

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) to (d) The charge raised in the question is based on the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) brought out annually by PRATHAM, a non-governmental organization. The ASER (Rural) 2012 expresses concern regarding the 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 achievement of children in classes – III, V and VIII. Two rounds of these 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. The reasons for low-level achievement include, *inter-alia*, the non-availability of professionally trained teachers, an adverse Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at the school level and gaps in infrastructural facilities in schools, etc. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), these issues have been addressed in compliance with the provisions of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 in partnership with States/ Union Territories (UTs).

**Setting up of a National Multi-dimensional Regulatory Machinery**

†1285. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many of the States have opposed the proposal for setting up of a National Multi-dimension Regulatory Machinery for higher education;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the National Commission for Higher Education and Research would work as an advisor and a guide for other regulatory bodies and would also help in making their performance smooth; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) In the 57th meeting of the

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held on 19.06.2010, the draft Higher Education and Research (HE&R) Bill, seeking to establish a national overarching regulatory body in higher education, was discussed. While there was a general consensus on the need to establish an overarching regulatory body at the apex level, CABE decided to ask the State Governments and other stake-holders to send their written comments and suggestions which would be taken into consideration, before the draft Bill was finalized by the Central Government. All States were accordingly addressed and comments and suggestions on various provisions of the Bill were received from 18 States. The setting up of the national overarching regulatory mechanism for higher education was specifically opposed by the State Governments of Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

(c) and (d) The Higher Education and Research (HE&R) Bill, 2011 intends creating the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) for determination, coordination, maintenance and continued enhancement of standards of higher education and research. The existing regulatory bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the National Council for Technical Education (NCTE) and the Distance Education Council (DEC) would be subsumed in NCHER. However, the regulatory bodies in the fields of medicine and law would retain the powers to set minimum standards for medical education and legal education leading to professional practice. Other Professional Councils, listed in the First Schedule of the HE&R Bill would continue to function and set standards for professional practice in their respective domains. The head of each such professional council would also be a member of the General Council of the NCHER as proposed in the Bill.

**Annual Status of Education Report for rural  
areas of Karnataka**

1286.DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is an Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012 for rural areas of Karnataka;
- (b) if so, the findings of the report;
- (c) whether more than half the students studying in rural schools in Karnataka are very poor in their academics; and