

Reforms and restructuring of higher education

*67. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of reforms and restructuring of the higher education sector;
- (b) the goals of such restructuring;
- (c) whether equity is part of the mission of the Ministry; and
- (d) if so, the details of programmes undertaken to achieve the goal of equity?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Reforms agenda of the Ministry of Human Resource Development includes legislative proposals, academic and governance reforms as well as new schemes and programmes to address issues of access, equity, inclusion, quality and excellence.

The legislative proposals include the Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010 for the adjudication of disputes in higher education sector at the State and National level; the Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 to prohibit and punish unfair practices in higher educational institutions; The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010 and Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010, etc. Besides new legislations, amendments have been proposed to the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act and many other Acts in order to achieve the goals of equity, access and quality.

Academic reforms include semester system, choice based credit system, curricular reforms etc. Governance reforms include restructuring of existing institutions and reforms in the regulatory systems in higher education. Expansion efforts of the Government include setting up of new institutions funded by the Central Government and expansion of existing ones. It also includes incentivizing State Governments to set up new institutions in backward areas to benefit socially and educationally backward segments of population. Restructuring also includes improving accountability frameworks and an overarching regulatory frame which can restore to universities, oversight of the entire universe of knowledge.

(c) Equity, quality and access are the cornerstones of the entire reform agenda. Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2006 has ensured reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in all central education institutions of higher learning. Equitable access to all students, irrespective of economic

background, is sought to be achieved by making collection of “Capitation Fee” as a cognizable offence. The Government is ensuring that benefits of all schemes and programmes reach SCs, STs, minorities and women in an equitable manner. University Grants Commission (UGC) is giving special development grants for Universities located in backward areas. UGC provides grants for establishing Equal Opportunities Cell in Universities. Special Schemes are run by UGC for coaching SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities for National Eligibility Test (NET). Ten per cent of the budget is being earmarked for north eastern States. Educational loans upto Rs. 10 lakhs for studies in India has been declared as priority sector lending by Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

(d) During the Eleventh Plan, several schemes and programmes have been undertaken in order to provide access to relevant and good quality higher education in an equitable manner. These include setting up of 374 Model Degree Colleges in districts with less than 12.4% Gross Enrolment Ratio (these include 60 Minority Concentration Districts), establishing of new Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, National Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Information Technology, Schools of Planning and Architecture and new polytechnics. Specific schemes targeting development of SCs, STs, minorities, disabled and girls have been implemented. These include scholarships and fellowships for the socially deprived. Special programmes for women like Girls’ Hostels and Single Girl Child Scholarships, gender and inclusion initiatives of University Grants Commission and All India Council for Technical Education, Interest subsidy to economically backward students on educational loans etc.

**Action on recommendations of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan
Commission**

†*68. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government had constituted Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Commission;
- (b) if so, whether this Commission has submitted its report to Government;
- (c) if so, when this report of the Commission was received by Government;
- (d) the responsibilities which were entrusted to the Commission by Government; and
- (e) the action taken on the said report of the Commission, so far?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) In

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.