

(a) whether the State of Goa has sought certain exemption from the provisions of Right to Education (RTE) Act;

(b) if so, the details of the exemption sought and reaction of Government as regard the same;

(c) whether provisions of categorisation of schools into primary, middle and secondary and any other categories was discussed with the State Governments before introduction of the Bill; and

(d) if so, what was their reaction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) The Government is not aware of any representation of the State Government of Goa regarding exemption from the provisions of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.

(c) and (d) The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 envisages a common educational structure comprising 10 + 2 years of school education, including 5 years of primary, 3 years of upper primary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of senior secondary education. The RTE Act, which was enacted after extensive consultations with the State Governments and other stakeholders, defines elementary education as education from Class I to Class VIII. States which do not have an eight-year elementary education cycle have been advised to adopt the same in accordance with the RTE Act.

#### **Changes by Australia in its visa programme for students**

1347. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Australia has decided to make changes in its visa programme for students that includes cutting down on financial requirements for some categories;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the reforms will encourage genuine students and will see the re-emergence of Australia as a favoured destination for education; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) As per information furnished by the High Commission of India in Australia, Australian Government has made changes in student visa programme. Changes include reduction in financial requirements for certain Assessment Levels. Under Stage 1 of the implementation process, effective from 5th November 2011, the Australian Government has reduced the financial requirements for Assessment Level 3 (higher education - Graduate, Post- Graduate level) and Assessment Level 4 (Vocational Education and Training and English Language courses) student visa applicants which apply to Indian students also.

(c) and (d) As almost 80% of Indian students going for study in Australia apply for courses in VET sector, the above changes in financial requirements, made effective from 5th November, 2011 will benefit genuine students. However, one of the factors impacting on the inflow of international students to Australia is the rising cost of Australian dollar and it is likely to continue to affect the Indian students wishing to go to Australia. Hence it cannot be asserted whether these changes will see the re-emergence of Australia as a favoured destination for Indian students.

#### **Schools belonging to minorities**

1348. SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of financial assistance given by Government of construction/expansion of schools belonging to educationally backward minorities, across the country, State-wise;

(b) the details of schools constructed/upgraded during the last three years, State-wise; and

(c) the details of targets fixed/achieved by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) The Infrastructure Development of Minority Institutions (IDMI) Scheme was carved out from the Area Intensive and Madarsa Modernisation Programme (AIMMP) in 2008-09 to facilitate education of minorities by augmenting and strengthening school infrastructure in Minority Institutions. Financial assistance given to States and number of institutions supported between 2008-09 and 2011-12 is provided below: