SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSION HELD DURING THE STATE EDUCATION MINISTERS’ CONFERENCE HELD ON 5th JUNE, 2012 AT NEW DELHI

The Conference of State & UT Education Ministers’ was held on 5th June 2012 with Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister for Human Resource Development, Communications and IT, Government of India in the Chair. Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for HRD, 20 Ministers of Education representing various State Governments and Union Territories, Smt. Anshu Vaish, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Shri Ashok Thakur, Secretary, Higher Education, Prof. Sanjay G. Dhande, Director, IIT-Kanpur, Prof. Damodar Acharya, Director, IIT-Kharagpur, Prof. Gautam Barua, Director, IIT-Guwahati, heads of autonomous institutions, and senior officials of the Central and State Governments were present.

In his opening remarks, Hon’ble HRM, Shri Kapil Sibal emphasized the centrality of State Governments both in policy formulation as also in their effective implementation. HRM recalled the cooperation extended by the State Governments in the education sector during the last three years and thanked all the State Education Ministers for the same. He stated that Education being a Concurrent subject, consultations and continuous dialogue with the States becomes crucial in a federating structure. These interactions have been extremely useful in shaping the initiatives and policies of the Ministry, ranging from the Right to Education, continuous and Comprehensive evaluation, reforms in higher education etc.

At the outset the Minutes of the State Education Ministers Conference held on 22nd February 2012 were confirmed and the Action Taken Report was noted. Thereafter the following issues were deliberated.
A presentation on the reforms proposed in the entrance examinations for admission to engineering institutions was made by Prof Sanjay G. Dhande, Director, IIT Kanpur. The process adopted in consulting various stakeholders and the details of the decision arrived at the meeting of the Joint Council of IITs, NITs and IIITs in its meeting on 28.5.2012 was explained in detail. The percentile normalisation process and the modalities for organisation of the common test were explained by Directors of IIT-Guwahati, Prof Gautam Barua and IIT-Kharagpur, Prof Damodar Acharya. The representative from Maharashtra stated that a consultation with various stakeholders had been organised by the State Government, where the overwhelming opinion was in support of the common test. The Hon’ble Minister from Gujarat stated that they have written to the Central Government supporting the common test. It was explained that States would have the freedom to join in the common examination system and have the autonomy to determine their own relative weightages to normalized Class XII Board marks, performance in JEE-MAIN and JEE-ADVANCED.

On queries raised by States, it was clarified that the Academic Body to be constituted for the JEE-MAIN test would have representation from States in an appropriate manner. It was also clarified that where the State intends to join in the common test for admission to engineering institutions in the State, the exam papers would be also available in the regional language of the State in addition to English and Hindi. On a query raised on the syllabus for the JEE-MAIN, it was clarified that the Council of all Boards of Secondary Education had, in 2010, adopted a core curriculum in Sciences and Maths and the examination would be based on the core curriculum so adopted.

After detailed deliberations, the proposal for a common examination process for admission to engineering programmes was supported unanimously.
The States were of the opinion that IITs should also adopt the same format as other central educational institutions in the longer term. The States were requested to convey their decision on the year of joining in the common admission process and the relative weightages to normalized Class XII Board marks, performance in JEE-MAIN and JEE-ADVANCED by 30th June to enable preparations to be made accordingly.

2. A presentation was made by the Shri R.D. Sahay, Joint Secretary, on the draft Bill for establishment of IIITs and the implementation of the Scheme for IIITs on public-private partnership mode. The draft Bill was discussed in detail and States unanimously supported the Bill. There was a demand from States that the Bill should be moved at the earliest for Parliamentary approval. It was informed that the Central Government intends to introduce the Bill in the Monsoon Session of Parliament. The Scheme for establishment of IIITs was discussed in detail and various suggestions were offered by the States. On a query from some States, it was clarified that the States were expected to provide land free of cost under the Scheme. A suggestion was made by the Hon’ble Minister of Rajasthan that the private partner need not necessarily be from industry. A suggestion was made by the Hon’ble Minister of Bihar for allowing State or Central PSUs to be accepted as industry partners. It was agreed that the following modifications to the Scheme could be considered:-

(i) To allow Central and State Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to be accepted as industry partners for establishment of IIITs; and

(ii) Giving States the flexibility to bring in one or more industry partners instead of limiting the no of partners to three.

work of the Community College Scheme” in the Conference. The Report was unanimously accepted by the States and UTs. While welcoming the setting up of Community Colleges, the State Education Ministers agreed that the concept of Community Colleges will be paradigm shift leading to skill development and energisation of the community and the youth will be educated not only for taking employment, but more importantly for becoming self-employed. It was decided to start 200 Community Colleges on a pilot basis in 2012-13 and then scale up gradually. The States were requested to identify local skill requirements linked to local needs which could form the basis of opening community colleges and forward proposals to the Central Government by June 2012.

4. A presentation was made by Financial Advisor on the recommendations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for adoption of accounting standards for educational institutions. An accounting system that presents a true and correct picture of the state of affairs of an educational institution is an important requirement for transparency and accountability besides assisting in prevention of malpractices. Educational institutions are set up as trusts or societies and adopt different accounting systems. Adopting a common accounting standard would assist States in evaluating the expenditure of schools and estimate the reimbursement to be provided to private schools under RTE Act. The adoption of common accounting standards by educational institutions was endorsed unanimously. While States may consider adoption of the accounting standards in the school system according to their convenience, the adoption of these standards in the higher education sector through instructions issued by the concerned regulatory authorities was supported. It was also decided that the accounting formats prepared by ICAI be circulated to
all States and States would revert on these formats at the earliest. States would also be supported for capacity building in implementation.

5. A Presentation was made by Dr. Amarjit Singh, Joint Secretary, MHRD on Revised Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education. In the presentation revised guidelines pertaining to financial sharing between Centre and States, provisions for strengthening of SCERTs, Colleges of Teacher Education, Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education, DIETs, establishment of Block Institutes of Teachers Education (BITEs) were explained in detail. The States were requested to submit proposals under the scheme for strengthening teacher education. They were requested to fill up vacancies in the teacher education cadre, provide in their respective budgets to meet the State share for the scheme, strengthen management of teacher education institutes, increase the use of ICT, strengthen mechanisms for ensuring quality civil works, grant more autonomy to the teacher education institutions and strengthen monitoring mechanisms.

6. A presentation on Two Years of RTE-SSA was made by Shri Pramod Tiwari, Director, School Education. The presentation gave an overview of the progress made by the States in regard to the implementation of Right to Education Act – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the areas of concern were highlighted. The issues related to availability of funds, construction of buildings, PTR norms, teaching hours, etc. were discussed at length. There was unanimous view that all these concerns are genuine and need to be addressed at various levels in order to facilitate the implementation of RTE Act by the States. The State Education Ministers also raised the issue of funding of reimbursement of cost of education of 25% children admitted to private schools under Section 12 of RTE Act.
7. Discussions were also held on UGC Regulations on Prevention of Discrimination and Establishment of Ombudsman, setting up of Model Schools under Public Private partnership and Saakshar Bharat. It was decided to circulate the UGC Regulations to States for their comments.

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