

Delhi, IIT-Bombay, IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Madras, IIT-Roorkee and IIT-Guwahati to help them to come up into the Top 100 World University Rankings. The concerned IITs have been asked to prepare a plan of action for implementing the Scheme.

**UNESCO report on Universal Educational Goals**

2620. SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH:

SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) report recently released, India will be half a century late in achieving its universal education goals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India will achieve universal primary education by 2050, universal lower secondary education by 2060 and universal upper secondary education by 2085; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the 2030 deadline for achieving Sustainable Development Goals will be possible only if India introduces fundamental changes in the education sector, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA): (a) and (b) In its Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016, UNESCO has claimed that India will be half a century late in achieving its universal education goals. The Report also states that India will achieve universal primary education by 2050, universal lower secondary education (Grades VI - VIII in case of India) by 2060 and universal upper secondary education (Grades IX-XII in case of India) by 2085.

(c) UNESCO has informed that these projections have been made based on past trends. It has not involved the Ministry of Human Resource Development in this exercise.

With the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which provides for free and universal elementary education and the implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which is the key vehicle to implement the RTE Act, near universal access and enrolment has been achieved at the primary and upper primary level.

As per UDISE 2014-15, the Gross Enrolment Ratio at primary and upper primary level is 100.08% and 91.24% respectively. Additionally, near universal access has been achieved at the elementary level of schooling and 97% and 96.6% habitations have been covered with primary and upper primary schools respectively.

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) provides for universalisation of access to and improvement of quality at the secondary stage. As per UDISE 2014-15, the Gross Enrolment Ratio at secondary and higher secondary level is 78.51% and 54.21% respectively.

Overall there has been substantial growth in enrolment in secondary education (Grade IX-X) in the country. Total enrolment for Grades IX and X has increased from 30.7 million in 2009-10 to 38.3 million students in the academic year 2014-15. This represents a 24.8% increase over a five-year period. There has also been steady improvement in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). The national average GER increased by 15.6 percentage points (from 62.9% in 2009-10 to 78.5 % in 2014-15). Accordingly, it is envisaged that the target of universal secondary (Grades IX-X) education will be achieved sooner than 2030.

The statements and predictions made in the UNESCO Report are based on past linear trends and assumptions. It is expected that in view of the increased emphasis on programmatic initiatives aimed at reducing out of school children, current new policy and targeted interventions India may be able to achieve the goals of universal primary, lower secondary and secondary education much earlier.

#### **Financial assistance to students in Himachal Pradesh**

2621. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to extend financial assistance to the children between 6-14 years for providing elementary education and free books and stationery items to students from poor families in Himachal Pradesh;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the amount allocated for the purpose; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to ensure that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan achieves its goals in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA): (a) and (b) The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 effective from 1/4/2010 provides for Free Education for all children in the age Group of 6-14 years and as per the provisions of the Act, all Government Schools and Government Aided Schools provide free education for all children including students from poor families.

The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan comprises various interventions for which financial assistance is provided to all States including Himachal Pradesh. Free textbooks are provided to all children enrolled and the amount is ₹ 150/- per child for primary and