

GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Planning Commission has been engaged in an exercise to determine what would be the most effective role for the Commission in the altered domestic and global scenario. A draft proposal prepared to this effect is presently under submission to the Prime Minister for consideration and convening a meeting of the Full Planning Commission.

(c) Yes, Sir. Monitoring the impact of various Plan Schemes including those in agriculture, wasteland, drought prone areas etc. is being emphasised by the Planning Commission. Government is committed to bring about a regionally balanced agricultural development in the country. Development of wastelands, drought prone areas and desert areas has also been given a high priority. In this context, the Department of Land Resources has been created in the Ministry of Rural Development to take a holistic and long terms view on development of land resources in the country. Programmes for development of these areas are being taken up on a water shed basis.

(d) The ongoing Ninth Five Year Plan outlines the initiatives and programmes for improvement in education. Among the special efforts that have been taken up, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is to ensure that every child in the 6 to 14 age group is provided with elementary education by the year 2010; The nutritional support to primary education (Mid-day Meal Scheme) is being continued to boost universalisation of primary education by increasing enrolment, retention, attendance and improving the nutritional status of children. A new scheme called National Programme for Women's Education is being formulated. In addition, there is an emphasis on increasing education opportunities in the educationally backward blocks. More importantly in the course of the Plan, Government has significantly stepped up its budgetary support to the Education Sector.

Technology Fund for Small Scale Sector

1372. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Planning Commission Panel has recommended the establishment of Rs. 5000 crore Technology Fund for the Small Scale Sector;

(b) if so, the details of this recommendation;

[3rd August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) whether the Planning has completed discussions with the concerned Ministers in this regard;

(d) the reaction of other Ministries to this proposal;

(e) when this scheme or fund will come into operation; and

(f) the full details of implementation of this recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Study group on Development of Small Scale Enterprises (SSEs) under the chairmanship of Dr. S.P. Gupta, Member, Planning Commission, has recommended that funds should be made available for modernisation of SSEs at a concessional rate of interest on easy terms. It is estimated that Rs. 1000 crores annually may be required for five years to meet with the needs of the SSEs.

(c) to (f) The discussion with various Central Ministries have not been completed. It is not possible to indicate a time frame for a decision on the scheme or its implementation.

Up on the Verge of Bankruptcy

†1373. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the Government's reaction to the news-item captioned "Uttar Pradesh Divaliyapan Ke Kagar Par, Yojana Ayog Ke Chaukane Wale Aklan" appeared in "Punjab Kesari" dated the 5th July, 2000;

(b) what action Government proposes to take to avoid the situation from deteriorating further by the end of the current year;

(c) what measures have been taken by Government to stop the dependence of the State only on the internal as well as external loans; and

(d) what measures have been taken to ensure that Government is not forced to beg from World Bank?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.