

Further, *vide* its D.O. No. F. 21-13/2019 (CPP-II) dated 20th January, 2020, UGC has communicated to the Vice Chancellors of all Universities, to abide by the provisions of section 22 of the UGC Act and award only those degrees as specified by UGC.

(b) The UGC from time to time has issued various directions/instructions regarding precautions to be taken by students before enrolling for programmes offered under Open and Distance(ODL) and/or Online Learning mode. A public notice in this regard has been issued by UGC and the same can be accessed at https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdf/news/6981874_Public-Notice-DEB.pdf

Aims of NEP to address current educational challenges

512. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the New National Education Policy (NEP) aims to address current educational challenges while envisioning to equip every child for future opportunities and challenges; and

(b) if so, what measures does Government propose to take which can help curb dropout rates in later years of schooling?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'):

(a) Yes Sir. The key overall thrust of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, as laid down in the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it, is emphasis on conceptual understanding, rather than rote learning and learning for exams. The focus is on children learning how to learn. It aims at not only cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills.

(b) NEP emphasizes to bring Out of School Children back to schools and to prevent children from dropping out by providing effective and sufficient infrastructure in the schools, regular trained teachers at each stage, safe and practical conveyances and/or hostels, alternative and innovative education centres and by achieving universal participation in school by carefully tracking students as well as their learning levels. Further, under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha, financial assistance is provided to the States and UTs for various activities to reduce number of dropouts,

which include opening/strengthening of new schools upto senior secondary level, construction of school buildings and additional classrooms, setting up, up-gradation and running of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, setting up of residential schools/hostels, free uniforms, free text books, transport allowance and undertaking enrolment drives, residential as well as non residential trainings for mainstreaming of Out of School Children, Seasonal Hostels/ residential camps etc. Financial assistance is also provided for Inclusive Education of children with special needs. Also, Mid-Day-Meal is provided to students at the elementary level of education.

Teachers training and comprehensive foundational learning

513. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take any measures to train teachers to understand the aim of foundational learning, child development and structured instruction methods, where they understand different levels of learners in a classroom and come up with ways to respond to the diverse needs;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to ensure that foundational learning operational plans and approaches are comprehensive and able to address any challenge that a child living in a remote village may face in achieving her/his dream of learning?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'):
(a) to (c) National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 gives an increased focus on foundational literacy and numeracy - and generally, on reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking - throughout the preparatory and middle school curriculum, with a robust system of continuous formative/adaptive assessment to track and ensure each student's learning. Redesigned Teacher Education and early grade curriculum with renewed focus on foundational literacy and numeracy is suggested to encourage and enthuse students. NEP 2020 also envisages a national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy available on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) platform to serve as aids to teachers and to help bridge any language barriers that may exist between teachers and students. It also stresses upon holistic development of learners and adoption of experiential learning,