

**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