

ment showing the details of the facilities and amenities which have been provided so far for the welfare of disabled children in each State during this international year of disabled ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTERIES OF RAILWAYS AND EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [Placed in Library See No. LF-3268/81].

Effect on eyes of children studying at very early age

*500. **SHRI BALKRISHNA WASNIK :** Will the Minister of EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ophthalmologists who participated in a seminar on the prevention of blindness among children held in Delhi in November, 1981 were of the view that sending children to school before the age of six years increases the chances of eye damage;

(b) whether all the public schools functioning in the country and the educational shops admit children in schools at the age of three years; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto and what steps they propose to take to ensure that children are sent to schools at proper age ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTERIES OF RAILWAYS AND EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) to (c). The participants of a Seminar on 'pre-

vention of blindness among children' organised recently by the Dr. A. V. Baliga Foundation of Delhi expressed concern on the incidence of damage to eyes due to strain of reading and writing introduced below the age of five years.

Formal education begins in class I for which the age of entry is at least 5 plus; mostly, in fact, 6 plus.

In some cases, children in the age group 3-6 are exposed to pre-schooling. The early childhood education in these cases generally is more in the nature of play group activities. Such early childhood education is mostly under private auspices over which States/Union Territories have no control. Specific information about what private institutions do in this area is not available.

Iranian Students in India

*501. **SHRI CHITTA MAHATA :** Will the Minister of EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to lay a statement showing :

(a) whether a large number of Iranian students are living in India ; and

(b) if so, the number of Iranian students, university-wise ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTERIES OF RAILWAYS AND EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) and (b). According to the information available in the Ministry the total number of Iranian students studying in various universities and Institutions