

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1978 - 79)**

(SIXTH LOK SABHA)

TWENTY-SEVENTH-REPORT

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & IRRIGATION
(Department of Rural Development)**

Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Twentieth Report of the Estimates Committee (Sixth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation (Department of Rural Development)—Survey of Unemployment in Rural Sector.

Presented to Lok Sabha on 21 December, 1978



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STUDY GROUP 'J'

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

(1978-79)

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2. Shri Mukhtiar Singh Malik—*Convener*
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10. Shri Vgrasen
11. Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty-Seventh Report on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Twentieth Report of the Estimates Committee (Sixth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Department of Rural Development)—Survey of Unemployment in Rural Sector.

2. The Twentieth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 28 April, 1978. Government have furnished their reply indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the Report on 4th October, 1978. The reply was examined by the Study Group 'J' of the Estimates Committee (1978-79) at their sitting held on 15 December, 1978. The draft Report was adopted by the Estimates Committee on 18 December, 1978. The Report contains only one recommendation. Since the final reply of the Government is still awaited the same has been included in Chapter V.

4. An analysis of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 20th Report of the Estimates Committee is given in the Appendix.

NEW DELHI;

December 20, 1978

Agrahayana 29, 1900 (S)

SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA,

Chairman,

Estimates Committee.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

1. This Report of the Estimates Committee deals with action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their 20th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (Department of Rural Development)—Survey of Unemployment in Rural Sector—which was presented to the House on the 28th April, 1978.

2. Action Taken notes have been received in respect of recommendations contained in the Report.

3. The action taken notes on the recommendations/observations contained in the Report has been categorised as the recommendation of the Committee in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited. The recommendations and action taken notes of Government have therefore, been included in Chapter V.

Survey of Unemployment in Rural Sector

4. The Committee had taken note of the various definitions and concepts of unemployment and under-employment evolved and the varying estimates of the number of unemployed and under-employed made by different organisations from time to time including those provided by the 27th round of the National Sample Survey (October 1972—September, 1973). The results of the NSSO 32nd round of Survey on Unemployment and Under-employment, which is the latest survey, are expected to be available by June, 1979.

5. In the context of the decision of the Government to remove unemployment in the country in the next 10 years, the Committee had expressed the view that it was necessary, nay vital, to have a clear picture of the size of the problem of unemployment from season to season and year to year not only to know the magnitude of the challenge before the country but also to watch the rate of progress of the various employment generating schemes in solving this problem. They had felt that unless comparative figures of unemployed persons were available at frequent intervals in respect of each State and also each District, the Government might be severely handicapped in devising employment schemes suited to areas where the unemployment position might be acute and in making timely and on-course improvements in the schemes in the light of the results.

6. In the opinion of the Committee the data collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation would not be sufficiently useful to the Government in the implementation of their 10-year plan to remove unemployment in the country first because it becomes available after long intervals

(5-6 years), the survey being taken up once in five years, and secondly because their data which also included even those persons like small children who should be in schools rather than counted in labour force and for whom Government might not be called upon to provide employment on urgent basis, tended to give a rather inflated picture of the problem.

7. Against this background the Committee had felt that there was need to evolve simpler concepts and methodology to assess the magnitude of unemployment at more frequent intervals than those adopted by the National Sample Survey Organisation. With this approach the Committee made the following suggestions for instituting a system of collecting data on unemployment in the rural sector:—

- (a) There should be a standing arrangement at the level of the basic unit of administration in each State to assess the number of unemployed persons residing in the jurisdiction of that unit. The basic unit may be a village or a cluster of villages, a town, a tehsil headquarters or the like which forms an administrative unit at the local level.
- (b) The task of collecting statistics on unemployment should be entrusted to the already existing agencies at the level of these units, viz. Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Anchal Panchayat, Municipality, any other unit of local self-government or Revenue Officer, assisted by local school teachers, gram-sewaks etc.
- (c) Each designated authority should open a Register of Job Seekers and enter therein names of all those persons (men and women) residing within its jurisdiction, who offer themselves for employment. The registration should preferably be twice a year—once during cropping season and again during non-cropping season.
- (d) If at any time, unusual seasonal conditions, like drought, develop in any part of India or some natural calamity occurs, special efforts should be made to collect data about persons who seek work during that period.
- (e) To ensure regular and timely collection of statistics it will be desirable to offer incentives to the agencies (including corporate bodies) and personnel engaged in this task.
- (f) As regards minimum age for registration in the Register of Job Seekers, the Government may determine the age limit keeping in view of the I.L.O. Convention on the subject, provisions of Article 45 of the Constitution, the Employment of Children Act, 1938 and the Employment Guarantee Schemes of the

Maharashtra Government. But children who should be studying in educational institutions should not be registered as job-seekers for this purpose. The age limit thus determined should be observed uniformly in all the States and Union Territories.

- (g) The statistics collected at the basic unit level should be consolidated at the level of Tehsil/Block, District and State Headquarters under the guidance of the Statistical or Planning Unit of the State Administration. The All India figures should be consolidated by a central agency to be nominated for the purpose.
- (h) The statistics collected and consolidated at each level should be subject to sample checking.
- (i) As conditions may vary from State to State or even from region to region in the same State, the details of Machinery and methodology for each region/State may be carefully worked out to suit the local conditions. In doing so, the machinery and methodology evolved in Maharashtra for the purpose for registering the names of job-seekers may also be studied.
- (j) The State Governments should be made responsible for all operations in this process within the States and the Central Government should co-ordinate the work among the States.

8. In their reply (October 1978) Government have stated that "the National Sample Survey Organisation carries out enquiries on different subjects in different years to meet the data requirements for policy planning and decision-making and the programme allows for only quinquennial surveys on employment and unemployment. As such, the usefulness of the NSSO data in the monitoring of unemployment programmes is admittedly very limited."

9. Government, however, feel that "regular collection by local agencies of data on items like unemployment and underemployment would be extremely difficult taking into consideration the complex nature of these concepts and the difficulty of the level of agency in understanding and putting across such difficult concepts and other organisational problems." They are of the view that "if the onus of registration of unemployed person is placed on the local authorities (without obligation on their part to issue any registration card), even the rough estimates of rural unemployment based on such registered job-seekers may be subject to substantial bias either in favour of or against some particular socio-economic groups in the locality." "As regards organisational problems", it has been pointed out that "even in the case of registration of simpler vital events such as births and deaths under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969, a large number of such events are often missed due to lack of suitable organisation particularly in the rural areas".

10. Government have intimated that with a view to evolving a suitable scheme of monitoring rural employment and unemployment, experimentation with some schemes in some selected CD Blocks is under active consideration of the Government and that the ten-point scheme outlined by the Estimates Committee could be taken up as one such scheme for experimentation.

11. Another proposal under consideration of Government is for the States to canvass periodically the NSS schedule of the 32nd round on employment and unemployment in some selected C.D. Blocks, for estimating levels and changes in the rural labour force situation."

12. It has also been stated that "the Ministry of Labour have constituted in March 1978 a Committee on Employment Service Organisation in India which has *inter alia* been asked to examine the possibilities of involving the Employment Service for dealing with rural unemployment. The report of that Committee is awaited."

13. The Committee are not happy at the lackadaisical response of the Ministry to their recommendation to institute a new and simple system of collecting data on unemployment in the rural sector. National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) is the only Government body at present conducting surveys on unemployment and under-employment and such surveys are held only once in five years. According to the Ministry's own statement, "the usefulness of the NSSO data in the monitoring of unemployment programmes is admittedly very limited." In view of the decision of the Government of India to remove unemployment in the country in a period of 10 years and of the fact that the data on unemployment collected by NSSO would not be sufficiently useful to Government in this campaign against unemployment—a fact which has also now been admitted by Government—the Committee had felt that, without prejudice to what is being done by NSSO, there was an imperative need to evolve simpler concepts and methodology to assess the magnitude of unemployment at more frequent intervals not only to know the magnitude of the problem but also to monitor the rate of progress of the various employment generating schemes which the Government may be starting for the purpose.

14. The Committee were fully conscious of the inadequacies of administrative units at the village and Tehsil levels to understand the complex nature of concepts of unemployment and under-employment, as evolved by NSSO, and to collect the detailed data, as required under these complex concepts. It was precisely because of this awareness about the state of administrative set-up at grass root level that the Committee had suggested a simple concept of unemployment and a simple methodology of registering names of all those persons, other than children, who offered themselves for employment.

15. The Committee were of the opinion that it should be possible to collect such simplified data at the level of Panchayats, Municipalities and other local agencies with a little guidance and assistance and by the State Governments concerned.

16. The Committee regret to note that the Government have not shown any sense of seriousness or urgency to consider the simple system for data collection suggested by them. The Government have stated that the experimentation with some schemes of monitoring rural employment and unemployment in some selected CD Blocks "is under active consideration" and that "the ten-point scheme outlined by the Estimates Committee could be taken up as one such scheme for experimentation". The Committee are unhappy at such a half-hearted response from the Government to their recommendation. The Committee would like to reiterate that action on the 10-point scheme suggested by them to collect data on unemployment in rural sector should be initiated without delay and the Central Government should not spare any effort to persuade the State Governments to join in this scheme whole heartedly and earnestly, as without their active cooperation and willing participation the experiment would not succeed.

17. The time is the essence of the matter. One year out of the ten years, within which the unemployment problem is to be solved by the Government, is almost over. The Committee would like the Government not to lose any more time to set in motion a simplified system of data collection on unemployment at grass root level as otherwise they will be hard put to evaluate progress of their employment generating schemes or to identify areas needing urgent attention.

CHAPTER II

Recommendations that have been accepted by Government

Nil.

CHAPTER III

Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies

Nil.

III CHAPTER IV

Recommendations in respect of which replies have not been accepted by the
Committee

Nil.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED.

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 69)

"All that the Committee wish to state is that in view of the decision of the Government of India to remove unemployment in the country in the next 10 years, it is necessary, nay vital, to have a clear picture of the size of the problem of unemployment from season to season and year to year not only to know the magnitude of the challenge before the country but also to watch the rate of progress of the various employment generating schemes in solving this problem. The Committee feel that unless comparative figures of unemployed persons are available at frequent intervals in respect of each State and also each District, the Government may be severely handicapped in devising employment schemes suited to areas where the unemployment position may be acute and in making timely and on-course improvements in the schemes in the light of the results. In the opinion of the Committee the data collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation would not be sufficiently useful to the Government in the implementation of their 10 year plan to remove unemployment in the country firstly because it becomes available after long intervals (5-6 years) and secondly because their data which also includes even those persons, like small children who should be in schools rather than counted in labour force and for whom Government may not be called upon to provide employment on urgent basis, tends to give a rather inflated picture of the problem".

Reply of Government

The position taken in the paragraph is accepted subject to the following observation. In the NSS 27th round (October 1972—September 1973) and 32nd round (July 1977-June 1978) information on labour force status (working, unemployed and out of labour force) was ascertained in respect of all persons of age five years or more. The tabulated results are, however, available for different age groups, including the conventional age group 15—59 years so that the users of data could include or exclude age groups to meet their requirements. Information on the employment of children is needed per se, to meet the requirements of Ministry of Labour and other agencies on the extent to which children are put to work. It may also be mentioned that rate of weekly unemployment (the number of unemployed expressed as percentage of labour force comprising employed

and unemployed) in the age group 5+ years is around 4.3 per cent. The rate of unemployment by restricting the analysis to the age group 15—59 years would rise nominally to 4.5 per cent. This is because persons seeking employment in the age group 5—14 and 60+ years constitute a small fraction of the total population in the concerned age group. As the number of persons in the labour force outside the conventional age group amounts to over 28 million out of a total number of 215 million in all age groups put together, it would be desirable to collect the data on labour force status for all individuals as attempted in the recent rounds of the National Sample Survey.

[O.M. No. H.11011/16/78-RME Dated 4th October, 1978]

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 70)

“Against this background, the Committee feel that there is need to evolve simpler concepts and methodology to assess the magnitude of unemployment at more frequent intervals than those employed by the National Sample Survey Organisation. The Committee are aware that the results obtained under any other system may not be detailed or scientific as available under the NSS system. But in the opinion of the Committee, for the success of the time-bound campaign against unemployment, it will be more useful to have for day to day reference purpose even rough and less scientifically collected statistics about actually unemployed persons every 6 months or so than to have more detailed and more scientifically collected statistics after a lapse of 5-6 years. The Committee, therefore, feel that without prejudice to what is being done at present by the National Sample Survey Organisation there is an imperative and urgent need to evolve a new mechanism to feed the Government with estimates of unemployed persons in each State and in each District for successful implementation of their 10 year plan to remove unemployment.”

Reply of Government

The National Sample Survey Organisation carries out enquiries on different subjects in different years to meet the data requirements for policy planning and decision-making and the programme allows for only quinquennial surveys on employment and unemployment. As such, the usefulness of the NSSO data in the monitoring of unemployment programmes is admittedly very limited. The impression that the NSS data become available after a lapse of 5 to 6 years is not borne out in the recent rounds of NSSO. The NSSO has been making strenuous efforts to cut down the time-lag in the release of results. The latest survey taken by NSSO on employment and unemployment was during the 32nd round which was completed only on 30th June, 1978. As regards the release of the results of this round, a report based on quick tabulation of the data for the first sub-round is expected to be released in October this year. Similar reports based on

the subsequent three sub-rounds will follow at intervals of a month or so, so that by January next year a report based on the whole round will be available. Detailed tabulation of the data is being taken up with the help of the Computer Centre of the Department of Statistics and reports based on this are expected to be available by the middle of next year.

[O.M. No. H. 11011(16)/78 RME dated 4th October, 1978]

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 71)

"It is with this approach in view that, based on their study of the problem of Rural Employment, the Committee wish to make the following suggestions for instituting a system of collecting data on unemployment in the rural sector :—

- (a) There should be a standing arrangement at the level of the basic unit of administration in each State to assess the number of unemployed persons residing in the jurisdiction of that unit. The basic unit may be a village or a cluster of villages, a town, a tehsil headquarter or the like which forms an administrative unit at the local level.
- (b) The task of collecting statistics on unemployment should be entrusted to the already existing agencies at the level of these units, viz. Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Anchal Panchayat, Municipality, any other unit of local self-government or Revenue Officer, assisted by local school teachers, gram sewaks etc.
- (c) Each designated authority should open a Register of Job Seekers and enter therein names of all those persons (men and women) residing within its jurisdiction, who offer themselves for employment. The registration should preferably be twice a year—once during cropping season and again during non-cropping season.
- (d) If at any time, unusual seasonal conditions, like drought, develop in any part of India or some natural calamity occurs, special efforts should be made to collect data about persons who seek work during that period.
- (e) To ensure regular and timely collection of statistics it will be desirable to offer incentives to the agencies (including corporate bodies) and personnel engaged in this task.
- (f) As regards minimum age for registration in the Register of Job Seekers, the Government may determine the age limit keeping in view the I.L.O. Convention on the subject, provisions of Article 45 of the Constitution, the Employment of Children Act, 1938 and the Employment Guarantee Scheme of the

Maharashtra Government. But children who should be studying in educational institutions should not be registered as job-seekers for this purpose. The age limit thus determined should be observed uniformly in all the States and Union Territories.

(g) The statistics collected at the basic unit level should be consolidated at the level of Tehsil/Block, District and State Headquarters under the guidance of the Statistical or Planning Unit of the State Administration. The All India figures should be consolidated by a central agency to be nominated for the purpose.

(h) The statistics collected and consolidated at each level should be subject to sample checking.

(i) As conditions may vary from State to State or even from region to region in the same State, the details of Machinery and methodology for each region/State may be carefully worked out to suit the local conditions. In doing so, the machinery and methodology evolved in Maharashtra for the purpose for registering the names of job-seekers may also be studied.

(i) The State Governments should be made responsible for all operations in this process within the States and the Central Government should co-ordinate the work among the States.

Reply of Government

Regular collection by local agencies of data on items like unemployment and underemployment would be extremely difficult taking into consideration the complex nature of these concepts and the difficulty of the level of agency in understanding and putting across such difficult concepts and other organisational problems. It is well-known that the activity status of a person (employed/partly employed/unemployed) in rural areas in India often varies widely over the year depending on the agricultural seasons, size of land-holding of the household and his/her socio-economic status. Registering of job-seekers only twice a year as recommended by the Estimates Committee will not be able to take into account all the above factors. Further, if the onus of registration of unemployed person is placed on the local authorities (without obligation on their part to issue any registration card), even the rough estimates of rural unemployment based on such registered job-seekers may be subject to substantial bias either in favour of or against some particular socio-economic groups in the locality. As regards organisational problems, it is note-worthy that even in the case of registration of simpler vital events such as births and deaths under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act 1969, a large number of such events are often missed due to lack of suitable organisation particularly in the rural areas.

2. However, with a view to evolving a suitable scheme of monitoring rural employment and unemployment, experimentation with some schemes in some selected CD Blocks is under active consideration of the government. The ten-point scheme outlined by the Estimates Committee could be taken up as one such scheme for experimentation. Another proposal under consideration is for the States to canvass periodically the NSS schedule of the 32nd round on employment and unemployment in some selected C.D. Blocks, for estimating levels and changes in the rural labour force situation.

3. It should also be noted that the Ministry of Labour have constituted in March 1978 a Committee on Employment Service Organisation in India which has *inter alia* been asked to examine the possibilities of involving the Employment Service for dealing with rural unemployment. The report of the committee is awaited.

[O.M. No. H. 11011(16)/78 RME dated 4th October, 1978]

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 72)

"The Committee need hardly stress that the success of this experiment would depend on the active cooperation and willing participation of the State Governments and they would, therefore, like the Central Government not to spare any efforts to persuade the State Government to join in this scheme whole heartedly and earnestly".

Reply of Government

The Central Government would continue to seek active cooperation and willing participation of all State Governments in whatever system of monitoring unemployment in rural areas that would be finally evolved after careful examination of various proposals outlined in the statement on Paragraph No. 71.

[O.M. No. H. 11011(16)/78 RME dated 4th October, 1978]

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 73)

"The Committee would be keenly watching the progress of implementation of this scheme and would like to be informed of it within a period of six months."

Reply of Government

The Committee would be informed of the progress as desired.

[O.M. No. H. 11011(16)/78 RME dated 4th October, 1978]

NEW DELHI:

December 20, 1978

Aeroharyana 29, 1900 (Saka)

SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA

Chairman,

Estimates Committee,

APPENDIX

(Vide Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE 20TH REPORT OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE (6TH LOK SABHA)

I.	Total number of recommendations	1
II.	Recommendations which have been accepted by Government	
	Number	Nil
	Percentage of total	—
III.	Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies	
	Number	Nil
	Percentage to total	—
IV.	Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee	
	Number	Nil
	Percentage to total	—
V.	Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited	
	Number	
	Percentage to total	100 %