the marginal farmers who own one or two acres of land are self-employed in the fields.

With this background, I came back to India; I was the first person to offer financial help to the families of the farmers who have committed suicide. Unfortunately, even today, farmers are committing suicide in quite a large number in my State also. I do not feel shy in accepting this fact. It is a fact; it is happening countrywide, not only in Andhra Pradesh.

It is also a good beginning by the UPA Government, fulfilling the commitments. The agricultural credit loan has been increased from Rs.80,000 crore during the NDA time to Rs.2,25,000 crore during this year. The UPA Government has also brought in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which substantially helps people in my district too. I can proudly say that mine is the first district in the State to implement the project completely which helped the poor agricultural workers, in their bid to have some employment and some means to live.

It is our responsibility to bring a legislation which could protect them from exploitation by the landlords. You can take the example of my own district, Nizamabad. The average daily wages for women agricultural workers is Rs.35, and Rs.45 for men per day. Moreover, they do not get employment every day. When we move on to other districts of coastal areas in my own State, the minimum wages for women agricultural workers is Rs.80, and Rs.120 for men. The Minimum Wages Act of 1948 obviously is not bringing in uniform wages across the country. So, obviously this Bill definitely is very important to protect the poor people.[\[R32\]](#) It depends on the conditions also. When the farmer himself is not getting returns of the investment made, obviously he cannot afford to pay to the workers. Aam Admi Bima Yojana is a good beginning. When a worker is earning Rs.40 or Rs.50, how can he support himself and his family? He cannot spend much on his children's education and health. A study shows that quite a large number of people get into the debt trap because they have to pay a lot on maintaining their health. Subsequent Governments have failed to provide primary health facility to poor people, especially in rural areas. This has indirectly affected the living conditions of the agricultural workers.

Why we have such a pathetic conditions of the agricultural workers today? You may see the increase in the fertilizers cost. Three years ago, to cultivate 1000 hectares of land, the cost of seed used to be Rs.2,200. The increase in its cost now is almost three times. Even the fertilizers' cost has gone up to 400 per cent. These indirectly contribute to farmers getting into debt trap and committing suicides. The condition of agricultural workers is more pathetic.

Though our State Government is providing free power to the agricultural workers but due to load shed power is provided in the midnight. So, the workers have to go to their fields in the middle of the night and most of them die either due to snake bite or are electrocuted. Obviously, the landlord does not compensate these workers. So, this Bill will definitely help such unfortunate workers whose only means of living is to work as workers in the field. If they die, their whole family is on the road. There are a number of such heartening incidents all over the country. Other hon. Members have already mentioned about them.

The UPA Government under the leadership of Shrimati Sonia Gandhi gives importance to the agriculture which is also evident from the Finance Minister's Budget speech which he gave 15 to 20 minutes to agriculture. He has not only brought in new initiatives to help the poor agricultural workers but has also supported the marginal workers who are self-employed and are also considered to be the agricultural workers.

My senior colleague from Andhra Pradesh, Shri K.S. Rao, did mention about various initiatives by the State and Central Government.

सभापति महोदय : हमने इस बिल का समय आधा घंटा बढ़ाना था। अभी तीन वक्ता हैं और मंत्री जी को भी उत्तर देना है।

श्री हन्नान मोल्लाह (उलूबेरिया) : सभापति जी, इस बिल के कंप्लीट होने तक समय बढ़ा दीजिए तो अच्छा रहेगा।

सभापति महोदय : हम सब लोग मिलकर चार बजे तक इसे खत्म करने की कोशिश करते हैं ताकि दूसरा बिल भी आ जाए, नहीं तो दूसरा बिल नहीं आएगा। Everybody should be brief and precise, including yourself.

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI : Unlike NDA and Opposition TDP, the Congress Party under the UPA and the State Congress Party Govt. have started a number of initiatives to help the farmers. Unless the farmer is paid for his work, we will not be able to protect the agricultural workers.

The other major threat these agricultural workers are facing in the rural areas is the new SEZ policy. Thousands of acres of cultivable land are given to the industrialists. Poor workers with no education or other employable quality are facing a threat. I would suggest that instead of thousands of acres of cultivable land a few acres of land, that too non-agricultural land, should be given to SEZ so that the agricultural workers are protected. [\[R33\]](#)

15.30 hrs.

(Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey *in the Chair*)

If it is necessary to give agricultural land, then the agricultural workers should be protected. They should be trained to get various other jobs. I have seen one of the SEZ companies doing this in Andhra Pradesh. But it should be done uniformly. It should be made compulsory that any SEZ company acquiring land should protect these agricultural workers. The farmers should be trained and told new methods of cultivation. High yield seeds should be provided to them. In Andhra Pradesh, in many areas the agents provide seeds but most of the times they provide adulterated seeds. The farmer is depending on it solely. He waits for the crop to come up but there is no scope of it coming up. With the result, they end up in committing suicides. The current Government, especially, hon. Prime Ministerji mentioned a few selected States of this country including Vidarbha region and in Andhra Pradesh. Thirteen districts are also covered by assistance from the Central Government. They have been given a special package and over Rs.900 crore have been given to Andhra Pradesh alone. That is a good beginning which would help these farmers substantially.

With these words, I would once again congratulate hon. Hannan Mollahji for bringing this Bill. I am sure we all agree to protect agricultural workers from exploitation by the landlords and other rich people. The Government should bring stringent and enforceable measures to see that the exploitation of the agricultural workers is stopped.

[\[R34\]](#)

SHRI M.SHIVANNA (CHAMARAJNAGARA) : I rise to support the Agricultural Workers Welfare Bill-2003 brought by Shri Hanan Mollan. The Hon. Minister of Labour and Employment, Shri Oscar Fernandes Ji is also present here. Shri Oscar Fernandes Ji is very sincere and honest a person. He is working for the welfare of the labour round the clock. He has always raised voice for the welfare of the labours. It is good that we are discussing here a very important Bill in the presence of Hon. Labour Minister.

As we all know more than 75% of our people live in villages. Still 70% people depend on agriculture. We can put agricultural workers in different categories such as small farmers, medium farmers and big farmers and daily wagers or coolies. Most of the small farmers are coolies.

I myself belong to peasant family. I am son of a farmer. I am very well aware of the difficulties of the agricultural workers. I can better understand the agony of the farmers. It is very unfortunate that even today in a large number of villages the land lords or the village Heads take decision as to how much wage should be fixed per Head. In many villages a meagre amount Rs. 50/- is paid to male workers Rs. 25/- to female workers. And nobody can question the land lord. This is the prevailing situation in Rural India. Now in view of such a situation our Hon. Member has brought this timely historical Bill. People of all sections of the country are very happy about this Bill. I also appreciate this Bill from the core of my heart.

Today we have been noticing that people of urban areas can get any job for their livelihood. Whereas in rural area it is very difficult. When there is sufficient rain they will get job opportunities. That is why people are selling off their land

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada

and migrating to urban areas to find means for their livelihood. Only those agricultural families who are having more lands, pump sets and irrigation facilities, are leading happy life in villages. Others are having only one option that is to work as coolie, which is also not available all the times. Today the UPA Government has brought a very good programme for providing free education for the children upto 10th standard under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Because of this programme many farmers are sending their children to school. Otherwise it would be a very difficult task to agricultural workers to send their children to schools as these workers are earning only Rs. 50/- per day. How can an agricultural worker send his children to school paying fees when he is earning such a meagre amount. It is very difficult for an agricultural worker to send his children to study in engineering or medical colleges. It would be difficult for them. So I feel it is a very good scheme of UPA Government to take all the responsibilities to provide education for children. Otherwise it will be unimaginable to have education for children of agricultural workers. An agricultural worker, who is earning Rs. 50/- per day could not even get 4 Kg rice with that amount. Because Minimum price of rice per kg. is Rs. 20/-. If there are 10 members in his family how can he feed them. Therefore I would like to suggest that common wage should be fixed without gender bias.

Apart from this we have been seeing every where in the country farmers committing suicide. It is a matter of grave concern. We should think as to why the farmers commit suicide why it is increasing day by day. I feel it is because there is no rain, no crops, severe drought, and famine condition over and above that credit burden. These are the factors which force farmers to commit suicide. So Government should come forward to rescue the farmers and take concrete steps to address the problem. I stress upon the Government to bring necessary legislation to fix same wage for same work. I would like to say that like Swarnajayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana the UPA Government has introduced N.R.E.G.A. RS. 60/- is being paid to a person per day. This includes 5 kg. of rice plus Rs. 35 in cash. Under this programme a person can get job for 100 days. It will definitely help the people of the Rural India. Apart from this, my humble request to the Hon. Minister is that the Government should bring an insurance scheme to the workers of agriculture and other sectors. The Government itself must pay the premium amount on behalf of the workers covered under the Insurance Scheme. The coolies and agricultural workers should be given top priority in that scheme.

A Government employee, may be able to pay his premium for his insurance policy and when he dies he would receive Rs. 5 lakh or 10 lakh. A coolie / an agriculture worker will not get even a single paise from any source, when he dies. Large number of workers are working in the field of construction of building, roads etc. There is no security for their life. So a coolie / agriculture worker may not be able to pay his / her premium that is why it would be a great help if Government steps in to pay for him.

Sir, it is a very serious matter that people particularly farmers have been migrating towards urban areas, they are not preferring to stay in villages as they are not getting jobs. But in urban areas people get jobs somehow and earn atleast Rs. 100/- per day. Whereas in villages people are not even getting jobs for Rs. 25/- or Rs. 30/- per day. That too they are being exploited by land lords, who are behaving like dictators even today. To control and stop such atrocities on village people particularly agricultural workers and coolies, I urge upon the Government to bring stringent law for getting equal wage by all agricultural and other workers.

Finally I would like to suggest on housing assistance. Government is providing financial assistance. Under the schemes like Indira Awas, Vambay Yojana. But a mere Rs. 20,000/- rupees is not enough to build a house. Therefore I request the Government to increase this financial assistance to atleast Rs. 50,000.- with this I conclude thanking once again Shri Hannan Molla, Hon.

Labour Minister Shri Oscar Fernandes Ji and I also express my gratitude to Hon. Chairman for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion. With this I conclude my speech.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Sir, at the outset, I congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah who has brought this very important and crucial legislation before the House, namely, the Agricultural Workers Welfare Bill, 2005.

This is a very important legislation. The UPA Government has promised to bring a comprehensive legislation to benefit the labourers of the unorganized sector. Three years of their rule have lapsed and another two more years are left now. When will the Bill be brought to the floor of the House? If the Bill will get passed, then many problems of the unorganized labourers will be solved. More than 50 per cent of the unorganized workers are agricultural labourers. And so, we have to concentrate on agricultural labourers.

Everyone is talking about growth. Last year, we have achieved 9.2 per cent growth. Growth without equity is meaningless and fruitless. It is all right that we are earning money and we are increasing our GDP. Finally the fruits of Independence and fruits of democracy should percolate down to the poorest of the poor. Only then the GDP has got some meaning.

Shri N.T. Rama Rao was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He started his Party in 1982 and within nine months, he came to power in Andhra Pradesh. In his first Cabinet meeting, he took three policy decisions, namely, to provide shelter, permanent housing to the poorest of the poor and to provide clothes at 50 per cent subsidy, and to provide rice at Rs. 2 per kilo. These three decisions are intended for the welfare of the poorest of the poor in the society. Nowhere in the country has this happened in all these years. Every Chief Minister, in his election manifesto, promises rice for Rs. 2 per kilo, etc. But in the whole country, the TDP is the only Party which started all these welfare measures. Even now, there is so equality of social status for the agricultural workers. The farmer is not having access to education, health, safe drinking water, good roads, etc. His children are not educated properly. He is not getting proper wages. These are the problems being faced by agricultural workers.

We are the elected representatives of the people of the society. The Executive, the Judiciary and the media are playing their roles. We have organizations in every field like we have the autorickshaws union, union for car drivers, etc. They have unions in every field. But in the unorganized sector, there is no union. So, they have no influence on the Government as regards their problems. There is no unity among them. That is why, I say that the Centre as well as the States have to take care of the unorganized labourers, particularly agricultural workers.

The introduction of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill has not served its purpose fully. It is all right that we are providing employment temporarily and to some extent, it is a good legislation. But it does not give permanent remedy. It is meant to provide 100 days employment. If there is one crop cultivated, they will get employment for four to five months. As regards agricultural workers, the villages are situated in the project areas and if they get two crops, they get seven months employment and in India, most of the land is rainfed and they may not get four months real work in a year. For the remaining 150 days of employment, who will take care of them? The Government will have to take care of them. Employees of other sectors are entitled for pension, insurance and women workers are getting maternity benefits. Why is it not so in the case of [\[MSOffice35\]](#) agricultural workers?

They are also part of this nation. They are also doing hard work for increasing the GDP. In this society, different people are in different professions. Some are politicians; some are employees; some are journalists and some are judicial officers. Like them, these people are also working. They are providing food to the entire nation, to hundred crores of people. We should be ashamed if they are made to suffer.

Hon. Finance Minister, three days back, told the media that the revenues collected during the year 2006-07 was Rs. 4,70,077 crore. That was the kind of income that was generated. It was more than what is estimated in the Revised Estimates. It was Rs. 5,000 crore more than what is estimated in the Revised Estimates. So, the Government is getting more income. That income should percolate down to the poorest of the poor. Most of the people who suffer belong to the unorganized sector.

If you bring in a legislation in this regard, everybody will support you. The States will also support you. I am requesting Shri Oscar Fernandes, who is the champion of these people, to bring in a legislation to give the workers in the unorganized sector, particularly the agricultural workers, a legal status, so that they can get pension, health benefits, insurance benefits, their children's education, hospitals, etc. We are ready to support you. Without unorganized labourers, there is no industry, there is no farmer, and there is no wealth in this country. Seventy per cent of our people are dependent on agriculture and allied industries. Most of these workers are from agriculture.

In this situation, I am requesting the hon. Minister to bring in a legislation without any delay, in consultation with the States. We are ready to support you. If you bring in that legislation, most of the problems of unorganized labourers, including the agricultural workers, will be solved.

SHRI T.K. HAMZA (MANJERI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity to say a few words.

First of all, I would congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah for having brought a Bill like this. We all know the fate of the Private

Members' Bill. We all know that it is not going to be passed. But the intention of the Bill, I understand, is to bring their plight to the notice of the Government and to make the Government to think of them. The reason for the backwardness of this country is that we have forgotten agriculture and agricultural labourers. That is our failure. After Independence we have attained progress to a certain extent. But we have forgotten these people. Nothing has been done so far by the Government of India for their welfare, irrespective of which party was in power. This is a very important matter to be considered by the hon. Minister.

The first labour in the world is the agricultural labour. Then comes the fishermen, industrial labourers, etc. We have forgotten that. To what extent development is possible in other fields, without achieving development in agriculture? How can we feed the people? This is forgotten by us. That is our failure. That is my first point.

Secondly, as my learned friend has submitted, since they are not organized they are exploited. It is not an industry and it is not confined to one place. They are not united. It is very difficult to organize them. But they should not be exploited. Some legislation should be brought out to give benefits to help them all over India.

After Independence, I searched and found, no State has done anything to them so far, except the State of Kerala. In 1981, Kerala Assembly passed a Bill giving effect to Agricultural Labourers Pension Scheme. That is still continuing. I understand, in no other State such a Bill has been passed. So, to a certain extent, in Kerala agricultural workers are benefited. In addition to this, the Kerala Assembly passed another Bill for setting up Agricultural Labour Welfare Fund. They set up a Fund for providing some help to them. [\[MSOffice36\]](#)

There is a contribution by the owner, by the labour and by the Government. With that a lot of fund has been organized which will be beneficial to the agricultural labourers. I am not saying that we have achieved everything. At this juncture, we are going to celebrate 150 years of India's Freedom struggle and we have also completed 60 years of Independence. But we have not started to think about the agricultural labourers. However, because of this Bill, the hon. Minister may kindly look into the matter and take the initiative to have a legislation applicable to all over India as has been done in Kerala. It was done in 1981 in Kerala and no other State has done it. It was discussed and postponed again and again. There are a number of opinions about it, but nothing has been brought out so far. Therefore, my humble submission to the hon. Minister is that he may kindly think over on the proposal of this Bill. In the light of this Bill, Welfare Fund and agricultural labourers' pension and some other help also may kindly be considered and a fresh legislation may be brought in this House.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (MAVELIKARA): I am happy that my colleague, Shri Hannan Mollah, has introduced a Private Members' Bill on Agricultural Workers' problems. It gives an opportunity for all of us to express our views on one of the most vital problems faced by the large number of poor people in this country, the unorganized workers especially the agricultural workers.

It may be recalled that the UPA in its National Common Minimum Programme has solemnly assured that they would bring forward such a legislation and enact it, if voted to power. I would like to remind you that you are in power for the last three years. During the course of these three years, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri B.K. Handique, assured this House that such a Bill would soon be introduced. Now years have passed but the Bill has not yet been introduced.

Now when the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of Labour were discussed, the young and the dynamic Minister, Shri Oscar Fernandez, assured the House again that he would introduce the Bill during this Session itself. Probably, this Session would come to an end in another ten days. So while replying the debate, we will eagerly wait for hearing from you when exactly you are going to introduce the Bill.

I may recall that in Kerala a legislation has been enacted almost three decades ago providing better condition, job security and welfare to the agricultural workers. You may be interested to know that this legislation was discussed by Shrimati Indira Gandhi as a model legislation. In a letter to all the Chief Ministers, she recommended that such a legislation should be enacted by all the States. But, unfortunately, nothing has happened.

Why are we insisting for this legislation? Among the 93 per cent of the total workforce in India of which more than 50 per cent are women belonging to the unorganized sector. To them, all these years even minimum justice was denied. We are only saying that social justice should be done to these people. I remember late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's words while describing what should be the path of Indian economic development he unambiguously told that India needs economic growth with the social justice. It is that we are demanding.

श्रम और रोजगार मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री अंसुवर फर्नांडीस) : आदरणीय सभापति महोदय, सबसे पहले मैं आपको और सदन के सारे मੈम्बरान को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ विशेष रूप से श्री हन्नान मोल्लाह जी को, जो यह प्रॉइवेट मैम्बर बिल लेकर आये हैं। मैं सरकार और लेबर मिनिस्ट्री की तरफ से उनको धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। इसके साथ-साथ मैं अपनी रिटन स्पीच भी आपके सामने रखना चाहता हूँ।

Sir, at the outset, let me express my gratitude to all the hon. Members, especially hon. Shri Hannan Mollah ji, who have drawn the attention of this august House towards an extremely important and relevant issue with regard to the welfare of agricultural workers. Agricultural workers constitute a high percentage of workforce in India. According to the survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation in 1999-2000, more than 60 per cent of the workforce in the unorganized sector is engaged in agricultural work. In spite of the fact that these agricultural workers have such a huge numerical strength, they are extremely vulnerable to exploitation on account of their low level of literacy, low level of awareness and persistent social backwardness.

Shri Hannan Mollah ji has rightly pointed out that there is no uniform Act in the country with regard to conditions of work and other social security measures like accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, etc. for agricultural workers. I fully agree with him that these sections are a deprived lot and a large number of them are living below the poverty line. The hon. Members have rightly pointed out that a majority of the agricultural workers belong to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and the Most Backward Classes. Successive Governments in the past have been attempting to address the issue relating to unorganized sector workers, especially those in the agricultural sector. Shri Hannan Mollah ji has correctly stated that the Labour Ministers' Conference in 1981 also considered a Bill for agricultural workers but no conclusion could be arrived at as there were differences amongst the State Governments. Though some of these differences still persist, yet our Government is committed to bring about a comprehensive legislation for the welfare of workers in the unorganized sector which will include agricultural labourers. I have reiterated this the other day. Again, I am reiterating it today. We are making all efforts to present this Bill sometime during this Session of Parliament itself...*(Interruptions)* We are bringing it forward in this Session itself.

I would also like to inform the House that the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector is also working on a Bill relating to the working conditions of workers in the unorganized sector. As soon as the recommendations of the Commission are received, we will start working on this Bill also.

Shri S.K. Kharventhan has rightly highlighted the problems of agricultural labour. He has also drawn the attention of the House towards certain health-related issues, including the insurance against accident.

Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat ji made a mention about the absence of any social security, including insurance and pension, for agricultural labourers.

Shri Shailendra Kumar ji indicated that a large number of labourers working in the field of agriculture, forestry, fishery and plantation fall in the category of landless labourers. The tasks that these labourers perform are hazardous in nature. Hence, there is a requirement for life and health insurance coverage, their pension and other such facilities.[\[R38\]](#)

16.00 hrs.[\[R39\]](#)

He also mentioned that as the workers are unable to get employment in rural areas, they migrate to cities. We are hopeful that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme will address this problem. The hon. Member has also drawn the attention of the House towards child labour. We have taken a number of steps including rehabilitation of child labour to tackle this issue.

Shri Sugrib Singh, while highlighting the plight of agricultural labour, expressed his desire that an insurance scheme be put in place for agricultural workers and unorganized labour. He also expressed apprehension over coverage of the existing insurance scheme. I would like to assure him that all his suggestions would be given due consideration while formulating the schemes for workers in unorganized sector.

Shri C.K. Chandrappan has correctly pointed out that there should be strong political will to bring about a legislation for the welfare of the workers in the unorganized sector. As mentioned earlier, our Government has commitment and desire to bring about such a legislation at the earliest. We have stated this in our National Common Minimum Programme also. The Prime Minister has, time and again, spoken about the commitment of the Government for bringing this Bill. The UPA Chairperson Shrimati Sonia Gandhi is very much concerned about the plight of workers in the unorganized sector. So, I again repeat that we are going to bring this Bill soon.

Shri Francis George drew the attention of the House towards the plight of farm workers on account of their being totally unorganized. He also pointed out that there is no enforcement of laws, specially the Minimum Wage Act, which is already in the Statute Book. The Members of this august House are aware that the enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act is primarily done by the State Governments. However, we have been writing to the State Governments to implement this Act in letter and spirit. I shall continue in my endeavour to impress upon the State Governments to strictly enforce the provisions of this law.

Dr. Sebastian Paul gave the example of Kerala with regard to various social security schemes. I would like to inform this august House that while formulating welfare schemes for workers in the unorganized sector, we are examining the schemes that are being presently administered by various State Governments, including the States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu which have brought in many welfare schemes.

Shri Mitrasen Yadav drew the attention of the House towards the plight of building and other construction workers. In this context, I would like to state that with a view to formulating and implementing welfare measures for building and other construction workers, a legislation was enacted in the year 1996. The implementation of this Act was to be undertaken by the State Governments. I must admit that all the State Governments have not been forthcoming in this regard. We have been taking up this issue with the State Governments in various fora and I shall continue to do so in future also. I have recently taken up this matter with the Labour Ministers of State Governments when I met them here at the National Conference on Labour and impressed upon them to take up this issue seriously.

Dr. R. Senthil, in his speech, has provided some useful suggestions with regard to the Bill presented by Shri Hannan Mollah. His suggestions will be useful to us while we consider formulating the Bill for the welfare of the workers in the entire unorganized sector.

Sir, today also, continuing the debate on the Bill, many Members have given their suggestions. Shri Kiren Rijuju from Arunachal Pradesh spoke on 60 years of our Independence. I would like to assure him that at least on the occasion of 60th anniversary of our Independence we are going to bring in some relief to our agricultural workers and I congratulate Shri Hannan Mollah for bringing this Bill.[\[R40\]](#)

I [\[r41\]](#) would also like to say that a Group of Ministers are working on this Bill and maybe within a very few days, we are going to take up the matter in the Cabinet. He has also said that we should consult other Ministries. That is exactly, why a Group of Ministers' team is constituted to go into the entire matter.

Shri Sudhakar Reddy has also given his valuable suggestions. He has emphasized that minimum wages are not paid to the agricultural workers uniformly all over the country. He has also said that it is not enough if we give 100 days of minimum work to our agricultural workers and that we should make it to 200 days. I think, first we have the responsibility to cover the entire country. We have covered 200 districts and now we have extended it to 330 districts. Let us cover all the districts and then let us examine the scheme and see what we can do about it.

Shri Mahtab also gave very good suggestions about social security, the Japanese Model and things like that. I think, we will go into these models before we finalise the scheme.

Shri K.S. Rao also spoke that the Government itself is bringing forward this Bill and he has given a lot of suggestions about providing housing and extending the benefits to the workers.

Shri Appadurai has also spoken about effective implementation. Shri Satyanarayan Jatiya, a former Labour Minister also spoke and said that they had made a beginning and we should progress. Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi also said that we are all committed to the farming community. He has spoken about the suicides being committed by the farming community. It is very essential that we do something to prevent these suicides in the country.

Mr. Shivanna, *Namaskara*.

Shivannaji has spoken in Kannada for that I congratulate him.

Shri Yerrannaidu, a senior Member of this House also said that the fruits of prosperity should be shared with the poor in the country, which is a very right expression and we are very much committed to do that.

Shri Hamza has said that priority should be given to the agricultural workers. Shrimati Sujatha has also spoken and has given very good suggestions that we should bring the Bill early.

Since, we are bringing this Bill in the Parliament in this Session itself, I would appeal to hon. Shri Hannan Mollah to kindly withdraw this Bill and not to press for passing of this Bill as a Private Members' Bill.

I thank once again the Chair and all the hon. Members for extending their full support in this debate.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Hon. Chairman Sir, I congratulate the hon. Labour Minister for his reply and for accepting all the uniform suggestion of this whole House that such a Bill is required.

You know that we have discussed it at length. For three decades this movement is going on all over the country by the agricultural workers in the unorganized sector. About 97 per cent of the workers in the unorganized sector were living without an umbrella of law and without the protection of law for so many years.

We are happy that this UPA Government has taken some initiatives and the Commissions have also prepared the draft. I have also been consulted to comment on the draft. There were certain limitations. I have already written about them because there is no provision of proper registration, maintenance of records and identification of those agricultural workers in the unorganized sector.[\[r42\]](#)

[\[r43\]](#) There will create problem regarding migration. That provision, I have suggested, should be included. I have given in writing to the Commission that there are four or five points where it is lacking. I have also requested that all the suggestions made in the House should also be considered because about 21 Members from all the political parties have extended not only their support, but also they have given valuable suggestions on different aspects of these two Bills. The Government is proposing three Bills, one is for agricultural workers, one is for non-agricultural unorganized sector, and one is for pension and welfare for both the Bills. But I suggest that in the basic Bills, that should be mentioned. Either pension and welfare should be mentioned in these two Bills itself, or if they are not mentioned in the Bills, there should be a specific backing clause that pension and welfare will be provided according to the separate Bill being brought for the welfare. Legal backing should be there in the mother Bill, otherwise it will create some confusion. That is also necessary.

Another suggestion that many hon. Members have given is that these people should have right to form union. We fight for making a law and then we have to fight to implement it. In our country the basic problem is implementation. Many good laws are there but they are only in the shelf of the offices; they are not being implemented. If people know about their rights, and fight for their rights, the Government and officers are forced to implement it. The unorganised sectors should be organized; they should form their associations. They should bring pressure on the Government to implement the Bill. So we are very happy that our waiting period of three decades – so many years – is over. As he has promised that within this Session, this Bill will be brought. We hope that 97 per cent of the workers of the unorganized sector of the country will get certain legal protection on the basis of which they can further build up their battle, their struggle to get a better deal in this country. I thank the Government; I thank all the Members. I hope that before this Session ends, we will go back home with the new Act for the welfare of the unorganized sector. Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Mollah, are you going to withdraw it, as the hon. Minister has assured you?

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Sir, on the basis of the assurance given on the floor of the House, I would like to withdraw the Bill with the support of the House.

I beg to move for leave to withdraw the Bill to provide for the welfare of agricultural workers and to regulate their employment and conditions of service and for matters connected therewith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill to provide for the welfare of agricultural workers and to regulate their employment and conditions of service and for matters connected therewith."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : I withdraw the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item No. 47, Shri Mohan Singh – not present.

Item No. 48, Shri Chandrakant Khaire.

