

to all States and UTs for various interventions to improve the quality of education such as training of in-service teachers, headmasters and principals, remedial teaching for academically weaker students, provision of library grants to schools, ICT and digital initiatives, strengthening of teacher education institutions, Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat, etc.

Further, the Central RTE Rules have been amended on 20th February, 2017 to include reference on class-wise, subject-wise Learning Outcomes. The Learning Outcomes for each class in Languages, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Science and Social Science up to the elementary stage have, accordingly, been finalized and shared with all States and UTs. These learning outcomes serve as a guideline for States and UTs to ensure that all children acquire appropriate learning level. A National Achievement Survey (NAS) based on learning outcomes was conducted on 13th November, 2017 through which the learning levels of around 22 lakh students of Classes III, V and VIII from 1.10 lakh schools across 701 districts in all 36 States and UTs were assessed. District report cards (provisional) for NAS 2017 have been released by this Department and are available on MHRD website. In addition, the RTE Act, 2009 was amended in 2017 to ensure that all teachers acquire the minimum qualifications prescribed under the Act by 31st March 2019 to reinforce the Government's emphasis on improvement of quality of elementary education. The National Institute of Open schooling (NIOS) has been entrusted to conduct this training through Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode. A four year B.Ed integrated course has been launched for which applications have been invited on 3rd June 2019.

Government of India has decided to participate in the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) to be conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2021.

Higher Education Commission

708. SHRI K.C. RAMAMURTHY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons why Government is considering to have a Higher Education Commission (HEC);
- (b) whether HEC has the power to provide grants and is stuffed with bureaucrats;
- (c) the regulatory bodies that are proposed to be brought under HEC; and
- (d) in what manner the proposed body would transform the higher education sector and take our institutions to the world's top 100 or 200?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'): (a) Over the last six decades the size, scale and complexities of India's Higher Education Sector have increased manifold and it is now considered to be one of the largest Higher Education Systems in the world. With the increase in number of Higher Educational Institutions, expert committees have recommended that the regulator should focus on promotion of quality teaching and research and usher in measures to bring the much needed reforms in the higher education sector. Reforming the regulatory structure to facilitate holistic growth of higher education sector requires structural and transformative changes. Therefore, the Ministry is considering the Higher Education Commission of India Bill.

(b) In order to ensure that the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) focuses primarily on quality of academic standards, the Commission is envisaged as a body predominantly comprising of distinguished academicians with an independent body for grant disbursal.

(c) Repeal of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 and the All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987 are being considered.

(d) The proposed objectives of the HECI are to promote and maintain the academic standards, encourage the autonomy of good performing Higher Educational Institutions and to promote research, entrepreneurship, innovation. The HECI will provide for comprehensive and holistic growth of higher education and research in a competitive global environment. These measures will aid in taking our institutions to top international rankings.

Science and Technology Encyclopedia in Hindi

709. DR. SANJAY SINH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a project for preparation of Science and Technology Encyclopedia (Vigyan aur Praudyogiki Vishwakosh) in Hindi was initiated by Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT);

(b) if so, the details of expenditure incurred and the names of the officials involved in the project;

(c) the details of current status of the project; and

(d) the roadmap and the time-limit for publication of the encyclopedia?