

MR. CHAIRMAN: As everybody knows, the question is about option and production. Production follows option. So...*(Interruptions)* Just a minute. Nuclear options means the option to produce nuclear bomb. Simple. And what is the meaning of option? The meaning of option is...*(Interruptions)* Just a minute. So, it is a question that can be transferred to External Affairs.*(Interruptions)* Will you please sit down? Let me complete. One can argue that when the Prime Minister is there, he can reply because, ultimately, the decision on nuclear option will be that of the Cabinet. It will not be of a particular Minister. But you should also understand. You should also think whether on such a delicate subject you would like the Prime Minister to commit. That is why I would request you...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: It is a matter of opinion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So far as the transfer is concerned, it is the right of the Chair to decide.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Why was it admitted then? How was it allowed first?*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Sir, we are not challenging your right to transfer. Not for a moment do I...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have taken my decision. That is all.*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: May I be permitted for half-a-minute? I crave your indulgence for half-a-minute.*(Interruptions)* We are not challenging your right to transfer, for a moment. Please do not misunderstand. On ordinary principles of... The Chair has permitted me.*(Interruptions)* We are not challenging your right.*(Interruptions)* Sir both the things are important.*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: What is the 'delicacy' you have mentioned?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will explain to you in my Chamber.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You will explain to me about the atom bomb?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will explain everything. Now, Question No. 181.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Setting up of a regional office of the UGC in Madras

*181. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:†

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to set up a Regional Office of the University Grants Commission in Madras for the convenience of the Southern States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) to (c) According to the information furnished by University Grants Commission, the Commission had considered a proposal to set up Zonal Offices of the U.G.C. at its meeting held on 18-12-1989 and has constituted a Committee to examine the matter.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think, the answer is not complete. I think I can give more information to the hon. Minister

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Pasumpon Tha. Kiruttinan.

AN HON. MEMBER: Let the Minister put the question to him.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Is he contesting for the post of a Minister?

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Thank you for your compliment. Sir, it is a fact that the Government had serious thought over it and there is a mention in the Education Policy document regarding the formation of State Councils of Higher Education. The U.G.C. appointed a Committee consisting of four Vice-Chancellors, five Secretaries of Education from different States and some officials to work out guidelines for the setting up of State Councils of Higher Education. The Committee have finalised their recommendations. These recommendations have been submitted to the Government. I think, these recommendations are under the consideration of the Government. I would like to know whether any final decision has been taken on these recommendations of the Committee set up by the U.G.C.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is about the setting up of a regional office of the U.G.C. Your supplementary is entirely different. You are now talking about the State Councils. The supplementary does not arise out of the main question. You had asked about the setting up of a regional office.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: I am asking about the U.G.C. The Minister himself has said that the Commission has constituted a Committee. The U.G.C. appointed a Committee consisting of four Vice-Chancellors, five Secretaries of Education...

MR. CHAIRMAN: They know.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: Sir, the Committee was set up to work out guidelines for the setting up of State Councils of Higher Education. Higher education comes under the U.G.C. As I said, the recommendations have been submitted to the Gov-

ernment by the Committee. I would like to know whether any final decision has been taken on the recommendations made by the Committee regarding the formation of State Councils.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, obviously a lot of information sometimes confuses one and, therefore,...

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: You are confused.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I would like to point out that the U.G.C. did discuss the question of zonal offices for the U.G.C., to co-ordinate the activities of the Commission with various universities situated in the zones of colleges. Then, according to the 1986 Policy, to which the hon. Member has referred, the State Councils for Higher Education have been set up only in one State-Andhra Pradesh. And five other States have indicated that they would move in that direction.

Sir, here the two points got mixed up. If the State Councils for Higher Education are set up, then the question whether these zonal UGC offices would be required or not has to be examined. Therefore, the proposal about the zonal offices of UGC was considered by the Commission and it never came before the Government because it was never finalised. That Committee is having another look by another committee. I can understand that one can say that this is a question of delay. But the projection of the State Councils has also come in between, as the hon. Member has referred, and two or three issues got mixed up. Therefore, it is being considered. We also want to speed up the process of deliberation and consideration over this matter.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: My second supplementary is that with more than 130 universities and 5000 colleges to look after, it is no wonder that the UGC is unable to cope with its numerous responsibilities. With a student population of

about 31 lakh 36 thousand and nine hundred and eighty six and 5012 colleges, it is hardly surprising that the UGC can neither scrutinise the proposals, nor release funds for the on-going items and it has failed to implement its own policies by allowing a dubious family of capitation fee colleges to spring up in different States, including Tamil Nadu. Decentralisation of UGC has been recommended time and again as a means of ensuring better functioning. Not only that, the offer of UGC assistance for the development of universities and colleges in the Southern States was not commensurate with their needs and eligibility. Nearly 80 per cent of the UGC funds are being spent on a few Central universities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN: So I would like to know from the Minister whether a conference of Education Ministers of Southern States held at Hyderabad had urged upon the Government and the Education Minister to hold a meeting of the Southern States' Education Ministers to discuss the proposal for establishing a UGC branch in the South. I would like to know whether such a meeting was held by the previous Government. If it is not so, what are the reasons? Also is this Government going to have such a meeting in the near future? If not, why not?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, we are always open to deliberations and discussions with the Ministers coming together in zones or otherwise.

About the previous Government, I can only say that we do not have the same stand as the previous Government adopted. But the hon. Member has asked three or four questions. I would like to make it thoroughly clear that the UGC did not finalise anything about the zonal sub-offices. It is being processed. And the Education Council has also come up in only one state. It is coming up; that indicated there.

Then the question regarding capitation fee has been asked. This question is also not related with the main question. Therefore I need not answer on that point, of course, we are against capitation fee. We want it abolished. There is no doubt about that. And we are making all efforts in that direction.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I am sorry, Sir, he says, we are for its abolishing. Before I ask my supplementary, I want to ask: abolishing what?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Abolishing the capitation fee.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I am sorry, I did not catch that. The hon. Minister has made a statement that they would like to change what the previous Government did because they do not agree with them. Sir, the UGC is a statutory body which exists and there have been repeated demands that because the UGC is rather centralised and it is very difficult to even get things sanctioned or approved for people from our parts of the country, for instance, from distant places they have to come to Delhi for every thing—there should be a certain amount of decentralisation and there should be regional offices. On the one hand, the Minister says that he is for the Southern States coming together and the previous Government did not encourage it. Since it would be undoing what the previous Government did, would he consider, therefore, the proposal which has been made to have regional offices of UGC set up in different parts of the country? I would like to know whether he is any opinion on the matter rather than just referring it to the Committee. When you refer a matter to a committee, there must be some specific points which are referred to a committee. Now what is referred to this Committee? Is it the idea, or is it undoing of the previous Government's ideas, or are they giving some specific proposals to that Committee on which they should decide? What is the point of reference to the Committee.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: It is a Government by committees.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: There are only committees and committees. We do not know what is referred to the committee. Then he says that recommendations are being studied by the Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are setting up a number of Committees in the Rajya Sabha.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: But there is no action by anybody.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: This question may also be referred to a committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Headed by Mr. Subramanian Swamy.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I don't mind.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: We are all for decentralisation and we are working in that direction. This Committee was set up on 18-12-89 by UGC. The process was started earlier. Therefore, we have not held it up. And UGC is not a newly set-up Commission; it is the old Commission still continuing. Therefore, we are not alleging any motivation. But they are having different kinds of minds in the sense that once they have identified certain zonal centres, then the question came of Education Councils at the State level. Then, whether you are going to have a 2-tier coordination or 3-tier coordination. Decentralisation is a must. It has to be worked out. We are all for that.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: There is no contradiction between the State Education Councils and the Zonal Councils because the State Councils will automatically come under the Zonal Committees of the UGC. The State Councils do not directly come under the UGC. They have to be in a way affiliated to the Zonal Offices. So they are not contradictory to each other.

MR. CHAIRMAN: At the moment the question is very simple. About Zonal Offices of UGC they have appointed a Committee to look into the question whether they should have Zonal Offices; and if so, where and how many? That is all.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: He says, because there are State Councils, they are not decided on which should exist. I am saying that the two are not contradictory; both can exist.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That does not arise from it.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: It is the Minister who has deviated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did you say that?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: I did not say that. It is being studied. I have not negated anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has not negated anything. He is a positive Minister.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: She should look in that light.

SHRI J. S. RAJU: My question may not be related to the main question. My question is, will the Minister be pleased to state why the vacancy of the Vice-Chairman of the UGC is not being filled up till date? If this is going to be filed, by when will it be done? And the last part of my question is, while filling up this vacancy, will the Minister be pleased to consider a scholar from the Southern States?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, we are speeding up the process of filling up the vacancy?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 182.