

(b) whether two more central universities at the backward districts of Bolangir and Mayurbhanj would be set up with medical and engineering colleges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal at present to declare the Ravenshaw University of Odisha as a Central University, since the Central Government has already established at least one Central University in every state of the country (except Goa) as per current policy.

(b) No, Sir. No such proposal is under consideration at present.

Interest subsidy on education loan

1929.DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether, in view of rising costs of higher education, Government has any plans to raise the current annual parental income threshold of Rs.4.5 lakhs for the students belonging to financially weaker households, so that, more students may become eligible for the 100 per cent interest subsidy on loan scheme granted for higher education;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor along with the basis of calculation of parental income threshold of Rs. 4.5 lakhs for students belonging to financially weaker households?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SHASHI THAROOR): (a) and (b) At present, there is no proposal to raise the income ceiling of Rs.4.5 lakh per annum, prescribed under the Interest Subsidy Scheme.

(c) The present scheme is intended to cater to the needs of students belonging to economically weaker sections with prescribed upper parental gross income limit of the family from all sources. The Cabinet had approved the income ceiling limit of Rs.4.5 lakh only in August 2009. This Ministry is of the opinion that the income ceiling is adequate to cover all the deserving students belonging to economically weaker sections and there is no need to revise the income limit as of now. It is pegged at a very generous level relative to our per capita national income in order to cover the widest possible portion of our population that genuinely requires this assistance.