

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) The Government proposes to constitute a High Powered Body for evolving criteria for inclusion of any or more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Amendment in Pension Scheme

1996. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the Employees Pension Scheme 1995 including payment of Gratuity Act, 1972;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the criteria for calculating pension;

(c) whether there is any proposal to reduce the eligibility for pension to 30 years from 33 years;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the scheme likely to be reviewed after every two years instead of three years?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) to (e) A bill to amend the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 so as to enhance the ceiling on maximum amount of gratuity from Rs. 1.00 lakh to Rs. 3.50 lakh is presently pending before the Parliament. Under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 the employee becomes eligible for pension after completing 10 years; contributory service. Under the scheme, there is a provision for valuation of the pension fund and review of pensionary benefits on an annual basis. As such the question of reduction in the eligibility condition from 33 years to 30 years' service and review of the scheme after every two years does not arise. As regards amendment in the pension scheme the same is an ongoing process and will be made as and when considered necessary.

Social Justice to the Backward Classes

1997. SHRI K. P. NAIDU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Welfare Ministry is being renamed;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed by the Government to provide social justice to the backward classes besides SCs and STs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI

MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) The Ministry of Welfare has been renamed as "Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment" (Samajik Nyaya Aur Adhikarta Mantralaya).

(b) The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes are still suffering from historical disabilities and they want social justice and empowerment, and not mere welfare. The decision to rename the Ministry is guided by a stronger commitment on the part of Government to the values of equality and socio-economic liberation than is conveyed by the concept of welfare.

(c) The Central Government has provided 27% reservation in vacancies in Civil Posts and Services under the Government of India in favour of Other Backward Classes from 8th September, 1993, subject to the exclusion of socially and economically advanced persons/section known as "Creamy Layer." In order to promote the economic development of OBCs, the Central Government has set up a National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation for providing institutional credit for viable self-employment units. The additional steps proposed by Government to provide social justice to the backward classes, besides SCs and STs, include;

- (i) Reservation to OBCs in Educational and Technical Institutions;
- (ii) Introduction of various schemes for the educational and social development of OBCs; and
- (iii) Inclusion of more castes/communities in the Central list of OBCs on the advice of the National Commission for Backward Classes.

Pending Anti-Dowry Cases

1998. DR. SANJAY SINH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of anti-dowry cases pending in the court in Delhi alongwith the number of such cases under investigation;

(b) whether a large number of women are misusing the anti-dowry provision to harass their husbands and their relatives;

(c) if so, whether the Union Government propose to make suitable amendments in I.P.C. so as to protect the innocent persons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Delhi Police have informed that there are 6586 anti-dowry cases pending trial in the Courts in Delhi. The number of such cases under investigation is 900.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.