

[3 March, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

(iii) All 6—14 age children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

The approach is community-owned and village education Plans prepared in consultation with Panchayati Raj Institutions will form the basis of district elementary education plans. Funds to states would be channelised to registered societies at state level. There will be a focus on districts having low female literacy among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will cover the entire country with a special focus on educational needs of girls. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other children in difficult circumstances.

The formal approval for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is under process and it is likely to be operationalised soon.

(c) The scheme is proposed to be monitored at all levels with community support.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Improving the quality of Higher Education

*134 MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:.

(a) whether Government have any plans to improve the quality of higher education, particularly in the Rural and suburban sectors;

(b) whether the colleges there are fully funded by the Government;

(c) whether Government extract qualitative work from the teachers; and

(d) whether Government have any plans to make colleges in the country self-supporting and independent of dependence on Government aid?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. It has always been part of Government educational policy to promote quality at all stages of education including higher education. The main emphasis has been in the areas of access, relevance and quality. The University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up in 1956 to make provisions for the coordination and determination of standards in universities. The • National Policy on Education 1986 and its accompanying Programme of Action 1992 have further laid emphasis on this. Quality improvement in higher education is sought to be achieved through a wide range of interventions. These include schemes such as Special Assistance to College located in Rural Backward Areas, Special Assistance Programme, Academic Staff Colleges, Strengthening of Infrastructure in Science and Technology etc.

An Inter University Centre namely the National Assessment and Accreditation Council was also set up in 1994 so as to look at quality issues in the higher education sector. The National Board of Accreditation has similar responsibilities on the technical education side. There is a move to make accreditation compulsory in higher educational institutions within a definite time frame.

To give a further boost to the quality of teachers in higher education, the Government has also provided for revision of pay scales of the university and college teachers with a view to attracting better talent in this area. Colleges are being funded as per prescribed norms laid down by the UGC. In so far as the colleges under the State Governments are concerned, there are separate funding arrangements for them by the concerned State Governments.

Government has no intention whatsoever of withdrawing financial support to higher education institutions. In fact, the Ninth-Plan allocation for higher education has been increased from Rs. 800 crores during the Eighth Plan period to Rs. 2000 crores. Universities and colleges are also being encouraged as a part of already existing educational policy to become financially more resilient so as to upgrade their standards.