

cent of the doctors and thirty-six per cent of the NASA scientists in the US are Indians, were quoted;

(b) whether the US Government or the Central Government has conducted any survey or published any report in this regard;

(c) whether the NASA administration and some Indian newspapers have declared these figures, as incorrect;

(d) whether these figures were quoted from an internet spam; and

(e) if so, the reasons for giving such an answer in the House?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH):

(a) to (e) In reply to supplementaries arising out of Starred Question No. 142 on 10.3.2008 certain statistics in regard to Indian professionals placed in the United States were mentioned on behalf of the Government. The thrust of the reply was that Indian students are doing reasonably well and they are occupying high positions, which reflects well on the quality of education that is being provided in India. The said statistics were taken from an article published in a reputed Telugu Newspaper. Subsequently it has been brought to the notice of the Government that there could be some variations in those statistics, for which sincere regrets are expressed. Yet it may be mentioned that the thrust of the said reply is corroborated by the figures given by "the American Community — Asians: 2004" compiled by the US Census Bureau according to which the percentage of the entire American population (including Indians) of age 16 and above engaged as Management professionals and related occupations is 34.1%, of which, the percentage of Asian Indians is 60.6%.

Running of Distance Education Courses

***543. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Distance Education Council, IGNOU is the only competent authority to give recognition/approval for running Distance Education Courses, both technical and non-technical, to universities/institutions;

(b) whether there is any role of University Grants Commission (U.G.C.) in respect of Distance Education Courses run by Central/State/Deemed universities;

(c) whether it is mandatory for the Indian Universities to take approval for their distance education/technical courses from All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE); and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH):

(a) As per the provision under Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Act, 1985 the Distance Education Council (DEC) is responsible for promotion, coordination and determination of standards of teaching, evaluation and research in distance education system in the country.

(b) The University Grants Commission (UGC) by virtue of the provisions under UGC Act, 1956 has the general duty for promotion and coordination of university education and for determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities, including those offering distance education courses, and for the above purpose cause an inspection. Further, the universities, including those offering distance education courses, can confer only such degrees, as may, with the previous approval of the Central Government, be so specified by UGC in this behalf by notification, in the official Gazette.

(c) and (d) All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Act, 1987 empowers AICTE for proper maintenance of norms and standards in the technical education system of the country. Therefore, the universities offering courses through distance mode in technical and professional education, are required to maintain the standards prescribed by AICTE.

Compilation of schemes of Ministry of HRD

***544. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK:** Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has published any booklet/compilation of all the schemes of the Ministry, with the text of the schemes, as approved, alongwith the prescribed forms;

(b) if so, whether the publication is available in Government approved bookshops;

(c) whether they are available on websites also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH):
(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Booklets have been published under different schemes from time to time and have been made available free of cost. The Annual Report of the Ministry also contains details of most of the schemes. However, it does not contain the prescribed forms. The details of the Annual Report containing various schemes administered by this Ministry are available on the Ministry's Website: www.education.nic.in.

HVDC line between India and Sri Lanka

***545. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:** Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering any proposal to lay an under-sea High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission line between India and Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details thereof and what are the salient features thereof;

(c) whether Government is considering such power transmission projects with other neighbouring countries also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) A feasibility study is being proposed for establishing a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission system of 1000 MW capacity using overhead and submarine cables between India and Sri Lanka. The system will have two HVDC terminal stations at both sides of the link. According to preliminary estimates, the length of the HVDC line may be approximately 350-400 kms. This would consist of about 200-250 kms overhead HVDC line in India and between 30 to 50 kms undersea cables and finally about 125-150 kms of overhead line in Sri Lanka. The study would facilitate estimation of capital cost based on route survey and would also examine the techno-economic feasibility of the interconnection.

(c) and (d) India is already having cross-border AC transmission links with Bhutan and Nepal. Further interconnection with Bhutan is proposed with Punatsanghchu-I HEP in Bhutan. Existing transmission lines between India and Nepal are at 132 kV and below and are operated in radial mode. A 400 kV D/C transmission line between Muzaffarpur (India) and Dhalkebar (Nepal) interconnection through a joint venture of ILFS, Nepal Electricity Authority, PTC India Limited and Powergrid is also under consideration.