



PIB Releases

August 30, 2001

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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT BY DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI, MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ON 29-8-2001 IN RAJYA SABHA IN RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE OF CALLING ATTENTION TABLED BY SHRI SURESH PACHOURI AND OTHERS REGARDING THE RECENT CIRCULARS OF UGC AND THE NCERT CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

Hon'ble Members have drawn my attention to the recent circulars of UGC and NCERT curriculum framework in the context of the National Policy on Education.

The National Policy on Education(1986), as modified in 1992, was based on an in-depth review of the entire gamut of the educational process. It enunciated a comprehensive framework to guide the development of education in its entirety. It envisaged a National System of Education, which would be based on a national curricular framework containing a common core along with other flexible components. In the higher education sector, the policy provided for dissemination of specialised knowledge and skills, to make the system dynamic, constantly entering uncharted areas, redesigning courses and programmes to meet the demands of specialisation better etc.

National Council for Educational Research & Training (NCERT)

The NCERT has been established by the Government of India to assist and advise the Central and State Governments in all matters of school education. It engages in research and field studies and then comes up with programmes and activities which are conducted in collaboration with States and other institutions. The NCERT does not issue circulars.

In response to the 1986 Policy, the NCERT has been contributing to the areas of universalisation of elementary education (including the latest Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), vocational education and introduction of educational technology, education of women, minorities and groups with special needs, teacher-training and research, surveys, studies and innovations in the field of education etc.

In particular, during the recent past, the NCERT has implemented the following important programmes:-

- Setting up of National Centre for Computer Education.
- Setting up of National Centre for Value Education
- Setting up of the National Resource Centre for Inclusive education, for which UNESCO assistance is being sought
- Setting up of Centre for International Relations for organising training programmes for teachers and teacher-trainees for SAARC countries
- Revival of the Programme of Community Singing, initiated by Smt. Indira Gandhi in the early 1980s but discontinued in the early 1990s.

While working in all these areas, the NCERT has been constantly responding to the new concerns and requirements emerging in curricular matters suitably. However, the need for reviewing and revising school curricula in the light of NPE-1986, POA 1992 and the IX Five Year Plan document, was strongly felt which generated some projects for this purpose during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98. However, the progress was slow and it was re-energized in September 1999. A Discussion Document on Curriculum framework was published in January 2000, based on extensive deliberations/involvement of experts in its seven constituent units including the Central Institute of Vocational Studies, Bhopal and the Central Institute of Education and Technology, New Delhi and consultations with teachers, educators and parents. This was widely disseminated to State Education Ministers, all functionaries of state level agencies dealing with school education, educationists, individual experts, non-governmental organisations, political leaders, newspaper editors and journalists to initiate nationwide debate and consultation. It was widely covered by media and press and was also put on the NCERT website. Seminars and conferences were also organised to discuss the document.

Based upon the inputs received, NCERT finalised the National Curriculum Framework in November 2000. This was considered in December 2000 in the General Body of the NCERT wherein all the Education Ministers of States/UT Governments are members.

Copies of the final/revised document of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education were subsequently distributed to various organisations, Central/State Governments, News paper editors which include: all the Chief Ministers, 70 leaders of political parties, 55 State Education Ministers, 53 Education Secretaries, a large number of Education Experts and 30 prominent News Paper Editors. Besides, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education was discussed in two Conferences of State Education Secretaries held in November, 1999 and April 2001, in both of which the Director, NCERT made a detailed presentation.

Currently, NCERT is engaged in the task of developing new curricular materials including textbooks. So far no such curricular materials have been finalised.

University Grants Commission(UGC)

The university Grants Commission is the apex body for promotion and coordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities and colleges.

The UGC has during the years 1999-2001 issued thirty-one(31) circulars on excellence and quality, covering comprehensive plan of action for improving the quality and standards of teaching and research, compulsory minimum attendance of 75% by students, Universities of Excellence, adjunct professorship, National Lecturership, Career advancement scheme from Reader to Professor, fellowships, Compulsory accreditation through NAAC, UGC Regulations on minimum qualifications, Autonomous Colleges, Work ethics and self discipline in universities, audit of educational institutions, recognition of degrees specified by UGC award of degrees by private franchisees of universities, minimum standards of instructions for grant of first degree, appointment of observers in Selection Committees, Revised guidelines for Deemed Universities, listing of Fake Universities, Cells for prevention of Malpractices, performance linked funding, etc.

Similarly, it has issued six (6) circulars on access and equity. These concern Coaching Classes for minority communities, Reservation for SC/ST and Establishment of SC/ST Cell in Universities, Remedial Coaching for SCs/STs, Reader's allowance to blind teachers and reservation for persons with disabilities.

Eleven(11) circulars have been issued on relevance of education which include :Revision of curriculum, Revised NET Syllabus, Vocational education, Day care centres, Studies on eminent personalities, photocopying of Books, Adventure Sports Programme, Establishment of the Department of Human Consciousness and Yogic Science and Setting up of simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres.

Fifteen(15) circulars on general development and other aspects of university education have been issued by UGC during 1999-2001. These include: Prevention of ragging in universities and colleges, Programme for utilising the Youth Force in the fight against corruption, Setting up of Cells to combat Sexual Harassment and violence against women in Universities, Emergency powers of Vice-Chancellors, General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) under WTO, Observance of National Science Day, National Awards and National Mineral Award for Excellence, Ban on filling up of vacant posts and other austerity measures, introduction of BA/MA courses in Jyotir Vigyan in selected Universities and Enhancement of honorarium to guest lecturers.

Apart from this, one (1) circular on creation of 15% supernumerary seats for foreign students with preference to Persons of Indian Origin has also been issued.

It will be amply clear from the above that the actions/initiatives taken by the NCERT and UGC in the fields of school and higher education sectors have been in pursuance of and within the parameters of the National Policy on Education with a view to bringing about quality upgradation and meeting emerging challenges.

