

including" the history of India's freedom movement, the constitutional obligations and other content essential to nurture national identity". These elements cut across subject areas and are designed to promote values such as, India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, observance of small family norm and inculcation of scientific Temper. All education programmes are carried on in strict conformity with secular values.

In keeping with the Constitutional and NPE mandate, the history of national freedom and the role of Gandhiji have formed an integral part of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) curriculum and text books.

Deemed University status to National School of Drama

1252. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:
SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:

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

(a) whether the University Grants Commission has decided to grant 'Deemed University' status to the National School of Drama under Section 3 of the UGC Act;

(b) whether a cross-section of the artistes has demanded development of theatres in various languages as 'National Theatre' freeing the Indian theatre movement from the present Delhi-centric image;

(c) whether the aggrieved artistes have cited the abysmal record of UGC in sprucing up theatre training in a handful of departments across the country; and

(d) if so, Government's comments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Deemed to be University status has been granted to the National School of Drama.

(b) The Ministry of Culture, which is the administrative Ministry for the National School of Drama, is aware of such a demand.

[14 March, 2005]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Common entrance test for engineering students

1253. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that AICTE has received representations against a common entrance test for students of engineering;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that a large number of engineering colleges are operating only upto 25 per cent of their capacity;

(d) if so, what steps AICTE is taking to assist such engineering colleges in finding students and also arranging financial assistance for such students; and (e)

the details of the steps proposed by AICTE to assist new engineering colleges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The AICTE has received representations against a common entrance test for engineering students. However, the State Ministers of Higher and Technical Education, in the conference held at Bangalore on January 10-11, 2005, arrived at a broad consensus on the need for a Central Legislation to regulate admissions and the fee structure in private self-financing professional educational institutions. Accordingly, a Draft Bill has been prepared for vetting by the concerned Departments and subsequent circulation among stakeholders including the State Governments to elicit their views for eliminating arbitrariness and malpractices in professional educational institutions.

(c) The admission position varies from college to college depending upon the quality of education delivered, location, etc. Many colleges still receive applications for admission much more than the approved intake.

(d) and (e) To reduce the financial burden on new institutes, the AICTE has brought down the amount of Joint FDR from Rs. 50 lakhs to Rs. 35 lakhs. The interest accrued on the FDR is to be used for scholarship/fee concession to needy students which would encourage more students to