

Performance of Educational Bodies

*195. SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH:
DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR:

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

(a) whether the Government have launched a massive exercise to assess the performance of Universities, Colleges and Technical Institutions in the country;

(b) if so, whether the University Grants Commission has set up an assessing body;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the nature of recommendations made by the assessing body; and

(e) the time by which these recommendations are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (e). The University Grants Commission has decided to set up a National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to, *inter-alia*, grade institutions of higher education and their programmes; stimulate the academic environment and quality of teaching and research; encourage innovations, self-evaluation and accountability in higher education; and promote necessary changes and reforms in these institutions. The technical education institutions such as IT's, REC's etc. fall within the purview of All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been registered as a society at Bangalore under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, and the Karnataka Societies Registration Rules, 1961.

Forests and Wild Life

*196. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether exploitation of minerals like iron-ore, coal and others has posed a grave threat to ecology by way of endangering wildlife and forest reserves;

(b) if so, whether the Government have made any study regarding the impact of mining, industrial and other developmental activities on wildlife and forests;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the main wildlife sanctuaries and reserves facing the problem; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to preserve ecology?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH):

(a) Mineral exploitation in or near forest areas and wildlife sanctuaries has the potential to cause ecological damage to wild life and forest reserves unless adequate environmental measures are integrated into the project activities.

(b) and (c). With a view to conserve and protect ecology, Government have issued the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification dated 27 January 1994, amended on 4 May 1994. It has been stipulated that project proposals on mining, industrial and other developmental activities, above specified thresholds, are required to carry out the Impact Assessment study which *inter-alia* includes study on wildlife and forests, if applicable. Such a study report is then examined in consultation with expert committees before projects are cleared from the environmental angle. Recent examples where separate ecological studies have been sought include Rowghat (Madhya Pradesh), Barsingsar (Rajasthan), Patharkheda (Madhya Pradesh) and Arki (Himachal Pradesh).

(d) The main wild life sanctuaries facing the problem include Sariska, Buxa Tiger Reserve and Kaziranga.

(e) The steps being taken for preserving the ecology include the following:

- Conservation programmes have been strengthened.
- Eco-development programme initiated to reduce pressure on forest ecology.
- Notifications have been issued for regulation of developmental activities in identified eco-sensitive areas.
- Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been made more stringent.

[Translation]

Fertile Land

*197. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA:
SHRI NITISH KUMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the present rate of per-capita utilisation of fertile land in India;

(b) whether the rate of per-capita utilisation of fertile land has been declining constantly during the last several years as reported by the World Watch Institute in Washington recently;

(c) if so, the extent thereof;

(d) whether any action plan has been prepared by the Government to encourage use of new techniques to increase the fertility of land; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): (a) The per-capita availability of cultivable land in the country during 1990-91 (latest available) was estimated as 0.22 ha.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The per-capita availability of cultivable land which was estimated as 0.53 hectare in 1950-51, declined to 0.41 hectare in 1960-61, 0.27 hectare in 1980-81 and then to 0.22 hectare in 1990-91.

(d) and (e). The Government has been implementing various crop production oriented programmes as also other schemes including balanced and integrated use of fertilisers through combination of organic and inorganic fertilisers, encouraging bio-fertilisers, compost and green manure, etc., to raise/maintain the fertility of soil. The Government is also advocating specific crop rotations including legumes, to augment the soil fertility.

Report of Yashpal Committee

*198. SHRI JAGMEET SINGH BRAR:
SHRI RATILAL VARMA:

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

(a) whether the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal to suggest comprehensive improvements in education system has given its report;

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof;

(c) the action plan formulated by the Government to implement these recommendations; and

(d) the recommendations which have not been accepted by the Government with reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (d). The National Advisory Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal, former Chairman, University Grants Commission to advise on the ways and means to reduce academic burden on the school students submitted its report entitled 'Learning Without Burden' to the Minister of Human Resource Development on 15.7.93. The Committee was not set up to suggest comprehensive improvements in entire education System. The main recommendations of the Committee which have been included in a broad framework suggested to State/UT Governments in June '94 are:—

- (i) Greater involvement of teachers in framing curriculum and preparation of textbooks at State/UT level.
- (ii) Amendment of School Education Acts or Rules of States/UTs for laying down norms for pre-schools.
- (iii) Abolition of tests/interviews for admission in pre-schools and discontinuance of textbooks and homework at pre-school stage.
- (iv) Abolition of home work and project work at primary stage.
- (v) Extensive use of audio-visual material and enforcing teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40.

2. While forwarding the report of the Committee, Prof. Yash Pal advised for wide-ranging debate thereon. All the

recommendations of Yash Pal Committee and the majority of views expressed in the State/UT level workshops of experts were included in the broad framework that was circulated amongst States/UTs in June 1994 for appropriate action as deemed fit. 99% of schools in the country are under the control of State/UT Governments and they enjoy full autonomy in all school education matters within their jurisdiction.

[English]

Montreal Protocol

*199. SHRI VIJAY NAVAL PATIL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has threatened to walk out of the Montreal Protocol, if developed countries do not honour their commitment and contribute to the ozone fund;

(b) the extent to which the lack of funds has led India in not being able to switch over to the new. Clean technologies and phase out the CFCs and to bring down its ozone depleting potential to the 1995 level; and

(c) the amount released to India by the Montreal Fund so far and expected during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) India has not threatened to walk out of the Montreal Protocol. However, we have expressed our apprehension that should developed countries not fulfil their financial commitments, it would be difficult for developing countries to fulfil their technological commitments under the terms of the Protocol.

(b) Project proposals from India have not suffered due to lack of funds with the Multilateral Fund. Under the approved project proposals new and clean technologies will be adopted to replace the existing technologies. It is hoped that with the active cooperation of industries India will be able to fulfil its obligations under the Montreal Protocol.

(c) So far US \$ 11.4 million has been approved for 30 projects. A further amount of US \$ 4.00 million has been set aside for India, for small project proposals to be submitted shortly.

Railway Land

*200. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways has large area of vacant land lying unused;

(b) if so, whether the public have unauthorisedly encroached upon this land;

(c) if so, the area of railway land under unauthorised occupation; and

(d) the action being taken by the Government to get this land vacated?