

SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSION OF THE 56TH CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION HELD ON 31ST AUGUST 2009

1. The Fifty Sixth Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was held on 31st August 2009 at Hotel Ashok, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal. Minister of Rural Development, Shri C.P. Joshi, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. M.S. Gill, Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Kantilal Bhuria, Minister of Labour and Employment, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Smt. D. Purandeswari, Member Planning Commission, Dr. Narendra Jadhav. and Ministers in-charge of Education from various States/UTs attended the meeting. The Board also has eminent educationists, authors, artists, linguists etc. apart from Heads of different autonomous organizations and Secretaries of different departments of the Government of India as its members.

2. The CABE is the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education. It was reconstituted by the Government on 12th December 2008 with the mandate to review the progress of education and implementation of education policies and to advise regarding educational development in the country. The CABE also acts as a forum for coordination and exchange of views between Central & State Governments/Union Territories and Non-Governmental Agencies and eminent persons from different walks of life on education policy and progress.

3. The meeting focused on the vision for the future with Child Centric education as mentioned by Shri Sibal in his opening address, and also reviewed various initiatives by the Ministry of HRD both in School Education & Literacy as well as Higher Education. The meeting also focused particularly on the legislation for Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – flagship programme for universalisation of elementary education; Mid-Day Meal Programme meant for improving nutritional standards and health status of school-going children and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan for universalisation of access to secondary education and Education Reforms.

4. In the area of Higher Education, the Central Advisory Board of Education deliberated on planning and progress in expansion of Higher Education envisaged under the 11th Five Year Plan. The meeting also focused on initiatives like opening of new Central Universities, Central assistance for the 374 new degree colleges in educationally backward districts, opening of new IITs, IIMs, NITs, IITSERs and IIITs, National Mission on Education through ICT, educational advancement of minorities, Reforms in Higher Education and creation of an all encompassing National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) a constitutional body.

5. (i) CABE unanimously endorsed the general need for reforms at all levels of education and felt that while there may be different view points on the pace and process of reforms, there was unanimity on its direction in the interest of children who are India's most precious assets. Members reiterated their commitment to a meaningful partnership between Central and State Governments, non-government and civil society organizations in the national endeavour for the future of children in our country. The national endeavour should encompass:

(a) expansion of the existing education system to allow choices to children.

(b) Inclusion so that no child is left out, and special priority given to child belonging to SC/ST and other disadvantaged groups, including children with special education needs so that they receive the same educational opportunity as other children.

(c) Opportunity for excellence for all children.

(ii) CABE welcomed the new legislation on Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, which would lead to significant systemic reform in the elementary education sector, including SSA. CABE endorsed the RTE mandate for ensuring universal access, attendance and completion on elementary education, and recommended that quality benchmarks in teacher qualification, quality of teacher education and curriculum reform be expeditiously established. CABE also welcomed the shift in approach from

provision of incentives and benefits to child rights and entitlements. CABE endorsed the need for synergy between the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education and the literacy and continuing education programme.

- (iii) CABE emphasized the need for all States to modify their curriculum, syllabi and textbooks on the basis of NCF 2005, so that all children in the country have access to child-centric, constructivist teaching and learning process. CABE emphasized that curriculum and textbooks should be fully in line with constitutional values and child centered pedagogies.
- (iv) CABE endorsed the necessity of a core curriculum in science and mathematics at secondary and higher secondary levels across all Education Boards in the country, so as to provide a level playing field to all students to join professional courses.
- (v) CABE noted the efforts of CBSE to introduce a grading system in lieu of marks for its Class X examination from next year with the objective of reducing unhealthy competition, and thereby reduce stress, and suggested to the States that they explore the possibility of following suit.
- (vi) CABE was unanimous that there is a need to reduce examination stress among students. CABE noted the attempt of CBSE to make class Xth examination optional for students who will continue in the same school in Class – XI, while replacing the same with an efficient comprehensive and continuous evaluation (CCE) system so that standards of learning outcome are not compromised.
- (vii) CABE agreed to set up a Committee to draw up guidelines regarding ICT in School Education.

Higher Education

- viii) CABE approved the proposal for an autonomous overarching authority for higher education and research with its policy related functions being distinct from regulatory functions– some States felt that there should be scope for the involvement of States. The Task Force constituted to follow up on the

proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research would consult States in this regard. CABE also approved the proposal of a self-selecting Collegium of eminent persons for greater objectivity and assistance to search committees in the selection of Chairperson and Members of the proposed National Commission and in the selection of Vice Chancellors and other eminent academic and research positions.

- ix) CABE endorsed the need for a law to prevent, prohibit and punish malpractices in higher education – some States felt that the scope of the proposed law should be widened to include all sectors of education, and it was explained that the present proposal was in keeping with the legislative competence of Parliament.
- x) CABE approved mandatory assessment and accreditation in higher education – the proposed law should take into consideration the concerns expressed by some of the States with regard to the autonomy of the processes of accreditation.
- xi) CABE supported the proposal to establish Educational Tribunals at the national and State levels for fast track adjudication, without undermining the authority of universities.
- xii) CABE also supported academic reforms in Central Universities, State Universities and Colleges, especially the need to revise curriculum and update teacher competence with appropriate support from Centre and States.
- xiii) CABE welcomed the proposed policy to attract talent to teaching and research to higher education system generally.
- xiv) CABE endorsed the proposal to establish a Central Madrassa Board, which it felt should have greater representation of academics, especially women – and should ensure that only non-theological education would be overseen by the Board in respect of Madrassas volunteering to be affiliated to the Board.
