

Sir. As per the estimate of the Planning Commission quoted in the National Human Development Report- 2001, the incidence of poverty at the national level declined from 44.48 per cent of the population in 1983 to 26.10 per cent in 1999-2000. In absolute terms, the number of poor declined from about 323 million in 1983 to 260 million in 1999-2000.

(b) Among the major States, Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu had more than 50 per cent of their population below the poverty line in 1983. By 1999-2000, while Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had reduced their poverty ratios by nearly half, Orissa and Bihar continued to be the two poorest States with poverty ratio of 47 and 43 per cent respectively.

(c) and (d) The poverty estimates are used as the criterion for allocation of funds under the major rural poverty alleviation programmes. Hence, the poorer States stand to benefit relatively more in terms of allocation of resources for their efforts towards alleviation of poverty in their States.

Failure of scientific institutions to attract adequate manpower

991. SHRI S.K. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has sounded an alarm about the failure of the scientific institutions to attract adequate manpower as science has few takers among youths;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that Indian science has failed to contribute much while comparing with other countries not to speak of developed countries, as there is little incentives for scientific research and development; and

(c) if so, what steps the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) The Steering Committee on Science and Technology for the Tenth Five Year Plan constituted by the Planning Commission has recognized that talented students are generally not prone to opt for a job in science because they do not see it as a rewarding and satisfying career. Indian science has made significant contribution both in basic research as well as technology development

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particularly in the areas of atomic energy, space sciences, agriculture, bio-technology, drugs and pharmaceuticals, industrial catalysts, food processing, construction materials, leather processing etc.

Government have always placed high emphasis on constantly improving standards of Research and Development and to encourage students to take up science as a career. A number of initiatives have been taken to improve the quality of science education and scientific temper, such as National Children Science Congress, National Science Olympiad Programme, Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana, Swarn Jayanti Fellowship for Young Scientists, Better Opportunities for Young Scientist in Chosen Areas of Science & Technology for training in leading international laboratories, fast track programme for young scientist, bio-technology fellowship to young students and scientists, CSIR programme on youth for Leadership in Science, opportunities to young science students for interaction with Nobel laureates, visiting fellowships, summer schools, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Fellowship Scheme, training programmes to enable students interact with scientist in national laboratories, etc. The Government also supports NGOs under the "Improvement of Science Education in Schools Scheme" to take up innovative programmes amongst the youth for inculcation of scientific temper.

Changes in Gadgil Formula

†992. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring about changes in the Gadgil Formula on allocation of Central assistance to the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that the States performing fairly well in the field of State tax collection and fiscal management stand losers as a result of the proposed changes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Since the States have sought a revision of the Gadgil Formula for allocation of Normal Central Assistance to States, Planning Commission has sought their views and suggestions

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.