

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2916

ANSWERED ON:10.12.2014

REGIONAL IMBALANCE IN ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that there is a regional imbalance in access to higher education in rural and semi-urban areas of the country including Karnataka;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has set up a committee to evaluate the performance of the University Grant Commission (UGC) in coordinating, determining and maintenance of standards of education in universities;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the committee is likely to submit its report to the Government; and
- (e) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve the quality of higher education in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SMT. SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) & (b): Yes Madam. Students in some remote rural areas have difficulty in accessing higher education due to various reasons such as; (i) low number of higher education institutions in these areas, (ii) lack of adequate and proper infrastructure and poor quality of education in higher educational institutions, (iii) the challenges of attracting faculty to higher educational institutions in these area due to lack of infrastructural support etc. Economic, social and gender inequalities also play a big role in such cases.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) aims inter-alia to correct regional imbalances in access to higher education in rural & semi-urban areas, especially the unserved and underserved areas with low access to higher education, by setting up quality higher educational institutions and upgrading existing ones.

(c) & (d): Yes, Madam. The Government on 30th July, 2014, has constituted a Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Hari Gautam, former Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC) to evaluate the performance of the UGC in coordinating and determining standards of education in Universities and conducting an audit of its regulatory reach and identifying strengths and weaknesses on this aspect. The Committee has been asked to submit its report within a period of six months from the date of the order.

(e): The University Grants Commission (UGC) implements various schemes aimed at improving the quality of higher education, such as Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE), Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE), Special Assistance Programme (SAP), Centres with Potential for Excellence in a Particular Area (CPEPA) etc.

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has informed that in order to promote quality of technical education, it has introduced various schemes such as Research Promotion Scheme, Faculty Development Programme, Visiting Professorship, National Faculty in Engineering and Technology with Industrial Collaboration (NAFETIC), Innovation Programme Scheme and Quality Improvement Programme etc. It has also issued the Mandatory Accreditation of all Programs/Courses in Technical Education Institutions, University Departments and Institutions Deemed to be Universities imparting Technical Education Regulations, 2014 which makes it mandatory for each technical education institution, university department and institution Deemed to be University imparting technical education to get its programs/courses accredited.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), the overall quality of existing State higher educational institutions is sought to be improved by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adoption of accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework. Certain academic, administrative and governance reforms are a precondition for receiving funding under RUSA.