

Autonomous Colleges

6671. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of autonomous colleges in the country;

(b) whether the University Grants Commission provides them financial assistance to enable them to meet their expenditure;

(c) whether the financial assistance being given by the University Grants Commission is enough to meet the additional expenditure of these colleges which they are required to incur because of their responsibilities arising out of their autonomous character and for holding examinations;

(d) whether the amount of financial assistance being given to the professional, technical and non-technical colleges is different; and

(e) if not, the justification for providing them uniform amount?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) According to information available with the University Grants Commission, there are 13 autonomous colleges at present.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The conferment of autonomous status on any college does not involve any transfer of financial responsibility to the University Grants Commission in respect of the maintenance expenditure of the college. The Commission, however, provides a non-lapsable grant of Rs. 1.00 lakh, per annum to each such college for a period of five years, related to the special academic programmes developed by such colleges. This assistance is in addition to the normal development support provided by the Commission to colleges.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The conferment of autonomy is dependent, apart from academic standing and staff competence, on the financial resources of the colleges to meet the additional expenditure in respect of their consequential responsibilities.

Automatic Telephone Exchange at Bhuj and Gandhidham-Kandla

6672. SHRI MAHAPATRAY MEHTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the people of Bhuj and Gandhidham-Kandla have requested for automatic Telephone Exchange instead of the present manually operated one; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not implementing it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indigenous manufacturing capacity in the country for automatic exchange equipment is not sufficient to meet even the needs for the expansion of existing automatic exchanges. There are certain techno-economic difficulties in importing equipment for exchanges of the size required at these places. Steps are being taken to augment indigenous production capacity in the country.

Storage Facility under Gram Panchayat Area

6673. SHRI GADADHAR SAHA: Will the Minister of RURAL RECONSTRUCTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether expansion of storage facilities through construction of rural godowns at least 2 in one Gram Panchayat area is essential for the rural farmers for storing their stock of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the provision and allocation made and amount released to