

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): I am here, Sir. *..(Interruptions).*

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI) *In the Chair*]

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Other Ministers are there to take notes.

RESOLUTION RE: NEED FOR CONSTITUTION OF EXPERT COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY CONTROL AND STANDARDISATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY (WEST BENGAL): Sir, with your permission, I move the following Resolution:

"This House resolves that, for the purpose of quality control and standardisation of educational performance at the national level, a committee of experts be constituted by the Union Government to explore various issues relating to examination system, including the following:—

- (a) Setting of examination papers that properly assess the knowledge, understanding, and capacity for analysis of the examinees, rather than mechanical memory work and mindless reproduction of those;
- (b) scope for variations in question designs that help to combat selective, standardised answers prepared by private coaching centres and tutors and induce the examinee to study the entire course of his/her own, based on prescribed textbooks (and not notebooks or made-easys).
- (c) suitable changes in marking systems that give credit for original ideas and analytical ability, particularly at the postgraduate level and for social sciences and are not unduly insistent on unique answers;

(d) some standardisation in making and reduction in variability between universities to avoid under-marking or overmarking, so that students from good universities with a more rigorous standard and a tighter marking system are not penalised when compared, at the national level, with those from other universities with a more generous attitude towards marking;

(e) fighting corruption ruthlessly, going to the extent of terminating the services of teachers found guilty of leaking question papers, favouring individuals with high marks, and tampering with marks, and closing down institutions with records of repeated examination malpractices;

(f) and other relevant issues."

Sir, if there is any one issue today on which the politically divided, economically disparate and culturally diverse people of this country are unanimous, it is the issue of education. There is a peculiar anomaly here.

While there is a demand for education which, almost alone, is the key to advancement and opportunity, the nation is one at condemning the system as unfair, inefficient, faulty, directionless and wasteful. It needs to be over-hauled—but how? It requires enormous political power and enormous economic resources to formulate and implement a new education policy. Overnight it is not possible.

So, this afternoon, I will concentrate on only one aspect, a part of the whole, but part which encompasses the whole, that is the system of examinations. The education system in our country has, unfortunately, become examination-centric. The syllabus, the main part of our system follows the examination, rather than the other way round. In fact, our education has become synonymous with examination, and the latter typifies the ills that plague the former.

Where should we begin? at the beginning of the 19th century when the colo-

nial rulers introduced the system of education for colonial interests, that is, to create bureaucrats at the lower echelons of the imperial structure. The newly rising middle-class supported the system because they wanted gainful employment under the colonial rulers. Since the purpose was never to promote originality or creativity or initiative, this scheme, with a few exceptions, produced only clerks and civil servants.

Education even today in an independent India, has the original colonial objective *per se*. Education is equivalent to degrees for gaining employment. The gaining of Independence has not altered our goal. We only applaud the indigenous culture rhetorically. The vast majority of our people are still marginalised, and the retarded economy hinders development. Little effort has been made to mould education, to shape it according to the needs of an independent India, for nation-building or for putting the country in the forefront of the world economy or international frontier. Our examination arrangements are but a tool, a mode of perpetuating the colonial legacy.

In discussing examinations, I will make very briefly two or three basic observations which are central to the system. In the first place, this method fosters a waste of human resources because it is based on the exclusion of a quarter of our young people who are in the race, not to mention those who are not because they are too poor to join.

Why is there such a large number of drop-outs? Why do so many students fail every year? In the CBSE Plus 2 examination this year, the percentage of success was 78. The year before last it was 76. The percentage is often lower at higher levels. I refuse to believe that 25 per cent of our young people are dullards. In fact, if nothing else, India has tremendous brain power. Consider the students who go abroad and perform so well in their examinations as well as in the jobs. Why do they not do so here? Because our syllabus is not interesting, it is irrelevant to life and it is outdated. There is no

attempt to foster the potential flair in every student. There is no attempt to develop enough curiosity, the sense of inquiry of a child.

The examinations system does not try to find out what the child knows. It tries to find out what it does not know. The questions are set not to examine the child's power of observation or analysis. Only cramming is encouraged. Therefore, the whole system, in my view, is based on a system of reward and punishment for following or not following the beaten track.

The second point that I want to make is that the system imposes an enormous torture on our young people.

Since merit is judged only by performance in examinations, there is a tremendous pressure to excel. Parents, teachers, neighbours, relations, all are willing partners of this torture or pressure mechanism. The stigma of failure creates a crisis of confidence. I remember a lovely child, a 16 Year old girl, came to me with tears in her eyes and told me that I could not do it. She was so upset and so ashamed of failure, as if her whole life was ruined. Now, Sir, do we want our citizens to be shy and diffident, because they could not negotiate their way through the maze called examination or, do we want our children to grow up with leadership abilities, creative faculties, innovative ideas and self-confidence? Failure in examinations stifles each of these noble and desirable qualities. On the other hand it fosters frustration; it fosters violence among the young people, like breaking desks and chairs and hurling stones at buses. If we want to check this too evident violence by these people, we have to think of setting it right at the beginning.

The third point I would present before this august body is that this method of examination that we have today fosters and favours limited learning and limited teaching. Notebooks are preferred to textbooks and coaching is preferred to teaching. That is why even when the

students pass their examinations, they do not get jobs, nor do they acquire entrepreneurial skill, not to mention love of learning. The result is mass copying, mushroom of coaching centres, so on and so forth, which everybody in this House knows and I do not have to elaborate upon.

Finally, this system promotes lack of confidence and disrespect for teachers. Gone are the days when we used to say that there are three things sets of people for an examination: the examining authorities, paper setters and evaluators. According to students, the examining authorities i.e. the Council, the Board or the University are callous. Some of the papers are so tough and out of syllabus. This question came up before the House only the other day relating to the C.B.S.E. plus two Mathematics and Physics papers. We discussed it at whole length. In the evaluators of answer-scripts the students have no faith at all. It has been proved that subjective assessment of answer-scripts may vary from one examiner to another, and even by a single examiner, if the answer script is examined at different intervals. Some of the teachers—I must emphasise not all are involved in mal-practices. Of course, that is in tune with what is going on at the national level. But, we do expect the teachers to set the standard of ethics, morality and ideal conduct in this country. If we do not expect it from the teachers, whom will we expect this from?

While I have severely criticised the system, I am afraid, I cannot find an alternative. To the best of my knowledge, in no country, so far an alternative to the examination system has been devised. All that we can do is to make the system efficient, fair and humane. I will share with this House only a few of my ideas. First, some people are discussing the question bank. I think it is a very good idea, but with one rider that the topics and the questions, which were set in the previous year's examinations must not be excluded from this year's examination, so that limited teaching or limited, learning is not allowed.

The second thing I want to say is that the syllabus should be updated. For that at the national level, at the regional level and at the district level workshops have to be conducted. No doubt this an expensive process, but it is absolutely essential. You have to take into account of the national thrust and national needs as well as the regional needs down to the district level.

The third point that I want to say is about paper setting I think the CBSE has already accepted the method of short answer questions and essay type questions which should be principally accepted by other organisations also. As far as evaluation is concerned, I think, we have to go in for decentralisation. The conducting of examinations is going out of control primarily because the number of students appearing in the examinations is massive. Therefore, there is no other way but to encourage internal evaluation as well as evaluation of students on a continuous basis. Evaluation of students by every teacher must be made compulsory. Thus we can eliminate monopoly of some teachers over the examination scripts. It will also help the conscientious teachers to examine a limited number of scripts within a reasonable period of time. It will ensure fairness and accuracy of marking. Moreover it is necessary to keep a list of teachers with their specialisations with a seniority list and experience and their home addresses. The last point is necessary if announcement of results has to be done on time. This is very important.

Finally, the essential thing of the entire examination system is the principle of reliability. And the guiding principle for an examiner is fairness to an examinee. To ensure fairness and reliability some degree of accountability of the examiners, paper-setters, moderators, the administrative personnel of the university or the Board has to be effective. The use of unfair means by examinees as well as by the examiners has to be dealt with a strong hand. For examinees it should be made a cognizable offence. For

examiners if they are found guilty of tampering with marks, there should be nothing short of termination of their services. No teacher should be allowed to partake in any economic activity, full-time or whole time and participation in coaching classes should be forbidden and should be made a punishable offence.

To conclude, Sir, there are three components of education, learning, teaching and examination. No single aspect can be looked at in isolation. The syllabi must be changed. The teacher must teach. The students must study and an examination must be meaningful in order to make education efficient and effective. This evening my Resolution focusses only on examination. I suggest that an expert body be formulated by the Union Government to look into different aspects of the question. I humbly and strongly request the House and the Government to accept my Resolution. Thank you.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अजीत जोगी): अब केवल सात मिनट हैं। उर्मिलाबेन जी, अगर आप आज ही समाप्त करना चाहती हैं तो समय का ध्यान रखिए। पाँच बजे तक आप समाप्त कर दें क्योंकि पाँच बजे होम मिनिस्टर साहब का स्टेटमेंट होगा।

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL (Gujarat): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, as you know the main responsibility of the affiliating university is to conduct examinations. It is an evaluation of what the students have achieved and what they have learnt during their academic year. Basically, I do not agree with the system of total evaluation by simple examination of three hours duration. Day to day work done by the students should be taken into consideration in the form of assignments, term papers, weekly tests and so on and so forth. Today, it is an issue to be discussed. The issue is the prevailing system of examination. Unfortunately, the examination has lost its credibility and its sanctity. We know that there are all types of irregularities. At times, the questions in the examination are out of the syllabus. The students get frustrated

and they go on strike. The examination has not remained a test of what the student know but a test of what the students do not know. It only tests the cramming ability of the students and negligible weightage is given to their understanding of the subject or their knowledge and grasp of the basic principles of the subject. There is no scope to express the creativity or the originality of the students. Mostly, the questions in the examination are taken from the question papers of the last five years. And you get easy guides in the last months preceding the examination. Coaching classes, tuition classes, revision courses are the result of the same. The private tuition menace has reached its extreme. Students do not attend regular college classes; nor do they read the regular text-books and reference books. They read only the guides.

The most worrying factor is that the students do not worry about their examinations for the whole year. They are found in hotels, cinema halls or on 'pangallas', loitering and indulging in petty talks. They then try hard for leakage of examination papers in the name of important questions. The papers are leaked by some link agencies and sold. As if it is not enough, the students and their parents start running for the contact of examiners and try to have the expected marks by hook or crook. All types of irregularities at different levels are traced out in newspapers. The examination is not done with due seriousness. The examinees present are shown as absent and the absentees get passed; the top-most students get less marks; and the weak ones pass with credit. Unpardonable irresponsibility is noticed in the conduct of examinations. The large number of the students may be one of the reasons. But the number cannot be restricted in a vastly populated country like ours and with a democratic set-up where access to education is a basic opportunity to be offered to the young ones.

The examination mechanism has lost its credibility. All types of frauds are noticed and scams are identified. No serious notice is taken by the university authorities or the so-called educationists. Any form of corruption, favouritism or penalization should be ruthlessly handled and the culprits should be penalized. Before the whole system breaks down, it is high time the educationists took a serious note of it. The UGC also should come out with a plan for the improvement of the examination system. The UGC, instead of only extending financial support in the name of modernization of education, should give priority to the issue and nominate an Expert Committee to study the problem with a time-bound programme. The Government should instruct it and take the necessary steps for this purpose. Today, the university is a factory giving degrees and degree-holders have no value in the employment market. Lakhs and lakhs of degree-holders and trained professionals are jobless and....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Please conclude now. It is 5 o'clock. It is time for the Home Minister's statement.

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Become engaged in anti-social, illegal and immoral activities or are turned into terrorists, smugglers or anti-nationals. They fall prey to all sorts of vices. For instance, drug addiction. The elders of the society, the educationists and the teachers should take a serious note of the situation. There is no sense in blaming the youth as rascals, indisciplined, irresponsible guys and condemning them in one way or the other. The root-cause lies in the total neglect of the youth, the future generation of the nation. They feel a vacuum in their lives. They think that they constitute an unwanted and unimportant class of society. If we want to save our youths from all these vices, then the total educational system, including the issue of examination, should be drastically revised. (Interruptions)

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अजीत जोगी): समाप्त करिए कृपया।

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: We talk of the new educational policy every now and then and only a patch-work here and there is done as demonstration.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री अजीत जोगी): समय हो गया है आप बंद करिए। बस करिए। श्रीमती पटेल समाप्त करिए।

SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: It is time to think about the state of higher education by all the responsible persons. (Interruptions) I request the House to take up the matter in its proper perspective and the Government should be asked to revamp the entire educational system to get rid of these vices. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Now, the Home Minister has to make a statement. (Interruptions)

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Sir, I want to make one submission. Since this Resolution is not to be carried forward because we do not have any more Fridays, the Minister could just give some kind of an assurance on the Resolution in two minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): The time allotted for the Resolution is over. It was only up to 5.00 P.M.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: That is true.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): There was no time left for the Minister's reply.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: In two minutes, he can say something.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI): Before the Home Minister begins, I would like to inform the House that there is a request from the Home Minister.

वे यह चाहते हैं कि चूंकि अभी सदन में उपस्थिति ठीक नहीं है इसलिए वे अपना स्टेटमेंट आज कर देंगे, क्लैरिफिकेशन नेक्स्ट डे आफ रिकॉर्ड पर होगा। आदरणीय सभापति महोदय ने भी इसकी अनुमति दे दी है। तो अभी केवल होम मिनिस्टर का स्टेटमेंट होगा।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Seeking of Army Assistance by C.B.I. for execution of a warrant of arrest in Patna.

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDERJIT GUPTA): Sir, the issue of an attempt to utilize the services of the Army in connection with the arrest of Shri Laloo Prasad Yadav, former Chief Minister of Bihar, was raised in this House yesterday and Members had expressed concern about the same. I have ascertained the position in this regard. Following the rejection of the petition for anticipatory bail of Shri Yadav by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the afternoon of the 29th July, 1997, the Central Bureau of Investigation took steps and made arrangements for executing the warrant of arrest issued by the Special CBI Court in Patna. This was to be done by the 6th August, 1997. The decision within the CBI was to effect the arrest on the morning of the 30th July, 1997 and instructions were issued by the CBI Headquarters to the local formation that assistance of the State authorities should be obtained in this operation, that the Chief Secretary of the State and other senior officers should be taken into confidence for this purpose, and that utmost tact and care should be exercised. It appears that the officers concerned with this case decided to execute the arrest warrant during the course of the

night of July 29/30, 1997. It further appears that after having been unable to establish contact with the Chief Secretary of Bihar and having been given to understand by the Director-General of Police of Bihar that making necessary security arrangements would entail some extra time, the Joint Director of the CBI at Calcutta, who has been supervising this case, directed the SP, CBI at Patna, to seek the assistance of the Army in the execution of the arrest warrant. The letter of the SP, CBI, to the Danapur Army authorities stated: "As per the oral directions issued by the Hon'ble Patna High Court (Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.N. Jha and Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.J. Mukhopadhyay), this is to request you for favour of providing immediately armed contingent, comprising of at least one company to assist the CBI party to execute the Non Bailable Warrant against Shri Laloo Prasad Yadav, former Chief Minister of Bihar." The Army Authorities at Danapur did not respond to the request on the ground that the Army will be able to come to the aid of civil administration only at the request of the notified civil authorities. They also informed the CBI officers that in view of the sensitiveness involved, they had sought guidance from the Army Headquarters.

According to established procedure, the assistance of the Army can be sought by the civil authorities strictly in accordance with law and in limited cases where the assistance is absolutely essential for the maintenance of law and order and essential services, and in natural calamities, etc. Further, the request has to be made meticulously in accordance with the procedure, by making it through proper channel. The request made by the CBI officers to the local Army authorities at Danapur was in clear violation of the established procedure and also wholly beyond their authority. The overall national interest in a democratic society demands that the Army's assistance should be sought only