

Interestingly, the proportion of those studying science at the graduate-plus level has risen from 28.8 per cent to 34.6 per cent in 2004. The proportion of those doing engineering has almost doubled, from 6 per cent of the population studying at the graduate-plus level in 1995-96 to 11.2 per cent in 2003-04. Indeed, engineering education shows the highest growth, from 8.2 per cent per annum in 1995-2000 to 21.9 per cent in 2003-04.

As regards the human resource in science and technology, the ISR states that India has 52.6 million graduates, postgraduates and diploma-holders. The social and economic progress of a nation depends on the state of its science and technology. Hence, through you, I would urge the Central Government to convert this 'Knowledge Bank' into a vibrant National Asset. Thank you.

SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR (Himachal Pradesh): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Dr. Gyan Prakash Piliانيا.

Concern over rising accidents, involving school children, caused by unsafe and substandard transport in the Country

SHRI ANAND SHARMA (Himachal Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, through this Special Mention, I want to draw the attention of the House towards the rising accidents, involving school children, caused by unsafe and substandard transport. There has been a sharp increase in accidents involving school-going children in the country, especially, the National Capital Region of Delhi and other major cities, which is a matter of serious concern. These accidents have resulted in tragic deaths of many innocent children, and also caused injuries to a large number. It is sad that these accidents are treated in a routine manner. For the administration, these accidents and casualties are mere statistics. A few years ago, when over 30 children were driven to their watery grave, the Supreme Court had directed to ensure safe transport for the children. It had an effect for some time but, later, laxity and carelessness had aggravated the problems. Safety of the children commuting to their schools is the responsibility of both the school management and the State. Vulnerable children are entrusted by parents to school and State provided transport with confidence in the authorities for their safe return. It is a matter of concern that is disregard of the defined regulations, children commute

to the schools in unsafe buses, unsupervised and driven by rash drivers. Further, little children packed in RTVs, autos and cycle-rickshaws commuting to the schools is a common sight. The traffic police turns a blind eye and cannot be absolved of negligence. The callous attitude of the authorities towards the need of safe transport for school children is most unfortunate. The Government must take urgent measures to ensure the safety of the children while commuting to the schools and for adequate availability of transport that meets the safety guidelines.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with his Special mention.

SHRI K. RAMAMOHANARAO (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, I also associate myself with his special mention.

Demand for recognition of 'Kannada' as a Classical Language

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD (Karnataka): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the need recognising 'Kannada' as a classical language.

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the unified State of Karnataka, it would be a benefitting gesture on the part of the Centre to commemorate the event with a declaration of granting the Classical Language status to Kannada for which it eminently qualifies under the criteria set forth by the Centre in this regard.

'Kannada' has deep roots, being a member of the Dravidian family of languages with an antiquity of more than 2000 years, with a recorded history of over 1000 years. Its literary output, both quantitative and qualitative, is unique and distinct, and is not borrowed or influenced by any other classical language. The UNESCO Document on Asia Scripts recognises the 'Kannada' script as one of the major scripts in the world.

'Kannada' scores on all four benchmarks that a classical language should lay claim to—antiquity, ancient body of literature, original living tradition and continuity.

The Chief Minister of Karnataka had made a similar plea to the hon. Prime Minister on 11th February, 2005 with an *aide memoir* chronicling the evolution and growth of 'Kannada' as a major Indian classical language.