1	2		3	4	5
29	Karnataka	Total	33.36	23.90	43.13
		Rural	40.67	29.55	51.99
		Urban	19.42	13.34	25.88
30	Goa	Total	17.99	11.58	24.63
		Rural	20.33	12.63	28.08
		Urban	15.61	10.54	21.02
31	Lakshadweep	Total	13.34	7.47	19.53
		Rural	14.96	8.51	21.73
		Urban	11.38	6.23	16.87
32	Kerala	Total	9.14	5.76	12.28
		Rural	9.96	6.37	13.31
		Urban	6.81	4.06	9.38
33	Tamil Nadu	Total	26.55	17.58	35.57
		Rural	33.79	22.85	44.72
		Urban	17.47	11.03	24.01
34	Pondicherry	Total	18.76	11.38	26.10
		Rural	26.02	16.50	35.62
		Urban	15.16	8.82	21.43
35	Andaman & Nicobar Island	Total	18.70	13.67	24.76
		Rural	21.30	15.86	27.74
		Urban	13.43	9.35	18.53

Dismal status of literacy

144. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that nearly 60 per cent of country's school children cannot read a paragraph with long sentences according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) prepared by Pratham, an NGO;

(b) whether it is a fact that the lack of infrastructure is crippling tomorrow's talent; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve the dismal picture of education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) prepared by Pratham, an NGO has suggested that 35% of all children in the age group of 6—14 could not read a simple paragraph and 52% could not read a short story. The testing methodology used by the NGO is simplistic and has been questioned by several experts.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, several activities are undertaken to improve the quality of elementary education with a view to improving the learning achievement levels of students in government schools. These include, inter-alia, recruitment of additional teachers to improve the pupil teacher ratio, annual in-service training of teachers for a period of 20 days, provision of free textbooks for girls, SC & ST children at primary and upper primary levels, regular academic support to schools and teachers through cluster and block resource centres, regular evaluation of students and monitoring of school performance.

Student union elections

†145.   SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
          SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has advised to conduct the student union elections smoothly and keep it free from money and muscle power;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether Government have set up a committee to give suggestions in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when the committee would submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) As per the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Government

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.