

Education in backward districts

†1843. SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government had announced to identify the educationally backward districts and to make special efforts for development of higher education there;
- (b) if so, the progress made in this regard, so far, and the number of districts where educational institutes have been opened, so far;
- (c) whether there is any proposal to establish higher educational institutes in districts/blocks and sub-divisional headquarters of Bihar also under this scheme; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SATYA PAL SINGH): (a) to (d) An Expert Committee constituted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) had identified 374 Educationally Backward Districts (EBDs) where Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education was less than the national average of 12.4% based on 2001 census data.

During the first phase of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), being implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development with the aim of promoting access, equity and quality, central assistance to States has been provided for creation of one Model Degree College each in 60 EBDs.

NITI Aayog has identified 117 districts as 'Aspirational Districts'. The districts have been selected on the basis of composite index which includes published data of deprivation enumerated under Socio-Economic Caste Census, Health and Nutrition, Education and Basic Infrastructure.

During the second phase of RUSA, the focus is on opening new Model Degree Colleges in 'Aspirational Districts' identified by NITI Aayog and in unserved and underserved districts in North Eastern and Himalayan States.

The Project Approval Board of RUSA has approved central assistance for setting up of one new Model Degree College each in the 4 Aspirational Districts of Bihar namely Gaya, Araria, Katihar and Purnia.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.