

- (a) whether University Grants Commission (UGC) has been funding some universities found unworthy by his Ministry's expert panel;
- (b) if so, the facts and the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government/UGC proposes to review the norms for funding various universities; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) University Grants Commission (UGC) has been funding eligible institutions, including institutions deemed to be universities in the present Plan. Two of these institutions, funded by the UGC, have been found unfit to continue as such by the Review Committee, constituted by the Government to review the existing institutions deemed to be universities. However, the matter is currently sub judice in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Viplav Sharma vs. Union of India [WP(C) No.142 of 2006].

- (c) No, Sir. There is no such proposal at present.
- (d) Does not arise.

Promotion of higher education for poor

1762. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that students belonging to poor, marginal and weaker sections of society are deprived of opportunity, accessibility and affordability of higher education; and
- (b) if so, whether Government is exploring ways and means such as scholarships, free hostel accommodation, loans at low interest, etc. for such students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) A Central Sector Scheme has been approved by Government to provide interest subsidy for the period of moratorium on the educational loans taken by students from economically weaker sections with parental income upper limit of Rs.4.5 lakh per annum, from scheduled banks under the Educational Loan Scheme of the Indian Banks' Association, for pursuing recognised professional/technical courses in India. The scheme is available on the Ministry's website www.education.nic.in.

Quality of education in rural areas

†1763. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (a) the status of educational facilities being provided in rural areas of the country;
- (b) the details thereof; State-wise;
- (c) whether Government is aware that the quality of education in rural areas has been declining continuously;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether Government is considering any corrective measures in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (e) The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 (as modified in 1992) provides for a National System of Education, which implies that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality. It also accords priority for improvement of the standard of education at all levels for children living in rural and urban areas.

The NPE recognizes that the rural areas, with poor infrastructure services, will not get the benefit of trained and educated youth, unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification of employment opportunities. Pursuant to this, a large number of schemes/programmes are under various stages of implementation, which predominantly address the educational needs of rural areas including technical education. The schemes/programmes include Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day Meal scheme (MDM), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme, Mahila Samakhya and the scheme of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas have been opened in rural areas specifically in order to provide quality education to rural children. There are other institutions such as Gandhigram Rural Institute and the National Council of Rural Institutes which address issues of reducing disparities in education.

As per an independent study commissioned by Government of India the number of out of school children has decreased from 1.35 crore in 2005 to 81 lakh in 2009.

The Saakshar Bharat scheme also focuses on women's literacy, especially in rural areas. 80% overall literacy is targeted by the end of the 11th Plan period. The States/UT Governments have been informed that under Saakshar Bharat 70 million non-literates are to be made literate, of which 60 million will be women.

Promotion of higher education

†1764. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.