

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHA1 RAMJIBHAIKATHIRIA): (a) to (c) As per the information furnished by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), it has come to their notice that some foreign institutions/ universities are operating in India offering various programmes in Engineering & Technology. AICTE has notified Regulations dated 3rd April 2003 for Entry and Operation of Foreign Universities/ Institutions imparting technical education in India. AICTE has also constituted a Task Force to implement the Regulations from the academic year 2003-2004.

Revamping higher education

4410. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to revamp higher education with flexibility to combine various subjects;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed to improve quality of programmes in each subject?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHA1 RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA) : (a) to (c) Revamping of Higher Education is a continuous process. As informed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), the UGC has constituted a Committee to revise the career-oriented courses (vocational courses) to make the career oriented programme more flexible and need based.

The UGC has also introduced a number of new quality initiatives, which include (i) Universities with potential for excellence; (ii) College with potential for excellence; (iii) Digital Repository of Research & Teaching Material; and (iv) UGC-Net: Intranet and Internet connectivity for Colleges and Universities, etc.

100 per cent literacy

4411. SHWSATISHPRADHAN. Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of the percentage of literate persons in the country; and

(b) details of steps Government have taken or propose to take for increasing the literate person upto 100 per cent in the future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) According to Census 2001 the literacy rate in the country is 65.38 per cent.

(b) The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 provides for free and compulsory education as a fundamental right for all children in the 6-14 age group. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has been launched as a National Programme to implement the fundamental right to free and compulsory education. The main goals of the programme are:

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, 'Back-to- School' camp by 2003.
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.
- Universal retention by 2010.

The National Literacy Mission seeks to impart functional literacy to non-literates in 15-35 years age-group. The following steps are being taken in this regard:—

- (i) All uncovered districts would be covered under literacy programme.
- (ii) Taking up of composite total literacy and post literacy programme.
- (iii) Special prog 'amines are being taken up to address female illiteracy in low female literacy areas, in addition to the ongoing programmes to promote literacy.

- (iv) Enlarging the scope of Continuing Education to include skill development programme, individual interest programme, rural libraries and removal of residual illiteracy,
- (v) State Resource Centres would be strengthened to provide academic and technical resource support to the literacy programmes,
- (vi) The activities of Jan Shikshan Sansthan would be extended for creation of self-employment opportunities through vocational training programme.

Free internet access to students/teachers

4412. MISS MABEL REBELLO:

SHRI B.J. PANDA:

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

- (a) whether UGC has promised free internet access to students and teachers in universities across the country as appeared in the media;
- (b) if so, what other gifts UGC will offer to the students and teachers; and
- (c) the number of universities and colleges that would be connected to the internet and details of information that can be accessed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA) : (a) to (c) According to the information furnished by the University Grants Commission (UGC), it has been decided to provide internet connectivity to all the eligible universities and colleges in the country recognized under Sections 2(f) and 12-B of the UGC Act, under the UGC-Infonet Scheme. As a result, the students and teachers will get free internet access. UGC-Infonet will allow them to interact with each other allowing easy flow of intra-university information within the country. Under the Scheme, 90% of the total cost of infrastructure is borne by the UGC whereas the remaining 10% is taken care by the respective institution. The entire recurring expenditure is borne by the UGC for a period of 5 years.

Objectives of Operation Black Board

4413. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) the main objectives of the Operation Black Board Scheme;
- (b) the amount of allocation made to various States for implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme during the last three years;