

[17 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

is nobody here from the Panel of Vice-Chairmen. May I suggest to the House that Shri Dipankar Mukherjee take the Chair?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

(THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE) in the Chair]

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): Now, Prof. (Shrimati) Bharati Ray to move the Resolution.

REVIEW OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 1986

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY (West Bengal): Sir, I move the following Resolution:-

“That this House recommends that the National Education Policy, 1986 be reviewed.”

Sir, we are facing a crisis in the field of education. It is time, therefore, to concentrate on the Education Policy, and more specifically, on the implementation of the policy that we have. We had a National Education Policy passed by Parliament in 1986. It was modified by Parliament in 1992, and we also had an Approved Plan of Action, 1992. The NEP provided for "monitoring and review" every five years. A Central Advisory Board of Education was envisaged in the NEP "as a body to play a pivotal role in reviewing the educational developments, determining the changes required to improve the system and monitoring implementation." But today, we have come to a point when crucial decisions are being taken without consulting Parliament. If reviews have to be made, they have to be transparent. Well-known scholars and intellectuals from different branches of knowledge have to be consulted. Professionals have to be involved to identify the lacunae and find out ways and means to rectify them.

Sir, education is a vast subject. In this short time at my disposal, I will mention only a few points. The NEP emphasises on the universal access, universal enrolment and universal retention of all children up to 14 years. "Education is for all." But, see, not even illiteracy has been removed,

23 million boys and 36 millions girls are out of school. Crores of rupees are spent on various schemes, but there is no monitoring, no evaluation. In fact, the bulk of our children enrolled in schools are first generation learners. What steps have the Government taken to enable them to develop an understanding of their physical and social environment? A majority of students live in villages. What is the percentage of the total education budget for education in rural areas? Most schools do not have drinking water facility. Some do not have even a lavatory. Schools are an assemblage for parrots. The curriculum needs to be modernised. But how? Not by introducing Jyotir Vigyan or Vedic Mathematics? The curriculum should be addressed to the requirements of the life-situations of our students.

Coming to vocational education, in the NPE 1986, it was stated that 'Vocational education will be a distinct stream, intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activity'. Concern was shown for women and the disadvantaged sections in the society. What was not detailed out in the NPE was how the vocational education was to be imparted; which course, at what level, in what form, was to be imparted at which places, and for what sections of people? You must see what kind of skills are needed in specific areas, what kind of technicians are needed where, what the market potentials are. Otherwise, how would you ensure that the students who get vocational education are employed or become self-employed? Unless jobs are assured, or alternatively, there is scope, and demand for products that a self-employed person can offer, who will go in for vocational education? Vocational training should be imparted on practical lines. The education policy must spell out the detailed methodology.

Coming to higher education, the UGC has not done its job at all. Now it is reconstituted with members and people, I am sorry to say, who are relatively unknown. That is the mildest term I can use, "relatively unknown". The NPE says, "Efforts will be made to delve into India's ancient fund of knowledge and to relate it to contemporary reality." But see, we are busy trying to introduce Vedic Mathematics, it had its place in history, but it has no relationship to modern development process. There is a Report given by the CAG that the number of international standards of research is decreasing, the number of patenting by Indian scholars is going down. Shall we introduce astrology and Vedic Mathematics, and impose a burden

5.00 PM

on the already tottering university system? Or shall we spend money on updating the existing infrastructure or on research in new subjects?

But, then, research is being politicised. In the Indian Council of Research, reputed historians were replaced by historians whose mandate seems to be writing distorted or truncated history. History is not a decorative tree in our garden that we can prune it, as we like. The writing of history is a discourse of power. It is now influenced by intellectual giants like Michel Foucault, Ronald Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and so on. Now we are borrowing tools from other disciplines like sociology, economics and statistics. History has become a powerful tool, and it must be written in an objective and scientific manner. We do not want it to be dominated by one school of thought, which plans to strike at the very root of our culture.

Look, Sir, lawlessness is rampant. Communalism is an every day shock. The youth seem to delighting in terrorism and violence. Murdering and stripping of women have become an amusement. Unemployment is eating away the roots of our economy.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): Prof. Ray, you may continue your speech on 31st August, 2001, the next day allocated for Private Members' Resolutions.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, I will take just two minutes. I will not take more than two minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): No. Now, only a few seconds are left for 5 o'clock. You may continue your speech on 31st August, 2001, the next day allocated for Private Members' Resolutions.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, sometimes, Private Members' time is curtailed. I will not take more than two minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): No. You may continue your speech on 31st August, 2001.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, I want to finish it today. You just give me one minute.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): Prof. Ray, please listen to me. You can continue your speech on 31st August, 2001, the next day allocated for Private Members' Resolutions.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: You just give me one minute.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): No. There are some statements by the Ministers at 5 o'clock. The Ministers are waiting for making the statements.

PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, you can give me just one minute. Everybody is given this much time. Sometimes, the Private Members' time is curtailed.

This is my last point and I will sit down. My last point is that if you want to make some changes, convene the National Development Council, as Rajiv Gandhi did, convene the State Ministers' Conference and constitute the Central Advisory Board, and discuss it. Let there be a wide-ranging debate.

My appeal to the Government is, let not education be a political and divisive subject, but a national subject.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): There is an amendment to the Resolution by Mr. Eduardo Faleiro. You may move the amendment without making any speech.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO (Goa): Sir I beg to move:

That at the end of the Resolution, the following be added namely:-

“and urges upon Government to—

- (i) check the introduction of course materials of questionable factual accuracy with sectarian overtones in the Curriculum for School Education;

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- (ii) promote gender equality by showing positive role models of women in both modern and traditional contexts in text books;
- (iii) make Education a Fundamental Right of every child; and
- (iv) increase the Education Budget to 6% of GDP by 2005."

The questions were proposed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE):

The discussion will continue on 31st August, 2001, the next day allocated for Private Members' Resolutions.

Now, Mr. Ram Naik, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, is to lay a statement on the Table of the House regarding notice of "No Purchase - No Sale" received by the Government from the Federation of All India Petroleum Traders.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Notice of "No Purchase - No Sale" Received by Government from Federation of All India Petroleum Traders

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): Mr. vice-Chairman, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a statement regarding notice of "No Purchase - No Sale" received by Government from the Federation of All India Petroleum Traders.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE): Now, Mr. Nitish Kumar, Minister of Railways, is to lay a statement on the Table of the House regarding the collision of 132 Dn. Muzzafarpur-Sealdah Passenger with rolled down wagons at Jamui station on Danapur Division of Eastern Railway on 16.8.2001.

COLLISION OF 132 DOWN MUZZAFARPUR-SEALDAH PASSENGER WITH ROLLED DOWN WAGONS AT JAMUI STATION ON 16TH AUGUST, 2001

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a statement regarding