

schools. As he knows, we cannot interfere in the management of the private unaided schools and minority schools. That is the law of this country. So, we will not be able to bring the CBSE guidelines in consonance with what is being suggested.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, from the reply of the hon. Minister, according to him, the affiliation bylaws and guidelines are 'adequate'. He has used the word 'adequate'. Provisions to regulate the functioning of minority and private schools are adequate. It is his reply, Sir. According to me, when the existing procedure and provisions are adequate to take care of the problem, why are there are umpteen no. of complaints in terms of looting by the private schools when people come for admission? They are charging like anything and they are going too far. It is in everybody's knowledge that the private institutions and the minority institutions are exploiting the public. I would like to know whether this kind of complaints are coming to the notice of the Government. If so, whether your existing procedure or existing law or existing system or whatever you call it, is adequate. According to me, it is totally inadequate and totally ineffective.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the comment which is being made is not being made on any Central law but on the State laws because all this is done under the State Acts. ...*(Interruptions)*... I would request the hon. Member to go to the Chief Minister of the State that he represents and tell him how inadequate his laws are. If they wish to take action, we will support them.

Joint working group for education

*346. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:††

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

(a) whether a first of its type a joint working group on education has been set up between the United States of America (USA) and India;

(b) if so, whether this joint working group will have academic and Government representatives from both countries;

(c) if so, to what extent the USA has agreed to provide assistance and funds to India for improving higher education; and

(d) whether India has allowed foreign institutions to come in the country and the countries which have agreed to provide financial assistance for higher education?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) During the visit of Under Secretary, Political Affairs, US State Department in the month of June 2009, a Joint Working Group (JWG) headed by the Union Minister of Human Resource Development and his counterpart US Secretary of Education, has been proposed for cooperation in

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy.

the field of education between India and USA. While the composition of the JWG, modalities of its functioning, agenda items to be discussed, are yet to be finalized through mutual consultations, it is proposed to include some representatives of the Government as well as academia in the said JWG from the Indian side.

(d) The Government is contemplating a law to put in place a mechanism to facilitate the entry of reputed foreign educational institutions, accredited in their country of origin, for further improving the quality of higher education and research in the country while at the same time denying access to foreign educational institutions of dubious quality. However, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has framed regulations limited to collaborations in technical education and six such collaborations have been registered by the AICTE under the said regulation. There is no specific agreement for the provision of any particular amount of financial assistance by any country for higher education.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Sir, first of all, let me congratulate our hon. Minister for HRD for taking interest and for his determination to have modification in the educational system. In that background, he has succeeded to have a meeting with high dignitaries, his counterparts in the month of June in the United State of America. Here I would like to submit that about 90,000 students are going annually from India to the US for education, Sir. Out of ten world-class universities, six universities are in the United States of America. Therefore, the Minister is determined to attract their technology and their quality to India. He has held a meeting with his counterpart also. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister merely had the opportunity to meet the Under Secretary, Political Affairs, US State Department when he happened to visit India or whether he took pain to come all the way and take this meeting. I would also like to know...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You ask one question.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: It is only one question, Sir. What is he going to do ultimately to have the results? He says that it has been discussed for half-an-hour or thirty minutes. What is the outcome that has come? What is the time limit when the country is going to get the attractive technical education from the US system?

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this was an official meeting with the Under Secretary, Mr. William Burns on June 11, 2009. We discussed the matter of collaborating in the area of education at length and we decided to set up a task force to take this relationship forward. The task force, hopefully, will meet in the next three months to determine as to what should be the road map ahead for collaboration between educational institutions in the United States of America and India.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: My second question is: in the reply Minister said, "Government is contemplating a law to put in place a mechanism to facilitate the entry of reputed foreign educational institutions for further improving the quality of higher education." In this connection, I would like to

know what is the clarity, what is the actual concept he is going to introduce – by introducing the law – to have this mechanism to facilitate entry of reputed foreign educational institutions in future.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: We would like educational institutions of very high quality to enter into India either by way of twinning arrangements or by way of grant of degrees based on the collaborations that they might wish to have or based on their entry as universities in India. But, we want to assure the House that we will not want and we will not accept fly-by-night operators or institutions of dubious quality. We will only allow institutions of very high quality and, I think, that will serve the needs of the community here as well because at this point of time, about a lakh of students go every year to the United States alone. In the discussions that I have had with some representatives of foreign institutions, I have been given to understand that they wish to provide quality education, perhaps, education of, at least, the quality, if not higher quality, in India at a much reduced cost.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, this issue of permission being granted to foreign providers has been a contentious issue and I really appreciate. The note of caution and the cautious path which had been adopted by our dynamic Minister's predecessor and in the context of the discussion then, my question to the Minister is that we know that there are very active education entrepreneurs in the United States of America who see the Indian education market as a very lucrative market for earning profits. In that context, we also have the experience of our private institutions in India and some questions which had been raised as far as school education is concerned are even more valid and relevant as far as institutions of high education are concerned. My question is: before going into agreements with any foreign providers, will the Government consider bringing in social control legislations for all private institutions in India, see how that works and then go ahead? Otherwise, I fear, Sir, that the problems of equity that we are having in accessibility in institutions of high education will be even more difficult for the mass of students in our country.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: I am glad that the hon. Member has raised this question. I might inform the hon. Member that we are equally concerned about the issues of both equity and quality and whatever mechanism that we set up. At the moment even quack, private, unaided educational institutions in India and minority institutions in India, there is a judgement – not just one but several judgements of the Supreme Court – which do not allow the State Government and Central Government to interfere, both in terms of fee structures as well as in terms of establishment and administration. That is the law of the land and one of the issues that we will have to grapple with is, if that law of the land prevails in India then, what do we do about foreign education providers who are unaided? Will we apply a different yardstick to them or will we apply the same yardstick to them as we apply to education providers in this country? Now, these are very complex issues and we will certainly very carefully look

at all these issues before we move forward. Caution is well advised but that also does not mean that we should not seize the opportunities that are awaiting us in the education sector.

MS. MABEL REBELLO: Sir, the AICTE had signed, two years ago, the Washington Accord with the US in order to help our institutions to upgrade themselves and also allow easy mobility of our students to have access to US universities. Nothing has been done in the last two years. Opportunity has been slipped for the last two or two-and-a-half years. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to prevail upon the AICTE to take advantage of the Washington Accord, so that we can upgrade our institutions to international standards and also allow our students to have easy access to international universities.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, the hon. Member is very right in raising this issue. We seem to have missed the bus this year. But, I want to assure the hon. Member that we are moving forward in a steadfast fashion not to be able to miss the bus next year so that, with the Washington Accord, we will have equivalence of degrees accorded under the Accord and we will be able to have the kind of exchange which we have not had before. We will quickly move in that direction.

SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Sir, I would like, through you, to ask the hon. Minister of HRD a question, I welcome the foreign universities of high quality coming into India, subject to some regulations. Is the Government thinking of putting some restriction on the profits they make here? I think, they should create surplus for their own expansion and growth, but not for sending money back home. They would come here for getting students and faculty. They have enough incentives, if I may mention, through you, to the hon. Minister, for coming here. The quality institutions like Harvard, MIT, Caltech, etc., have enough incentives. The profit should not go back. Profit motive should be there. It should be used in India for the growth of institutions. They have other causes for coming here.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, all these are very, very important and significant issues. We are deliberating them. When the law is in place, we will, certainly, discuss it in this and in the other House. But, I can assure the hon. Member that the policy of the Government of India, as of today, is not to allow profit-making institutions even in India to flourish in the field of education, because education is a charitable exercise. Therefore, I don't understand why a different yardstick should be applied. But, these are not the issues on which I can, in the Question Hour, give a definite answer. There are issues which are of great concern. Sir, hon. Member has mentioned about the foreign education providers coming here to take away faculty. I think, we should also recognise the fact that there are thousands and thousands of children in this country whose parents do not have the wherewithal to fly abroad and receive quality education. If quality institutions come here at 1/3rd of the price, you can impart education three times the number and with the kind of population dividend that we have we need to empower our children and this is one of the strategies that we must adopt in our way forward.