

Two programmes for education of girls at elementary level—the National Programme for Education at Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) have also been launched. Under the NPEGEL programme, special focus is given to education of girls from SC/ST community. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme is specially targeted to provide schools with residential facilities at the elementary level for girls belonging to SC/ST/OBC and minority communities. Out of 2180 KGBVs sanctioned so far, 242 have been sanctioned in SC dominant blocks and 457 have been sanctioned in ST dominant blocks. 16750 SC girls have been enrolled in 1039 KGBVs, operational so far, which is 27% of the total enrolment 30% of girls in KGBV schools are tribal girls.

NCERT operates the National Talent Search Scheme for pursuing courses in science and social science up to doctoral level and in professional courses like medicine and engineering up to second degree level subject to fulfillment of the conditions out of 1000 scholarships, 150 are reserved for SCs and 75 are reserved for STs. The National Institute of Open Schooling gives the SC/ST students concession in admission fees to the extent of Rs.200/- for bridge courses, Rs.250/- for secondary courses and Rs.300/- for senior secondary courses.

The National Literacy Mission aims to impart functional literacy to adult illiterates in the 15-35 age group. The main programme under the NLM include Total Literacy Campaign to impart basic literacy to the non literates followed by Post Literacy Programme for reinforcement of literacy skills to the neo-literates and thereafter Continuing Education Programme for providing opportunities for life-long educational opportunities. So far, the literacy programme have covered 597 districts in the country. Though under the literacy programme all sections of the community irrespective of caste, creed and gender are covered, the main focus, however, is on scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, females, minorities and other disadvantaged groups of people. It is estimated that 23% and 12% of the beneficiaries of literacy programme belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively. To facilitate teaching in the spoken language of the tribals, primers in 48 tribal dialects have been prepared. Further the funding for the tribal districts is in the ratio of 4:1 to be shared between Central and State governments as against 2:1 for general districts.

Setting up of National Institutes

2815. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are finalizing a plan to set up 24 National Institutes all over the country, to cover rural areas through quality higher education;

(b) whether any such institute would be set up in Tamil Nadu;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) what steps would be taken to give a boost to higher education in this manner in the public sector; and

(e) the steps proposed to improve quality of higher education in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (e) The Eleventh Plan has not been finalized. A substantial expansion in higher educational institutions and quality enhancement is envisaged in the Eleventh Plan, including setting up of a Central University in each State, such as Tamil Nadu, which does not have a Central University at present.

Supreme Court bench in the South

2816. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 4184, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 14th May, 2007 and state:

(a) whether Government propose to take up the matter of setting up of a bench of Supreme Court in South again with the Supreme Court and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government propose to bring an amendment to the Constitution in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI B.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The matter of setting up of a Bench of Supreme Court in other parts of the country was taken up again with the Supreme Court for its reconsideration. The Supreme Court informed that after reconsideration of the matter, the Full Court, in its meeting held on 7th August, 2007 found no justification for deviating from its earlier resolution on the subject and did not favour setting up of Benches of the Supreme Court outside Delhi. The Government do not propose to bring an amendment to the Constitution.

Issue of voters' identity cards

2817. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had decided to issue electors' identity cards to all the citizens of the country;

(b) if so, the number of voters covered so far and supplied with the identity cards, State-wise; and

(c) by when the remaining citizens are likely to be covered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Statement showing the number of Elector's Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) issued in various States/Union Territories provided by the Election Commission of India is laid on the Table of the House (*See below*).