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Title: Need to take steps to monitor online educational companies allegedly involved in fraudulent practices.

**SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM (SIVAGANGA):** Thank you, Speaker, Sir. Today, if you want to start an educational institution, you need to get a plethora of permissions. Your curriculum has to be vetted. You have to have a staff of a certain calibre. You need to pay the staff certain salaries according to, perhaps, UGC or according to whatever the Government regulations are. But today, there are online educational companies which are worth billions of dollars. Some of them are worth even more than the entire educational budget of India. These companies offer online courses which are not vetted by any Body. Nobody knows the content of these courses; nobody knows the quality of these courses; and nobody knows the calibre of these courses. Nobody knows about the calibre of the tutors who are conducting these courses. Now, these companies are engaged in predatory marketing practices where they prey upon the aspirational poor people, who want to give their children a better education, who want to supplement their education which they are not getting in Government schools. They force them to buy courses and auto-debit their accounts. Even when they want to discontinue these courses, the auto-debits do not stop. These auto-debits are happening regularly month by month. In fact, they are becoming like loan sharks where they are 'force selling' these courses.

Through you, I would urge upon the hon. Minister of Education to bring about some sort of a system where we monitor these online educational companies which are worth billions of dollars, which are

owned by major corporations internationally, which are thrusting these courses on the unsuspecting people of India, and are auto-debiting their accounts. It is very essential to do that.

I would also like to bring to the notice of this House that there are many social activists like Nidhu Bahuguna, Pradeep Poonia and Aniruddha Malpani who have spoken about this. But the power of this company is so much that it is able to bring down the complaints that are there on the social media. If you put a complaint on social media, they bring it down. In fact, this company sponsors the Indian Cricket Team now. You know exactly as to who I am referring to. This company is worth 21 billion dollars. Our entire Indian educational budget is not worth that much.

So, it is very essential to have some concerted effort to monitor these companies and prevent them from doing these predatory marketing practices where they are auto-debiting the accounts of unsuspecting people.