

from various quarters, from time to time, for conversion of certain State Universities to Central Universities. The Central Government had taken a decision to establish, during the Eleventh Plan, one central university, in each such State which did not have a Central University. All States, except Goa, now have at least one Central University. There is no proposal to convert Sambalpur University into a Central University, as the Central University for Orissa has been established in Koraput district..

Children dropping out of schools

995. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether to achieve the target in Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), Government has drawn up any schemes to check dropout rate at primary levels;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that more than eight per cent of children are still dropping out of primary schools in the country and State Governments' efforts to check such dropouts are not found satisfactory; and

(d) if so, to what extent the Union Government's schemes/plans are going to check dropout rate at primary levels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) The cohort dropout rates at primary education level have declined consistently from 40.70% in 2000-01 to 25.60% in 2006-07 as per the Select Education Statistics (SES) brought out by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. At elementary level the dropout rate has declined from 53.70% in 2000-01 to 45.90% in 2006-07. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a flagship programme for the universalisation of elementary education. A multi-pronged approach has been adopted under SSA for reducing dropout rates. The interventions include, *interalia*, opening of new schools, improving school infrastructure, recruiting additional teachers, providing annual school and teacher grants, conducting regular training of teachers, providing academic support to teachers, and free text-books to children. In addition, SSA provides intervention for community support for children who are dropouts, promotes education of girls, children with special needs (CWSN) and children from disadvantaged groups.

Schemes for small and medium enterprises

996. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes/programmes of his Ministry implemented towards the betterment of the small and medium enterprises in the country;

(b) the total budget allocation received by Ministry during the last fiscal year for the purpose; and