

High priority to elementary education

1567. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been able to give high priority to elementary education;

(b) whether there is any apprehension of getting Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan derailed; and

(c) if so, how the Government would be able to improve the quality of teachers and students since two per cent education cess is not being passed on to the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The education cess proceeds become available as a part of the overall budget for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Mid-day Meal (MDM) programme, and is included in the Central share of funds released to States/Union Territories for implementation. SSA includes several activities for improving quality of learning, some of which are regular teacher training, grants for teaching/learning aids and decentralized academic support for schools and teachers.

Drop out of girls in rural areas

1568. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of drop out of girls in rural areas in the country is higher, as compared to urban areas;

(b) if so, the comparative figures thereof during the last three years, class-wise and State-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact that insufficient sanitary conditions in the dilapidated buildings force young girls to stay out of schools for their convenience during menstruation cycles;

(d) if so, the steps taken/to be taken to address the issue of insufficient sanitary conditions in the schools; and

(e) the funds utilized by each school in this regard, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Annual Class-wise enrolment figures are not collected for urban and rural areas separately, and therefore drop out rates for these areas cannot be calculated separately.

(c) to (e) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has sanctioned 2.35 lakhs toilets under the programme up to 2006-07. The minimum unit cost allocated to elementary

schools for toilet construction is Rs.20,000/-. The programme is also converging with the Total Sanitation Programme to promote such facilities to cover all elementary schools.

Educational empowerment of OBCs

1569. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government's hype over the educational empowerment of OBCs is not matching with the ground realities;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the comments of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to allocate more funds during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) A Scheme of 'Post-Matric Scholarships to the OBC students' is already being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to promote higher education amongst the OBC students at the post-matric/post-secondary levels including Ph.D. degrees etc. The matter relating to reservation in admission of OBCs in the Central Educational Institutions in higher and profession education is presently *sub-judice* in the Supreme Court of India.

(c) An amount of Rs. 2698.00 crore has been provided in the current year's Plan Budget of the Ministry of Human Resource Development for implementation of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006.

Counselling cells in schools

†1570. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

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

(a) whether Government would make it mandatory to set up a counselling cells in each and every school, in order to check the atrocities against and misconduct with the girl students in schools, to enable them to report their grievances;

(b) if so, by when a decision in this regard would be taken;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to check the atrocities against and misconduct with the girl students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) Education being a concurrent subject, a vast majority of the schools come under the purview of State Governments. Ministry of Human Resource Development had written to all State

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.