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Title: Need to set up a full-fledged Central University at Darjeeling.

SHRI D. NARBULA (DARJEELING): Sir, I would like to stress the need for setting up of a Central University at Darjeeling in West Bengal. There has been a persistent demand of the local people in this regard. I am sure, every one of us here will agree that education is the backbone of every society. It is unfortunate that even after 57 years of Independence, Darjeeling hills do not have any University. At present, there are eleven Degree colleges with over 18,000 students in the three sub-divisions of Darjeeling District. All these colleges are affiliated to North Bengal University in West Bengal imparting conventional courses only. Majority of the students of Darjeeling are seeking admission for post-graduation courses in eight Universities of the State, where they are finding it difficult to get admission.

I am constrained to state that this kind of situation has made higher education a far cry for the youths of Darjeeling hills. While appreciating the present Government's efforts in inculcating development-oriented advance education system in the country, I would emphasise introduction of hill-oriented courses such as eco-tourism, high altitude science, mountains' culture and sociology, bio-resource management, environment and forestry, floriculture and medicinal plants, rural technology besides, the conventional courses for the benefit of the hill students.

In the backdrop of this, I would strongly urge upon the Government to grant a full-fledged Central University for Darjeeling hills which will go a long way in fulfilling the long standing aspirations of the people of Darjeeling hills.