

indicated below :

(i) it should have a population of 25,000 or more ;

(ii) concentration of tribal population in a T.D. Block should be 66 2/3% ;

(iii) the area of a T.D. Block should be between 150—200 sq. miles; and

(iv) it should have viability of functioning as a normal administrative unit.

(b) Only Ghatgaon fulfils the above criteria.

(c) Ghatgaon could not be approved due to the general decision that no new Tribal Development Block be opened during the IV Plan and the existing resources be utilised in incorporating a new stage III in the existing Blocks so that what has been achieved so far, is sustained and consolidated.

PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

1536. SHRI JAGAN NATH BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING AND HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Society for Prevention of Blindness has submitted to Government a 15 year programme for the prevention of blindness in the country ;

(b) if so, when it was submitted, the action taken thereon and the details thereof; and

(c) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor, and the time by when action is proposed to be taken ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND HOUSING AND HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA) : (a) Yes.

(b) Dr I. P. Agarwal of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, had submitted a 15 years perspective plan for prevention of blindness in 1967. The Planning Commission did not approve the scheme for inclusion in the Fourth Five Year Plan either as a Central or Centrally

Sponsored Scheme. This plan was however, forward to all State and Union Territory Governments for its implementation from their own resources as far as possible.

(c) Does not arise.

MODIFICATION OF CO-OPERATIVE LAWS

1537. SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact Government are considering to modify the existing co-operative laws; and

(b) if so, the main features thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHEB SHINDE) : (a) and (b) Co-operation is a State subject. Some suggestions relating to exclusion of money lenders from becoming members of Co-operative Societies, reservation of seats on the board of management of cooperatives for weaker sections, restriction of holding office simultaneously in a number of institutions and on terms of holding offices, regulation of loan to office bearers, regular election by an independent authority, independent tribunals etc. were made to State Governments for incorporation in their cooperative laws.

The Central Government is also considering to prepare a comprehensive legislation to cover the Multi-State Cooperative Societies replacing the existing Multi-Unit Cooperative Societies Act, 1942, which is an enabling Act.

INCREASE IN THE RATE OF ILLITERACY

1538. SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA : Will the Minister of EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the rate of illiteracy in the country has increased as compared to the previous year; and

(b) if so the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI D. P. YADAV) :

(a) There is no evidence to show that the rate of illiteracy has increased in the