

Resentment Amongst IGNOU Students due to Closure of Some Courses

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (Maharashtra) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the HRD Minister towards IGNOU's move to close some courses, which drew a huge protest by students.

Sir, the Indira Gandhi National Open University is going through one of its worst crises since its establishment in 1985. Hundreds of students turned up to protest against the closure of 26 Face-to-Face programmes, and, also the fact that over 10,000 B.Ed, aspirants were deprived of admissions because of closing down of 129 institutions under IGNOU's Convergence Scheme. The students who were agitating since April 16, 2012, did not let the acting Vice-Chancellor enter the campus. Later, the University administration had to call the police to bring the situation under control and 17 agitating students were taken into custody.

The university administration has stopped all admissions for its 26 Face-to-Face programmes, which are offered in the main campus in Maidan Garhi. These courses have gained popularity since their introduction in 2008, and, at present, around 2,000 students are enrolled in these under-graduate and post-graduate courses.

Another major decision, which made the students come out in protest, is the move to stop all admissions for the B.Ed, programme under the Convergence Scheme. The decision to stop fresh admission to the community colleges made matters worse.

Around 129 institutions under the Convergence Scheme were stopped from fresh enrolment for B.Ed, programme, which will adversely affect 10,000 aspirants who have already cleared the entrance exam. Moreover, hundreds of community colleges under IGNOU were also asked not to undertake fresh admissions resulting in loss of crores of rupees to the university.

Even admissions under Open and Distance Learning have taken a hit this year. While IGNOU admitted 1.19 lakh students in January, 2012, during the same period last year, the university admitted nearly two lakh students. Where will the poor meritorious students, who want to pursue face to face higher education, go if universities keep on closing the courses? Therefore, Sir, I urge upon the hon. Minister of Human Resource Development to kindly look into this matter.

National Health Crisis due to Poisoning of Ground Water

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Goa) : Sir, according to newspaper reports, data submitted in Parliament by the Ministry of Water Resources shows that out of 649 Districts, the groundwater in pockets of 158 Districts has gone saline. It mentions that groundwater contains excess fluoride in pockets across 267 Districts, it has nitrates beyond permissible levels in 385 Districts, it has arsenic in 53 Districts, and, it has

[SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK]

high levels of iron in 270 Districts. Besides this, aquifers in 63 districts contain heavy metals like lead, chromium and cadmium, the presence of which in any concentration poses a danger. Drinking fluoride-laden water beyond safe levels can lead to fluorosis which hits teeth and bones. Arsenic causes problems in the nervous system, reduces IQ level in children and, in extreme cases, can also cause cancer. Chromium is a known carcinogen. Presence of nitrates in drinking water leads to what is commonly called as 'blue baby' disease which hits infants and can lead to respiratory and digestive system problems. Sir, nearly 80 per cent of India's rural drinking water comes from underground sources where facilities to detect health problems do not exist. Central Ground Water Board has carried surveys of ground water in Goa since 1976. Goa has about 2 MCM ground water and it has exploited about 35-40 per cent. But this is an under estimate as Government has no figures of ground water used by the private tankers and the industrial estates. In a 1994 study, Dr. Chachadi of Goa University and Glen Kalavampara have studied how tourism industry has affected ground water in coastal areas. The study was done in the Department of Earth Sciences of Goa University and was titled 'Preliminary assessment of salt water-fresh water interface between Fort Aguada and Candolim Coast, North Goa'. Besides, impounding of water for illegal pisciculture in low lying khazan lands of Goa also increases salinity of water in village wells nearby. This salinity, however, gets cleared after the rains. The wells near almost all industrial estates—Pilerne, Corlim, Tuem, Kundaim, Markaim and Cuncolim—are polluted due to contamination of ground water. The ground water table in mining areas has been affected due to excess mining. Explosives used in mining areas contain nitrates....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. KURIEN): Yes, your time is over. Now, Shri Purshottam Khodabhai Rupala.

Alleged Misuse of Government Funds by CCI

श्री पुरुषोत्तम खोडाभाई रुपला (गुजरात) : सर, मैं आपका बहुत आभारी हूँ कि आपने मुझे बोलने का अवसर दिया।

सर, मैं भारत सरकार का ध्यान किसानों के कॉटन की मुफ्त लूट की ओर आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ। सर, इस लूट से उन्हें बचाने के लिए भारत सरकार ने यहां से पैसा भेजा और सी.सी.आई को उनके कपास की खरीदी के लिए कहा। सर, आपको और हाउस के सभी सभासदों को यह जानकर बहुत दुख होगा कि सी.सी.आई के अधिकारी उन किसानों से कॉटन नहीं खरीद रहे हैं। मैं एक मार्केटिंग यार्ड में गया, वहां के चेयरमैन ने मुझे बताया कि दो दिनों से जहारात हो गयी है कि सी.सी.आई. के लोग कपास खरीदी के लिए अपने गांव में आ गए हैं। गुजरात के अमरेली जिले के सावरकुंडला मार्केटिंग यार्ड में चेयरमैन ने मुझे बताया कि गांव में सी.सी.आई. के ऑफिसर्स हैं। सर, दो दिनों में मार्केटिंग यार्ड में किसान लोग अपना माल लेकर आए हैं, लेकिन उनका माल कोई खरीदने वाला नहीं है। उन्होंने जब अधिकारियों से पूछा कि आप हमारे गांव में हो तो मंडी में से इस की खरीद क्यों नहीं कर रहे हो? तो उन्होंने कहा कि हमने 2 हजार टन की खरीद कर ली है।