

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:21

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012

AAKASH TABLET

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram; Antony Shri Anto

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

- (a) whether the Government has launched a scheme to manufacture Aakash tablet in the country for distribution among students;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the number of students who have already been benefitted under the scheme, State-wise;
- (c) the norms laid down for providing this tablet to the students in the country;
- (d) whether the Government has already procured a large number of Aakash Tablets from Datawind, a Canadian firm, some of which were found to be defective and could not be rectified;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the total cost of the Aakash Tablets procured by the Government and efforts made by the Government to get back the money from Datawind?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.21 ASKED BY SHRI ANTO ANTONY AND SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING AAKASH TABLET.

(a) to (c) No, Sir. As of date, no scheme has been launched to manufacture Aakash tablets in the country. However, under National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) scheme, a project has been sanctioned to IIT Rajasthan for (i) Acquisition and testing of low cost access cum computing devices and (ii) Hardware & software optimization of low cost access cum computing devices. A Low Cost Access-cum-Computing Device (LCAD) named Aakash has been launched on 5th October, 2011. A total of 366 LCADs were distributed during the launch ceremony - to students from various institutions located in different States/UTs (not including devices retained at IIT Rajasthan for testing etc.) (on October 5, 2011) to get feedback from across the nation after testing the devices. State-wise distribution of Aakash Tablet for testing is as below:

S.No. State/UTs No. of Device distributed

1 Uttar Pradesh 132

2 Rajasthan 26

3 Gujarat 20

4 Madhya Pradesh 86

5 Punjab 39

6 Chandigarh 20

7 Maharashtra 22

8 Orissa 10

9. Himachal Pradesh 5

10 Kerala 2

11 Tripura 4

Total 366

The first phase of 1,00,000 tablets were targeted to the students in Higher technical education institutions so as to further ascertain technical feedback on its operation and usability. Since these LCADs were for the purpose of testing, no norms for distribution of LCADs to students were laid down. The devices are getting tested and hence are not ready for distribution. Once the production capacities are built up, norms for distribution with an aim to prioritise empowerment of students, especially from disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society, through this LCAD would get developed.

(d) to (f) IIT Rajasthan selected M/s Datawind through an open tender and placed an order for supplying 1,00,000 LCADs for the purpose of testing. Of the 6440, LCADs supplied to it, IIT Rajasthan, so far, has conditionally accepted 650 LCADs and rejected rest of the lots as the number of defective LCADs in those lots exceeded the stipulated 5% of devices. These devices were rejected for rectification and return to IIT Rajasthan. M/s Datawind is still to supply 1,00,000 LCADs of higher specifications at the same price. These higher specifications (which include 700 MHz Cortex A8 processor, 3200 mAH Battery and capacitive touch screen) have been necessitated to overcome the initial difficulties observed in the devices.

No payment has yet been made by IIT Rajasthan to the vendor (M/s Datawind), and hence, the question of getting back the money does not arise.