

training to enhance the employability of a person who is either pursuing his or her graduation/diploma in any technical or non-technical stream or has discontinued their pursuit of a degree or diploma course to increase their employability.

#### **Hunger strike by IIT, Kharagpur faculty**

1772. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the faculty of IIT, Kharagpur is going on hunger strike;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps being taken by Government to redress the grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Members of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, Teachers' Association were on a token hunger strike on 17.07.2013 from 9.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. after taking vacation leave for that day to agitate about the issue relating to the appointment of a regular Director of the Institute. The regular Director has since taken charge on 27.07.2013 (AN).

#### **Teaching standards in schools**

1773. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister has shown concern over the poor teaching standards in schools in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has contemplated any plan to improve the teaching standards in schools;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The quality of teaching is reflected in the learning achievements of the students. 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, which have revealed a slight improvement in pupil achievement learning levels, even though the overall level of achievement remains low. The findings of the third round conducted recently for class V also indicates that there is enhancement in the level of achievement in most States.

(c) to (e) Yes Sir. The Government is making continuous efforts to improve teaching standards in schools across the country. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations are supported on several interventions to improve teaching standards, including regular in-service teacher training, a 30-day induction training for newly recruited teachers, the training of all untrained teachers to acquire professional qualifications, the recruitment of additional teachers for better pupil-teacher ratios, academic support for teachers through block and cluster resource centres, a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system to equip the teacher to measure pupil performance and provide remedial action wherever required, and teacher and school grants for development of appropriate teaching-learning materials, etc. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 specifies the statutory duties and responsibilities of teachers and lays down the minimum qualifications for a person to be eligible for appointment as a teacher in elementary schools, which have been notified by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in its Notification dated 23rd August, 2010. For secondary education, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan programme similarly, provides for in-service teacher training and academic support to schools for improving teacher performance.