

20 NITs have an intake capacity of 13321 undergraduate and 6690 postgraduate students per year. The NITs also contribute to Ph.D. and research studies with nearly 923 students involved in research during 2009-2010.

#### **Level of girls' education**

†\*417. SHRI KAPTAN SINGH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the level of education among the girls living in rural areas is quite low as compared to that of the girls living in urban areas;
- (b) if so, the measures taken by Government to deal with the situation; and
- (c) the details of the schemes being run by Government to educate girls?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The National Achievement Tests conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) show the following:—

- In Mathematics rural girls in Class III and VIII performed significantly better than their urban counterparts, and in the case of Class V there is no significant difference in achievement of rural and urban girls.
- In Language, girls from urban area performed significantly better than their rural counterparts in Class V and Class VIII; in Class III there is no significant difference in performance of rural and urban girls.
- In Environment Studies, there is no significant difference in achievement of rural and urban girls at Class V level. In Science and Social Science, girls from rural areas performed significantly better than girls of urban areas in Class VIII.

(b) and (c) To enhance access and retention of girls in schools, SSA provides financial support *inter-alia* for free textbooks to all girls upto Class VIII, organizes back to school camps for out of school girls and bridge courses for older girls. In addition there are two focused interventions for girls, namely National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme to reach out to girls from marginalized social groups in educationally backward blocks (EBBs). At the secondary level, the Department of School Education and Literacy has launched the scheme of girls' hostels in EBBs to facilitate girls to continue their education at secondary stage.

#### **Soil Health Cards**

\*418. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) what are Soil Health Cards;
- (b) the objective and purpose behind issuing Soil Health Cards; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.