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MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE OF CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION HELD ON 27-28, APRIL, 1986

1. A meeting of a Central Advisory Board of Education was held on 27-28 April, 1986 to consider the document: National Policy on Education 1986 - A Presentation. A list of members and others who attended the meeting is annexed (Annexure-I).

Inaugurating the conference, the Chairman of the Board, the Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao announced that the Government has taken a conscious decision that the first priority in the New Education Policy will be given to the spread of education to children throughout the country. He observed that the nation should move as fast as it could towards this end. He added that the problem of poverty, unrestrained population growth, productivity and national integration cannot be tackled unless functional literacy and social awareness was provided to all persons who were in 15-35 age group.

The Chairman observed that effective steps would have to be taken to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by revolutionary developments in the fields of science and technology. While providing adequately for progress in respect of these, it would be necessary to support the programme of Research and Development and development of the required educated manpower. The Minister added that concerted attention would have to be given to the improvement of the system of higher education, to creation of institutions of excellence for teaching and research in science, to improvement in the existing institutions and establishment of first rate new institutions for technical and management education. Speaking on the role of the C.A.B.E., he stated that it was proposed to restore the C.A.B.E. to its old established role as the principal body to advise the Central and State Governments on educational matters, to facilitate coordination among them, and to add to its functions, the responsibilities to appraise, at least once every year, the manner in which education policy had been implemented by the Central and State Governments and other concerned agencies. The full text of his inaugural speech is annexed (Annexure-II).

4. Thereafter the Discussion Paper was taken up and discussed in detail. There was general consensus among the States on most of the issues listed in the Discussion Paper. There was complete agreement on the national system of education, and on giving priority to eradication of illiteracy, universalisation of elementary education, vocationalisation of education, improvement in the quality of training of teachers,

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distance learning including open school and open university. It was, however, felt that para No.5.11 of the document did not indicate the date for achievement of the target of universalisation of elementary education which should be clearly stated.

5. The representatives of the Governments of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal wanted education to be reverted to the State List.

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6. On the question of Three Language Formula, the Government of Tamil Nadu stated that they would retain the Two Language Formula which had been adopted by the State Legislature of Tamil Nadu in 1968. The rest of the States supported the Language Policy enunciated in the 1968 Policy Resolution.

7. In course of discussions, the conference addressed itself to the various elements contained in the discussion paper as a whole. The broad conclusions of the discussions are indicated below:

(1) The National System of Education should be based on a common educational structure; while the national curricular framework should contain a common core, flexibility to suit the requirements of regional variations should be allowed. The Education Minister, West Bengal, was against any mechanical uniformity to be super-imposed on different States in the name of common-core.

(2) The need for the Nation as a whole to assume the responsibility of providing resource support for implementing programmes of educational transformation, reducing disparities, universalisation of elementary education, adult literacy, scientific and technological research was emphasized by all members.

(3) In higher education in general, and technical education in particular, steps shall be taken to facilitate inter-regional mobility by providing equal access to every Indian of requisite merit, regardless of his origins. The universal character of universities and other institutions of higher education is to be restored.

(4) While the role and responsibility of the States in regard to education should remain essentially unchanged, the Union Government should accept a larger responsibility to reinforce the national and integrative character of education, to maintain quality and standards (including those of the teaching profession at all levels), to study and monitor the educational requirements of the country as a whole in regard to manpower for development, to cater to the needs of research and advanced study, to look after the international aspects of education, culture and human resource development and, in general, to promote excellence at all levels of the educational

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pyramid throughout the country.

(5) The new policy should lay emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far.

(6) Education should be used as an agent of promoting basic change in the status of women. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting of time targets, and effective monitoring.

(7) The central focus in the educational development of Scheduled Casts, should be their equalisation with the non-SC population at all stages and levels of education, in all areas and in all the four dimensions - rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female.

(8) Measures should be taken urgently to bring the Scheduled Tribes on par with others and to this end priority should be accorded to provide educational facilities in remote tribal areas. Keeping in view their special needs and life styles, incentive schemes for Scheduled Tribes need to be formulated.

(9) Greater attention should be paid to the education of educationally deprived or backward minorities.

(10) Measures should be taken to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

(11) The whole Nation must pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age-group. The Central and State Governments, political parties and their mass organisations, the mass media and educational institutions must commit themselves to mass literacy programmes of diverse nature.

(12) Recognising the holistic nature of proper child development, through integration of various inputs including nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development, Early Childhood Care and Education should receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the Integrated Child Development Services programme, wherever possible.

(13) The new thrust in elementary education should emphasise two aspects: (i) universal enrollment and universal retention of children upto 14 years of age, and (ii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education.

(14) Provision should be made of essential facilities in primary schools, including at least two reasonably large rooms that are usable in all weather, and the necessary toys, blackboards, maps, charts, and other learning material. At least two teachers, one of whom a woman, should work in every school, the number increasing as early as possible one teacher per class. Members welcomed unanimously their phased drive, symbolically called OPERATION BLACKBOARD to improve physical facilities in Primary Schools all over the country. Government, local bodies, voluntary agencies and individuals should fully involved with the programme of school improvements.

(15) A large and systematic programme of non-formal education should be launched for school drop-outs, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who cannot attend whole-day schools. Much of the work of running NFE centres may be done through voluntary agencies and panchayati Raj institutions. The provision of funds to these agencies should be adequate and timely. The Government should take overall responsibility for this vital sector which is not yet fully established. The representatives of the Government of West Bengal emphasised that non-formal education should be treated as complementary to elementary education and not as substitute.

(16) The New Education Policy should give the highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school and should adopt an array of meticulously formulated strategies based on micro-planning, and applied at the grass-roots level all over the country, to ensure children is retention at school. This effort should be fully coordinated with the network of non-formal education. It should be ensured as suggested in the draft discussion paper, that all children who attain the age of about 11 years by 1990 will have had five years of schooling, or its equivalent through the non-formal stream. Likewise, by 1995 all children should be provided free and compulsory education upto 14 years of age.

(17) Conscious internalisation of a healthy work ethos and of the values of a humane and composite culture must be brought about through appropriately formulated curricula. In the field of secondary education, vocationalisation through specialised institutions or through the refashioning of secondary education can, at this stage, provide valuable manpower for economic growth. Access to secondary education will need to be widened to cover areas unserved by it at present.

(18) Most of the members welcomed establishment Novodaya Vidyalayas as pace setting institutions in various parts of the country on a given pattern, but with full scope for innovation and experimentation. The Education Minister West Bengal however expressed stream reservations about the proposal, as serving the needs of small elite groups. The Education Minister, Andhra Pradesh suggested the use of regional language as medium of instruction in Navodaya Vidyalayas.

(19) Vocational education should be a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activity. These courses should ordinarily be provided after the secondary stage, but keeping the scheme flexible, they may also be made available after Class VIII. The objective of promoting better integration of vocational education at all levels, including the industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) was welcomed. The establishment of vocational courses or institutions will be the responsibility of the Government as well as employers in the public and private sectors; the Government should, however, take special steps to cater to the needs of women, rural and tribal students and the deprived sections of society. Appropriate programmes might also be started for the handicapped. Graduates of vocational courses might be given opportunities for professional growth, career improvement and lateral entry into courses of general, technical and professional education through appropriate bridge courses. Non-formal, flexible and need-based vocational programmes should also be made available to neoliterates, youth who have completed primary education, school drop-outs, persons engaged in work and unemployed or partially employed persons ---- Special attention in this regard will be given to women.

(20) The proposal to cover 10 percent of higher secondary students under vocational courses by 1990 and 25 percent by 1995 was endorsed. It was emphasized that all steps necessary should be taken to ensure that a substantial majority of the products of vocational courses acquire a certain minimum level of professional skills and competencies as would facilitate their employment or self-employment. A review of the courses offered should be regularly undertaken. Government shall also review its recruitment policy to encourage diversification at the secondary level.

(21) In the context of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education had to become dynamic as never before, constantly entering uncharted areas. The Conference emphasized the need for taking urgent steps to protect the system from degradation. In view of the mixed experiences with the system of affiliation, autonomous colleges might be helped to develop in large numbers until the affiliating system is replaced by a freer and more creative association of universities with colleges. Similarly, the creation of

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of autonomous departments within universities on a selective basis may be encouraged. It might also be ensured that autonomy and freedom it related to accountability. Courses and programmes might be redesigned to meet the demands of specialisation better. Special emphasis should be laid on linguistic to competence. There should be increasing flexibility in the combination of courses. The need for effective coordination higher education institutions at the State Level, through Councils of Higher Education received emphasis. The UGC and these councils should develop appropriate mechanisms to keep a watch on standards.

(22) Research in the universities should be provided enhanced support and steps should be taken to ensure its quality. Suitable mechanisms might be set up by the UGC for coordinating research in the universities, particularly in thrust areas of science and technology, with research undertaken by other agencies. Effort may be made to encourage the setting up of national research facilities within the university system, with proper forms of autonomous management Research in Indology, the humanities and social sciences may receive adequate support. To fulfil the need for the synthesis of knowledge, inter-disciplinary research should be encouraged. In the context of India's ancient fund of knowledge and the need to relate it to contemporary realities effort might be made to develop facilities for the intensive study of Sanskrit and other Classical languages.

- (23) In the interests of greater coordination and consistency in policy, sharing of facilities and developing inter-disciplinary research, a national body covering higher education in general, agricultural, medical, technical, legal and other professional fields will need to be set up.
- (24) The Open University system had been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as an instrument of democratising education. The Indira Gandhi National Open University, established in 1985 in fulfilment of these objectives, would be strengthened. The instrument of open and distance learning will have to be developed with care and extended with caution.
- (25) A beginning might be made in delinking degrees from jobs in selected areas. The proposal cannot be applied to occupation - specific courses like Engineering, Medicine, Law, Teaching, etc. Similarly, the services of specialists with academic qualifications in the humanities, social sciences, sciences etc. will continue to be required in various job positions. The de-linking might be applied in services for which a university degree need not be a necessary qualification. Its implementation will lead to a refashioning of job-specific courses and afford greater justice to those candidates who, despite being equipped for a given job, are unable to get it because of an unnecessary preference for graduate candidates.
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- (26) Concomitant with de-linking, an appropriate machinery, such as a National Testing Service, should be established, in appropriate phases, to conduct tests on a voluntary basis to determine the suitability of candidates for specified jobs and to pave the way for the emergence of norms of comparable competence across the nation.
- (27) The pattern of the Rural University would need to be consolidated and developed on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro-planning at grass-root levels and the transformation of rural areas. Institution and programmes of Gandhian basic education should call for support.
- (28) The Conference considered it essential to look at technical and management education together, in view of their close relationship and complementary concerns. The reorganisation of Technical and Management Education should take into account the anticipated scenario by the turn of the century, with specific reference to the likely changes in the economy, social environment, production and management processes, the rapid expansion of knowledge and the great advances in science and technology.
- (29) The Conference emphasised the need of suitably appraising the Community Polytechnic System and strengthening the same to improve its quality and widen its coverage.
- (30) Research as a means of renovation and renewal of educational processes will be undertaken by all higher technical institutions. It should primarily aim to producing quality manpower capable of taking up R&D functions. Research for development should focus on improving present technologies, developing new indigenous ones and enhancing production and productivity. A suitable system for watching and forecasting technology should be set up.
- (31) High priority should be given to modernisation and removal of obsolescence. However, modernisation will need to be undertaken to enhance functional efficiency and not for its own sake or as a status symbol. Institutions may be encouraged to generate resources using their capacities to provide services to the community and industry. They may be equipped with up-to-date learning resources, library and computer facilities. Adequate hostel accommodation may be computer facilities. Adequate hostel accommodation may be provided, specially for girls. Facilities for sports, creative work and cultural activities may be expanded.

(32) The role of the teacher especially the performance of multiple roles: teaching, research and development of learning resource materi- al, extension and administration or managing the institution was emphasised by the members. Initial and in-service training may be made mandatory for faculty members and adequate training reserves provided. Staff Development Programmes may be integrated at the State and coor- dinated at regional and national levels.

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(33) The All India Council for Technical Education will need to be vested with statutory authority for planning, formulation and the maintenance of norms and standards, accreditation, funding of priority areas, monitoring and evaluation, maintaining party of certification and awards and onsureng the coordinated and integrated development of technical and management education Mandatory periodic evaluation might be carried out by a duly constituted Accreditation Board.

(34) Provision of improved students services and insistence on observ- ance of acceptable norms of behavior; provision of a threshold of facilities to institutions; and creation of a system of performance appraisals of institutions according to standards and norms set at the National or State levels, received special emphasis.



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