

**RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE 53<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF  
THE CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CABE was held on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July, 2005 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi to consider the reports of the seven Committees of the CABE that had been set up pursuant to the recommendations of the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting in August 2004. These Committees were set up to consider the following issues:

- a) Universalisation of Secondary Education
- b) Girls' Education and the Common School System
- c) Free and Compulsory Education Bill and other issues related to Elementary Education
- d) Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions
- e) Financing of Higher and Technical Education
- f) Integration of Culture Education in the School Curriculum
- g) Regulatory Mechanism for the Textbooks and parallel textbooks taught in schools out side the Government system.

The reports of the Committees were considered in two sessions each on the respective days of the meeting as per the programme placed at Annex-I. The Chief Minister of Assam, the Ministers from the State Governments, and the nominated members of CABE, attended the meeting as also the ex-officio members and the representatives of the various Ministries. The lists of the participants on each of the days are placed at Annex-II and III.

The 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CABE commenced with welcome addresses by Shri Sudeep Banerjee, Secretary (S&HE) and Member-Secretary of the CABE and by Smt. Kumud Bansal, Secretary (EE&L). In their welcome addresses, they expressed their gratitude to the Chairmen and Members of the various Committees for the work they had put in for preparing the reports.

In his inaugural remarks, Shri Arjun Singh, the Minister of Human Resource Development and the Chairman, CABE also expressed his gratitude to the Chairmen and Members of the various Committees. He thanked all the participants for rising above political and ideological considerations to enable the Committees to function in a non-partisan

manner, enriched by the diversity of opinions. Saying that this was a tribute to the strength of our federal democracy and the sagacity of the Hon. Ministers in the various States, he requested the Members to consider the presentations of these reports and discuss the recommendations in the same spirit of working together in a federal framework.

He informed the CABE that the minutes of the previous (52<sup>nd</sup>) CABE meeting should ordinarily have been ratified in this meeting as the first item of business. However, he pointed out that since the last meeting was specifically convened to consider the National Curriculum Framework, which was again scheduled to be discussed in the next meeting of the CABE in August, 2005, and in view of the heavy agenda already fixed for this meeting, he proposed that the ratification of and any discussion on the minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting would be taken up in the next CABE meeting. The opening statement of the Minister of Human Resource Development can be seen at Annex-IV.

#### **The CABE Committee on Universalisation of Secondary Education**

Following the introductory remarks by Shri Ghanshyam Tiwari, Minister of Education, Rajasthan and the Chairman of this CABE Committee, as well as comments by the Member Secretary, Prof. Krishan Kumar, Director, NCERT, the salient features of the report were presented by Prof. Puran Chand, Joint Director, NCERT.

The report of the CABE Committee on Universalisation of Secondary Education was discussed at length in the first session. There was broad consensus on the need to immediately address the questions posed by the increasing numbers of children passing out of our elementary schools who would be seeking secondary school education. The financial projections accompanying the report as also the recommendation that the financial responsibility should be shared, initially on the pattern of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, was also discussed and endorsed. The CABE also appreciated the fact that the interests of children with special needs has received much needed focus in the report; however, it is also clear that much more work is required to be done to actually enable children in such situations to access formal education.

## **The CABE Committee Report on Girls' Education and Common School System.**

The presentation of this report commenced with the opening remarks by Shri Tarun Gogoi, the Chief Minister of Assam and the Chairman of the Committee and from Prof. Krishan Kumar, Director, NCERT followed by a detailed presentation by Ms. Poonam Agarwala of NCERT.

The CABE Committee Report on Girls Education and Common School System was discussed. There was a consensus that the Common School System would be one where all schools are easily accessible to children in every urban and rural locality and all of these provide a comparable standard of education. Several Members expressed concern over the proliferation of private schools, many of which function as commercial operations. The need for some control on the activities of such schools was repeatedly expressed.

On the question of girls' education, it was agreed that enlarging opportunities for secondary education was essential if girls were to be encouraged to enter school at all. The need to remove gender bias in textbooks and in the school system as a whole was also urged.

The CABE also discussed the recommendations made on Inclusive Education. Though some views were expressed that these recommendations were not extensive enough, it was felt that what was mentioned had some value.

## **The CABE Committee on the Free and Compulsory Education Bill and other issues relating to Elementary Education.**

The afternoon Session on 14 July 2005 commenced with introductory remarks from Shri M.A.A. Fatmi, Minister of State for Education and the Vice-Chairman of the CABE. He expressed his gratitude to Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of State for Science and Technology and the members of this Committee for putting together a draft Bill for dealing with a very important issue which would translate into action the Constitutional amendment aimed at making Education a Fundamental Right for all children in the country in the age group of 6-14 years.

Shri Kapil Sibal, Hon. Minister of State, Science and Technology and Chairman of this Committee made an opening Statement. This was followed by a detailed presentation by Shri K.M. Acharya, Joint Secretary (EE-I) and the Member Secretary of the Committee.

The members discussed the report of this Committee extensively. Valuable suggestions were received both from the Education Ministers of States as well as the other Members of the C.A.B.E. The Education Ministers of the States were generally supportive of the essential provisions of the Bill as recommended by the Committee but they felt that in view of the severe financial constraints faced by almost all the State Governments, the Central Government should bear most of the financial responsibility for the implementation of this Act.

Some members of the C.A.B.E, who were also members of this Committee, represented that certain issues had been included in the Committee's report, which had neither been discussed nor had been agreed to by them. It was explained by the Chairman that certain issues had remained to be discussed/resolved fully for want of time. However, since the Chairman had been authorized to finalise the draft report, these were included after due consideration. However, as reservations had been expressed these would also be duly considered for satisfactory resolution.

Taking into account the valuable views expressed by the Hon. Members, the draft bill will now be prepared and circulated to all State Governments and placed on the website for wider consultation. Based on all these inputs and after consideration by the Government, action would be taken to give the Bill a final shape and introduce it in the Parliament at the earliest.

The morning session of the C.A.B.E on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2005 commenced with the consideration of the reports of the C.A.B.E Committees dealing with Higher Education.

#### **The C.A.B.E Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions.**

The report of this Committee commenced with the introductory remarks by its Chairman, Shri. Kanti Biswas, Minister of Education, West Bengal, followed by a detailed presentation by the Member Secretary, Prof. Ved Prakash, Secretary, UGC.

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The Committee was set up to suggest measures for enhancing the autonomy and also to institutionalize regulatory provisions for promoting autonomy and accountability in institutions of higher education. The Committee, which held wide ranging discussions with various stakeholders, considered different aspects of autonomy prior to formulating its recommendations.

The Committee has made as many as 61 recommendations categorized under four major heads namely, academic, administrative, financial and general.

The report was received well by the members of C.A.B.E. During the course of discussions, some of the participants underlined the necessity of redefining the powers of regulatory bodies. Concerns were expressed about the functioning of privately managed institutions of higher education and more so for the ones engaged in professional courses. Concerns were also expressed about character building, promotion of excellence and ensuring compatibility between technology and humanities and social sciences.

It was felt that effective implementation of the recommendations would enhance the effectiveness of functioning of higher education institutions and pave the way for conferment of autonomy on them to handle their academic, administrative and financial matters, competently with accountability.

### **The C.A.B.E. Committee on Financing of Higher and Technical Education**

This report was entirely presented by its Chairman, Prof. Bhalchandra Mungekar, Member, Planning Commission. Its Chairman also made the detailed presentation, since the Member Secretary was on tour abroad.

The report of the Committee on Financing of Higher and Technical Education was well received and commended for the sensitivity shown towards increasing the access and equity with reference to the students from the disadvantaged groups in our country.

The suggested enhancements in allocations to this sector were also welcomed, though there was a call for the need to reconcile the apparent contradictions in the recommendations of the two Committees on Higher

Education on the respective shares among the different sectors of education and with respect to distance education.

The proposal for a body for financing higher education (the Higher Education Finance Corporation) was also supported in order to assist the students, especially those from the weaker sections. The Committee also suggested the need for regulation to curb profit making and ensuring quality education in all such institutions with proper infrastructure, faculty and laboratories and other facilities. This was especially recommended to cover the mushrooming number of institutions tying up with foreign institutions of dubious standing so that our youth are not exploited.

#### **The CABE Committee on Integration of Culture Education in the School Curriculum**

The report of this Committee was presented by its Chairman, Prof. U.R. Ananthmurthy, who made a mention of the advice received from the eminent cultural figures in his Committee. He specially mentioned the contributions of Shri Javed Akhtar, Dr. Kiran Seth and Smt. Krishna Sobti which had been annexed to this report. He also acknowledged the contributions of many writers, theater activists, educationists, painters and musicians, which had been integrated into report.

Stressing that the arts and culture should be acquired in a festive atmosphere without compulsion, the Committee recommended that the emphasis should be on children acquiring culture without any alienation from their own environment. The Committee recommended that sharpening the artistic faculty of children will contribute to their better learning of the academic subjects which they are routinely taught.

#### **The CABE Committee on Regulatory Mechanisms for Text Books and parallel Textbooks taught in schools outside the Government system**

The report of this Committee was presented by Prof. Zoya Hasan, Co-Chairperson, alongwith additional comments by Prof. Gopal Guru, the other Co-Chairperson. The report was broadly endorsed by the CABE with the suggestion that a similar exercise should also be done in respect of books taught within the Government system. It was felt that the proliferation of schools outside the Government system was in response to the lack of

schools within the Government system. It was also felt that if Government schools had functioned properly, it would not be such a problem with private schools and the inadequate or sub-standard teaching material. The suggestion of setting up an institutional regulatory mechanism for preparing the guidelines and the parameters for periodic review and monitoring of textbooks would need to be actively considered by the Government.

### **Supplementary Material Circulated to the Members of the CABE**

Some supplementary material given by Shri Anil Sadgopal in respect of the Committees on the Free and Compulsory Education Bill, the Common School System and Girls Education and by Ms. Teesta Setalvad on the Regulatory Mechanism of textbooks outside the Government system were also circulated to all the Members for their information.

In addition, a detailed note prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on Inclusive Education of the Disabled Children and the Action Plan for the Education of Children and Young Adults with Special Needs was also circulated during this meeting. Besides, a note, again prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on a draft legislation on the issue of Admission and Fee Structure in Private Professional Institutions was also circulated among the Members. In respect of the latter, the comments of the various State Governments were invited within a month so that further action could be taken to introduce this Legislation in the Parliament at the earliest.

After considering the reports of the seven CABE Committees, the meeting ended with the concluding remarks of the Minister of HRD and Chairman, CABE. Thanking all the members for their active participation during the two-day session, as well as the non-partisan and wide support for the Committees as they considered different issues of vital importance to the education sector, he expressed his satisfaction at the maturity and sagacity of the entire consultation process. The detailed concluding Remarks of the Minister of HRD can be seen at Annex - V.

Thanking the Members of the CABE for endorsing the approaches adopted by the various Committees, he assured them that their suggestions and comments would receive due attention. He stated that immediately following the meeting, the Government would identify the action points emerging from all these reports and prepare a road map for acting on these



in time. He assured the members that the Government would keep reporting to this Apex Body of consultation regarding the implementation and to seek further guidance.

Lauding the Members on the successful completion of the work of the CAGE through its various Committees, he announced the setting up of three Standing Committees of the CAGE for considering the following activities:

- 1) Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with special Needs.
- 2) Literacy and Adult Education; and
- 3) Integration and Coordination of Efforts for Children's Development

These Committees would comprise members drawn on a rotational basis from among the States and the Members of the CAGE and function under the Chairmanship of the following persons during the first year:

- 1) The Standing Committee on Inclusive Education to be chaired by Shri Vasant Purake, Minister of School Education, Maharashtra.
- 2) The Standing Committee on Literacy and Adult Education to be chaired by Prof. Basudeb Burman, MP; and
- 3) The Standing Committee on Integration and Coordination of Efforts for Children's Development to be chaired by Smt. Shanta Sinha, Member of the CAGE.

With these remarks, the meeting was declared closed and it was decided that the CAGE would meet next in August 2005 to further consider the National Curriculum Framework.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SHRI ARJUN SINGH,  
MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AT  
THE 53<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE CABE**

Respected colleagues on the Council of Ministers, esteemed Chief Ministers and Ministers from the State Governments, honourable members of the CABE, Secretaries of the Government of India and from the State Governments and other officials, ladies & gentlemen, I welcome you all to the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CABE. We have assembled here to discuss the reports of the CABE Committees, which were set up pursuant to the recommendations of the CABE in its 51<sup>st</sup> meeting held in August 2004. Ordinarily, we would have commenced the proceedings by considering the minutes of the previous CABE meeting. However, since the last meeting was convened to consider the National Curriculum Framework, which we propose to consider again in detail in the next CABE meeting in August 2005 and in view of the heavy agenda slated for this meeting, it is proposed that we take up the ratification of and any discussions on the minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting in the next CABE meeting. I would request that in this meeting, therefore, we may devote our attention to the consideration of the reports of the CABE Committees.

As we are all aware, seven Committees of the CABE were set up to examine the issues, which were identified as those requiring detailed consideration. These Committees, some of the which were

headed by my colleague Ministers and Chief Ministers/Education Ministers from the States and eminent educationists, included among others, the Secretaries from the various States, and academicians in order to ensure wide-ranging discussions and consideration of all the viewpoints in the true spirit of working together in a federal framework. I am very happy to note that the reports have all been submitted within the revised time frame. These committees have functioned in a non-partisan manner though enriched by the different political perspectives brought in the deliberations by the active involvement of Ministers and Secretaries of the States ruled by different political parties. This is a tribute to the strength of our federal democracy and the sagacity of the Hon'ble Ministers in the various States.

These Committees have held detailed discussions and interacted with a large number of people in the various States before making their recommendations. The reports are ready to be presented before this august body and I look forward to free and frank discussions and advice on all the issues raised in these reports.

I am also acutely aware that the real task of operationalising the recommendations of these reports is only now beginning. I am confident that we would continue to receive your unstinted cooperation in our follow up endeavours as well, rising above political and ideological compulsions, towards meeting our common goals. We have to work together to ensure that we make considerable

headway toward the objective of ensuring quality education to each and every child and young adult in our country.

I am grateful to you all for attending this meeting and contributing in our common cause to move ahead because we are collectively answerable for making the education system deliver with greater efficiency, equity, relevance and accountability as we nurture our citizens of tomorrow and engage ourselves in the onerous task of nation building.

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**CONCLUDING REMARKS OF SHRI ARJUN SINGH,**  
**UNION MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

It is a matter of great satisfaction to us that we have been able to reach a broad consensus on all issues so far as the States and the Central Government are concerned. It is a tribute to the maturity of our federal democracy. Consensus, by its very nature, is an art of the possible.

The Ministers across the political divide had recognized this and endorsed the approaches adopted by the various Committees, which had also functioned in a non-partisan manner. While endorsing, they have also made certain suggestions and comments, which will receive due attention.

An important issue that has come up for discussion is with regard to the financing of these wide ranging recommendations. It may appear that the financial requirement is unrealistic or fantastic. However, I have been advised by some very knowledgeable people that with our National Common Minimum Programme commitment of earmarking 6% of GDP to education and the projected growth rate of the economy at 7-8%, these ambitious requirements of funds are within the range of realistic possibilities.

While the CAGE is a mechanism of Centre-State consensus building, it is also enriched, in its deliberations, by the representation of various sections of the civil society. We have ensured that all sections of interests and opinions are reflected in the constitution of this body. It is within the very nature of our enterprise that we are inviting debate and discussion on issues. Within the civil society groups, the academics constitute a very important

section and their very *raison d'être* consists in articulating their different positions. It would be a sad day if we seek similarity of opinions from the academics and to that extent, it is the art of the impossible, which I will not attempt. It is in this context that we must understand the various opinions expressed by the civil society representatives and listen to them carefully.

The CABE is an advisory mechanism. While deciding on all these issues, the Government would very carefully apply itself to the various view points expressed here, howsoever radically different or marginal perspectives they may represent. This is how educational issues should be addressed in this country and I am certain that the deliberations during the last two days have strengthened the processes of policy making through wider debate, consultation and consensus building.

Immediately after this meeting, the Government will identify action points emerging from all these reports and prepare a road map for acting on them in a time-bound manner. We will keep reporting back to this apex body of consultation with regard to whatever we are able to do on their concerns and deliberations, as expressed through the recommendations and comments thereon expressed, in these last two days.

All the members of the CABE have found these mechanisms of working through Committees very fruitful. In the light of this experience, I would wish to constitute the following Committees:

A Standing Committee on Inclusive Education for Children and Youth with Special Needs. This Committee will oversee the implementation of the new National Policy on this, which I had the privilege to announce in Parliament on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2005. The Membership of this Committee would be on rotational basis among the States and the Members of the CABE. For the next one year, I would request Shri Vasant Purake, Minister of School Education, Sports & Youth Affairs, Maharashtra, to Chair this Committee.

I would also like to have a Standing Committee on Literacy and Adult Education to guide the National Literacy Mission. The Membership of this Committee also would be on rotational basis among the States and the Members of the CABE. For the next one year, I would request Prof. Basudev Barman to Chair this Committee.

A concern has been expressed by several members in the CABE about the need to take a holistic view about the development of children, which is sometimes not possible because of different schemes of Education, Child Development, Nutrition and Health proceeding in their parallel and often uncoordinated way. I, therefore, would also constitute a Standing Committee on looking at the Integration and Coordination of efforts for children's development. This Committee would be chaired by Ms. Shanta Sinha

We had a meeting of the State Education Ministers of Technical and Higher Education in Bangalore, on the need to have a Central Legislation for governing the admission and fee structure in private professional institutions. A consensus was reached in that meeting for enacting a Central Legislation

on this issue. A draft Legislation has been prepared in this regard, which has been circulated today. The State Governments and the Members of the CABE are requested to convey their views on this within a month so that we are able to bring in the Legislation soon enough to be able to be effective from the next academic session.

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