

(b) A wide range of programmes is required in order to make an impact on the situation. The National Policy on Education 1986 gives very high priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and recommends adoption of an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children's retention at school.

Three centrally assisted schemes have been started to (i) provide minimum essential facilities to improve primary schools through 'Operation Blackboard' (ii) strengthening and reorganisation of the Non-Formal Education Programme to provide education to school drop-outs, children from habitations without schools, girls who cannot attend whole day schools and working children (iii) reorganise and restructure Teacher Education including establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training to increase teacher competence and provide academic support. In addition, new text books in accordance with the National Policy on Education, 1986 are being developed upto elementary level in a time bound programme by NCERT and State Governments. Various incentive programmes like free supply of uniforms to girls students, free mid-day meals, free text books and attendance scholarships are being implemented by the State Governments/UT Administrations in the State Sector.

Induction of F-7 Aircraft by Pakistan

169. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Pak move to induct F-7 aircraft acquired from China; and

(b) if so, the action Government propose to take to further strengthen India's defence?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) All developments having a bearing on India's security are kept under constant review by the Government and all necessary measures taken to safeguard it.

Reviewing the public distribution system in the country

170. SHRI NARESH C. PUGLIA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to review the public distribution system in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Government propose to include more items for sale through fair price shops; and

(d) if so, what are the details of these items?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) and (b) The administration of the Public Distribution System is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/UT Administrations. Powers under the Essential Commodities Act and other similar legislations vest with them.

Efforts are made on a continual basis to strengthen and streamline the system. Guidelines have been issued to State Government/UT Administrations from time to time advising them regarding effective co-ordination among the agencies engaged in PDS, involvement of consumers' representatives in the vigil on its functioning, strict enforcement of the provisions of law, better coverage of population, introduction of mobile shops, etc. The Central Government also provides assistance to State Govts/UT Administrations under selected schemes for remote and hilly areas.

(c) and (d) The States and Union Territories have also been advised from time to time to include more items of mass consumption for sale through fair price shops. Several States have included additional items such as pulses, tea, salt, soap, matches, coarse grains etc. for distribution through fair price shops.