

**Reading levels of children**

1340. SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the provisional report of ASER, 2012 reading levels as well as basic arithmetic skills of children between the age group of 6-14 years have declined further since 2011;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures Government has taken to ensure quality education to children of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), which is an assessment brought out annually by PRATHAM, a non-governmental organization, expresses concern regarding learning levels of children in schools in rural areas. However, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which uses a rigorous research methodology, conducts very detailed periodic national surveys of learning achievements of children in classes – III, V and VIII. Two rounds of National Learners' Achievement Surveys have been completed by the NCERT which have revealed improvements in the overall learning levels, even though achievements remain low. The findings of the third round conducted recently for class V also indicate that there is enhancement in the level of achievement in most States.

(c) Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which specially focuses on rural and backward areas, the State Governments and UT Administrations are supported on several interventions to improve the quality of elementary education, including *inter-alia*, regular in-service teacher training, the distribution of free and improved textbooks, the recruitment of additional teachers for better pupil-teacher ratios, academic support for schools and teachers through block and cluster resource centres, a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system, teacher and school grants for development of appropriate teaching-learning materials, etc.

**Restructuring of ICSSR**

1341. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has contemplated certain major structural changes in the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR);

- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the fresh steps taken by Government for restructuring of Research Institute of ICSSR as well as to expand the research network and establishment of more such research institutes in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had set up a Review Committee on 23rd September, 2010 to review the functioning of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). The Committee had submitted its report to the MHRD on 28th June, 2011. The Report is available on the MHRD website <http://www.mhrd.gov.in>. The salient recommendations by the Committee included recommendations on the Restructuring and Redesigning of the ICSSR; strengthening Research; improving Resources and Finances and restructuring the ICSSR Institutes.

According to the ICSSR, action has been taken towards implementing various recommendations of the Review Committee. It is decided to amend the Memorandum of Association (MoA) of the ICSSR in order to streamline the appointments of the Chairman, the Member Secretary and the non-ex-officio academic members of the Council to ensure complete transparency in such appointments and further to provide greater autonomy and continuity in the functioning of the ICSSR.

(c) The said Review Committee has also made specific suggestions for restructuring and improving the institutional network of the ICSSR. These include ensuring minimum threshold faculty strength, hundred per cent payment of salary expenditure of the sanctioned posts by the ICSSR and working grant in all the existing 25 Research Institutes receiving maintenance grants from the ICSSR and to establish new ICSSR research institutes in territorial areas and fields of study where such institutes are non-existent at present. The ICSSR has also taken steps to ensure that the research outcomes in the Social Sciences are made available free of cost to teachers, students and researchers. At present, 3700 Ph.D theses procured by the ICSSR through the National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) are available online. These are available at <http://www.vidyanidhi.org.in/>.

#### **Bogus enrolment in schools in Maharashtra**

1342. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the report on the inspections/raids carried out in schools to find