

'No survey on child labour since 1996'

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By Our Staff Reporter

Children

ISLAMABAD, June 25: No statistics are currently available to ascertain the exact volume of child labour in the country as the latest survey conducted in this regard was in 1996.

The National Assembly was told that according to the National Child Labour Survey carried out by the Federal Bureau of Statistics in 1996, the total number of economically active children (below the age of 14 years) was 3.313 million.

It was informed that another survey about the overall labour force, conducted in 2001-02 by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, suggested that 33.59 million people comprised the total labour force of the country. Out of the total labour force, 3.72 million persons do not have regular jobs.

The National Assembly was told that the total population of Pakistan as on January 1, 2004, was estimated at 150.59 million. The

House was also informed about the steps being taken by the government to reduce unemployment in the country.

It was told that about one million new jobs would be created as a result of implementation of different uplift programmes and projects for which an allocation of Rs202 billion had been made in the Public Sector Development Programme 2004-05.

Provision of technical/vocational training in employable skills is also being introduced, besides expansion of information technology infrastructure for employment of educated youth.

One of the reasons for the significance of IT industry is its potential to generate employment for educated manpower in the country. A large number of projects aimed at promoting IT and its education are being implemented by the ministry of science and technology.

Similarly, credit facilities for self-employment are being extended through SME Bank, Khushali Bank, Zarai Taraqiati Bank and assistance under Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF).

According to the Economic Survey 2004-05, the labour force participation rate is higher in rural areas as Pakistan's economy is mainly agrarian and agriculture is a family occupation there. The female labour force participation rate is far less as compared to the male participation rate and their participation in economic activities is low.

Unemployment has increased from 7.82 per cent in 2000 to 8.27 per cent in 2004. Similarly, unemployment in rural areas, which was 6.94 per cent in 2000, had risen to 7.55 per cent in 2004, while urban unemployment has decreased from 9.92 per cent in 2000 to 9.8 per cent in 2004.