

present number of university level institutions is 504. A mix of initiatives, in stepping up public investments, encouraging not-for-profit private participation and public-private-partnerships, is the strategy towards capacity expansion in higher education.

Multiplicity of entrance examinations for higher education

1421. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that a meeting of State Education Ministers was held recently;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether they reached any consensus on reducing the multiplicity of entrance examinations for higher education; and
- (d) if so, how much time it will take for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A Conference of State Education Ministers' was held on 18th June, 2010. In the Conference, a child centric vision of education including higher education was shared with States. In particular, States were exhorted to join hands in reducing the multiplicity of entrance examinations for entry to higher education as also the need to develop a core curriculum in schools for the subjects of science and mathematics, without in any manner restricting or affecting the authority of States in prescribing syllabi and conducting examinations.

The need to establish a National Institute for Assessment and Evaluation; giving weightage to be accorded to performance in Class-XII in entrance tests for professional and other courses; extending the system of Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation for assessment of students upto Class-X; enunciating a National Vocational Education Qualification Framework and promoting value education are some of the other important issues that were discussed in the Conference of State Education Ministers.

Establishment of central university in Darjeeling

†1422. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.