

Non-recognition to MA degree course of British Universities

3513. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Indian students go to UK to pursue studies in one year MA degree course in British Universities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some of them continue to pursue further higher studies for gaining Ph.D degree;

(c) whether after obtaining such a degree, when they come back to India, their one year course in MA and Ph.D degree are not recognized in the country and they face a lot of mental tension and agony after spending a good amount of time and money on their studies abroad; and

(d) if so, the action plan of Government to help them out of this dilemma?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some of the Indian students going to UK for pursuing higher studies opt for one-year MA degree courses in British Universities.

(c) and (d) The issue of recognition of one-year MA degrees was taken up in the India-UK Qualification Recognition Task Force constituted for this purpose. The Task Force met on 28th January, 2013 and has decided to explore the possibility of creating an enabling environment in India, by introducing the necessary bridging mechanism, through which Indian nationals holding a Master's degree from an accredited and recognized British University are able to pursue higher studies in India.

Decision to shift distance education council of IGNOU to UGC

3514. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to shift the Distance Education Council of IGNOU to University Grants Commission;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor along with likely impact of this decision on the students studying under Distance Learning Programme; and

- (c) the fresh remedial steps taken by Government in the matter?

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

(b) and (c) The Distance Education Council (DEC) was created under Statute 28 of the IGNOU Act by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to regulate other institutions including Universities imparting distance education. One university regulating others creates conflict of interest. In order to remove this difficulty and the confusion prevailing in distance education system, a committee was constituted under the Chairpersonship of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon to suggest measures to harmonise the laws regulating the standards of distance education. The Ministry has, in principle, accepted the report submitted by the Committee, except for the creation of a separate regulatory authority for the Distance Education System in the country due to the pending Higher Education and Research Bill in the Parliament, which envisages subsuming all existing regulators. Based on the resolutions of the DEC and the Board of Management (BOM) of IGNOU, the approval of the Visitor has been obtained to repeal the Statute 28 and dissolution of DEC under the IGNOU. The Central Government, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub section 1 of section 20 of the UGC Act, 1956 and the AICTE Act, 1987 has directed the UGC and the AICTE to develop appropriate regulations for maintaining standards in ODL programmes/courses for the growth and development of ODL education system in the country with proper quality assurance in the light of the recommendations of the Madhava Menon Committee Report.

The decision of the Government to shift the DEC from IGNOU to the UGC and the AICTE for the maintenance of standards in the ODL system of education in their respective fields, is in the larger interest of the students as well as other stakeholders.

Efforts to fill vacancies of teaching staff in IITs and NITs

3515. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether 43 per cent of teaching staffs in IITs and NITs are lying vacant;