

(b) There is no scientific statistics available about the number of child prostitutes in India. However, the Government is very concerned about this phenomenon and feels that the problem of child prostitution is linked to the general problem of prostitution in the society.

(c) The Government of India has set up a Central Advisory Committee to frame recommendation/plan of action for both legal and non-legal approaches for the rescue and rehabilitation of child prostitutes. The recommendation of the Committee have been sent to the concerned Central Ministries/Departments and to the State Governments for taking appropriate action.

Many of the State Governments have set up State Advisory Committees within their jurisdiction for suggesting measures for the care, protection, treatment and rehabilitation of the young victims rescued from brothel houses.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 supplemented by the Indian Penal Code prohibits trafficking in human beings including children. Higher Penalties, punishments have been prescribed in cases relating to the prostitution of a child or a minor, under the act.

The Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 provides for the care, protection, treatment and rehabilitation of neglected or delinquent juveniles including girls.

The enforcement of the Acts is the responsibility of the state Governments. The Central Governments have issued instructions from time to time to all States/Union Territories for strict implementation of the Act. Meetings with DGPs of all the States have been held in this regard.

The Government has an extensive network of Short Stay Homes and Homes set up under the Juvenile Justice Act for protection and rehabilitation of the victims. The services of qualified doctors, psychiatrists are available in the Short Stay Homes.

These services are available on part time basis in the Homes under Juvenile Justice Act.

A National Plan of Action for the SAARC Decade (1991-2000 AD) of the girl child focussing on survival, protection and development of the girl child has been formulated. A special set of interventions for adolescent girls has been institutionalised through the ICDS infrastructure. Programmes of action and advocacy are being implemented to project positive images of girl children so as to bring about changes in societal attitudes towards them.

Deteriorating standard of higher education

589. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the standard of higher education in the country is rapidly deteriorating;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government propose to bring about improvement in the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPTT. OF EDUCATION & DEPTT. OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

In pursuance of NPE-86, the Government & UGC have taken several initiatives to improve the standard of education in institutions of higher learning. Some of the major steps taken in this regard are:

— Revision of pay scales of college and University teachers w.e.f. 1-1-1986. Opportunities provided for training and career, advancement for teachers. All-India Eligibility Test introduced to attract best talent to the teaching profession.

— Academic staff colleges established for re-orientation of newly appointed university and college Teachers.

— 27 Curriculum Development Centres in Sciences and Humanities established to modernise curricula. Model curricula has been prepared for 27 disciplines in undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

— Financial assistance provided by UGC For improvement in teaching and research under Special Assistance programmes, like Centres of Advanced Study, COSIP, COSIST, etc.

— Inter-University Centres established by UGC to provide front-line facilities and services for advancement of research in the university system.

— Higher priority given to grant of autonomy to selected Colleges and University Departments.

— Guidelines for implementation of an Academic Calendar circulated. These guidelines emphasize observance of at least 180 teaching days by Universities/Colleges.

— Regulations for minimum standards for the award of first degree, minimum working days etc. notified by UGC.

Irregularities in IGNOU

590. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was intended to be a pioneer institution in the country in the field of education;

(b) if so, the extent to which IGNOU has come to its ideal and goals;

(c) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Indian Express of 28th April, 1994 under the caption probe demanded into IGNOU

bunglings' to the effect that IGNOU is infested with administrative, academic and financial irregularities; and

(d) if so, the points brought out in the news and the action taken on each of them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPTT. OF EDUCATION AND DEPTT. OF CULTURE) (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established for the introduction and promotion of Open University and distance education system, and for the coordination and determination of standards in the country. The University has been endeavouring to introduce and develop distance education programmes and the promotion of the open university system. The progress made by the University in various spheres of its activities is briefly indicated in the Annual Report for the year 1992-93.

(c) and (d) According to the information furnished by IGNOU, the points made in the news item and the position relating to them are briefly as follows:

(i) The IGNOU has been mired in controversies over reports of bunglings; there are 22 cases pending in courts against the University.

— Since its inception in 1985 the IGNOU has opened 16 Regional Centres, 229 Study Centres and has an annual admission of about 80,000 students. In April 1994 there were 26 cases pending in various courts against the University. Of these 13 were in respect of service matters filed by present/former employees. 5 cases have been filed by students of the University in various consumer courts against non-receipt of study material. 8 cases have been filed by outsiders against the University.

(h) A group of IGNOU employees called "Save IGNOU Group"