

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2970

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DETERIORATION IN RESEARCH IN UNIVERSITIES

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

- (a) the measures being taken by the Government to stem the rapid deterioration of research in Indian Universities;
- (b) whether the Government has accepted to allocate Rs. 400 crore a year till 2007 exclusively for infrastructure development; (
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government is aware that in all the Universities and IITs in India teachers stay beyond working hours in the campus engaging themselves in research activities; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefore?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI)

(a) to (c): A Task Force was set up by the Government, for strengthening basic science education and research within the existing university system. The report has been given to the University Grants Commission (UGC) for further action. The recommendations of the Task Force inter-alia include earmarked allocation for improving scientific research in universities.

(d) & (e): According to the information furnished by the University Grants Commission (UGC), teachers in universities spend time on research, based on their commitment and requirement. their commitment and requirement.

New placement initiative

A novel state level placement programme (SLPP) initiated on January 17 this year by Anna University, which provides a common meeting ground for corporate recruitment personnel and students from 222 non-autonomous, self- financing colleges affiliated to the university, has generated great enthusiasm within the student community in Tamil Nadu.

Large corporates which hitherto did the rounds of a mere 20 top-ranked colleges in the state for recruitment purposes, now have a wider range of students to choose from and students studying in colleges in non-metros have an opportunity to land better paid jobs. Perhaps most significantly and for the first time ever, students of colleges in remote rural areas of the state who have never experienced campus recruitment, have been given the chance of entering the employment registers of large pan-India and even multinational companies.

‘Apart from providing recruiting companies a bigger talent pool to choose from and tapping hidden talent in rural institutions, one of our main objectives is to improve the quality of teaching in affiliated colleges and promote healthy competition between them. Today, placements have become an important yardstick for determining the status of engineering colleges and there is growing public pressure on them to upgrade the quality of education they dispense. This time 168 affiliated colleges sent students who met the eligibility criteria set by larger companies for SLPP,’ says Dr. E. Balaguruswamy, vice-chancellor, Anna University, who promoted the idea of the SLPP for the best of 44,000 BE and B.Tech students graduating from the 222 Anna University affiliated colleges this year. The recruitment initiative was flagged off by three IT majors – Cognizant Technology Solutions (CTS), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Wipro – on January 17 this year. These companies have completed three recruitment cycles in the nodal centres designated by Anna University – Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai – and selected their candidates, while Satyam Computers, which joined the recruitment process recently, has already visited Madurai and plans to move on to Coimbatore and Chennai shortly. ‘Out of 1,000 students selected to appear for interview in the three locations, 650 have found jobs in CTS, TCS and Wipro. Other IT giants like Infosys and Tata Infotech have also expressed interest in participating in the recruitment programme. Besides, core engineering companies like L&T, Hind Motors and Ashok Leyland are likely to participate from the next academic year,’ says Dr. Mannar Jawahar, director of Anna University’s Centre for University Industry Collaboration, which organised the SLPP.

Though the SLPP model has proved to be a remarkable success in widening corporate choice, the recruitment process also

highlighted uneven standards of engineering education inter se. Only 17 percent of students have secured jobs after the completion of ten recruitment cycles by four IT companies and recruits are from just 81 colleges. Moreover of the 222 self-financing colleges, only 168 were able to send candidates for recruitment. The rest could not even meet the minimum eligibility criteria set by the IT companies.

However, HRD managers of participating corporates are hopeful that the quality of SLPP candidates will improve. 'This is the first time that a state-wide placement programme has been conducted. By and large the candidates are of good calibre; what's lacking is an overall understanding of what IT companies are looking for and how students should prepare themselves. We have recruited about 90 engineers in Chennai, 90 in Madurai and over 50 in Coimbatore. SLPP will attract more companies in future as the process helps us save time, money and effort besides giving us access to graduates of diverse institutions,' says B. Suresh, senior HR manager, Cognizant Technology Solutions.

Considerations of wider choice, social justice and equity apart, within Anna University hope has been kindled that SLPP will prove a catalyst and inspiration for proliferating sub-standard colleges in the state to upgrade academic standards to ensure their students find placements of honour in SLPP melas of the future.