

Act, 1961, read with sub-clause (iv) of clause (c) of the proclamation, dated the 31st January, 1976, issued by the President in relation to the State of Tamil Nadu. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-138/77]

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Now,
Statement by the Education Minister.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
SOCIAL WELFARE AND CULTURE
(DR. PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER):
Sir, I am grateful to the Chairman for having given me this opportunity to make a statement in this august House

The Government would like to give the highest priority to the universalisation of literacy in the country. I am informed that 87 % of the children in the age group of 6 and 11 and 39% of the children in the age group of 11 and 14 have facilities for primary and middle school education in our country as at present. The present Fifth plan envisages enrolment of 96 % of the age group of 6 and 11 and 46 % of the age group of 11 and 14. In regard to adult literacy, according to the 1971 census, 34% of the population above the age of four are literate. In terms of numbers, I understand more than 200 million adults above the age of 15 are still illiterate. The dimensions of this problem are truly gigantic. However, the present Government are extremely anxious that urgent steps should be taken to achieve substantial progress in the matter of universalisation of elementary education and promotion of adult literacy. We have not yet had time to study in detail the various aspects of the problem and also consult the States who are primarily concerned with this. However, we would like to take the earliest opportunity to study this question in detail and prepare a time-bound plan of action for universalisation of elementary education and promotion of adult literacy. We shall also make earnest

efforts to reduce the existing gap between the world of work and world of education keeping in view the principles of basic education as enunciated by Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

The Secondary education sector especially the curriculum, syllabus and text books may all require to be looked into to lighten the academic burden on the students to enable them to turn their attention to sports, recreation, cultural aesthetic pursuits and social work. At the level of higher education fundamental and applied research deserve greater emphasis, I should also like to state here that we are not in favour of undue interference in the field of education.

Many Hon'ble Members of this House and other friends are approaching me and also writing to me about complaints of political victimisation in the Departments of Education and Culture. I asked for details of premature retirements and reversions in the Departments of Education and Culture. I find that as far as the Department of Education and its attached and subordinate offices are concerned, there has been no case of premature retirement during the last 2 years. There has been one case of reversion, but it would appear that this reversion was based on entries in the confidential records. However, this case is also under review.

In the case of Department of Culture, while there was no premature retirement or reversion in the Department at the Secretariat level, three cases of premature retirement in the attached offices have been reported. I have directed that these cases may be reviewed and submitted to me. I have also issued directions that a thorough check should be made in the attached and subordinate offices, under the Departments of Education and Culture, to verify whether there has been any case of victimisation on political grounds. I have also issued similar instructions to obtain the same information in regard to the autonomous organisations

attached to the Departments of Education and Culture. I hope to secure the information urgently and complete the review within a few days. I should like to assure the hon. Members that all cases which involve political victimisation will be reviewed.

We shall write to the State Governments and universities requesting them to review the action taken against the staff in the educational organisations on political grounds, in the changed circumstances. I am hoping that the State Governments and Universities will respond to our request

I have learnt that instructions had gone from the Ministry suggesting temporary postponement of elections to the various student unions in the Universities. I have directed that revised instructions may issue removing these restrictions. I am also taking up a review of instructions issued during the last 20 months in the wake of emergency imposing similar restrictions.

DR. V. P. DUTT (Nominated) :

Sir, the hon. Minister has made a number of policy statements with regard to primary education, secondary education and higher education. May I suggest that this House should get an opportunity to discuss this statement? We have held all the time that education is too vital to become just a party issue and so, all the dimensions of the issues that have been mentioned by the hon. Minister should be discussed in the House so that we are in a position to express our opinions. Maybe, the hon. Minister would like to take some of the opinions into consideration before further policies are evolved? Therefore, I should like to submit to you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, that there should be an opportunity to discuss this statement in the House.

SHRI MOHAMMAD YUNUS SALEEM (Andhra Pradesh) :

Sir, I support the submission made by my hon. friend. The statement on the educational policy is so vitally important that it requires a general discussion. I would beg of

you to give some time for a general discussion.

श्री उपसभापति : हमारे नियमों में प्रावधान है कि माननीय सदस्य इसके लिए नोटिस दें। आप कृपया नोटिस दे दीजिये। उस पर विचार कर लिया जायेगा।

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE ADDRESS BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT ACTING AS PRESIDENT—

contd.

SHRI V. B. RAJU (Andhra Pradesh) :

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I had moved three amendments to this Motion of Thanks and one amendment refers to paragraph 3. In paragraph 3, the President has chosen to interpret the electoral verdict in a negative and partisan way. I am only sorry that the President has chosen it in this manner, under the advice of the Council of Ministers, to misrepresent the picture of India in the outside world and also to mislead the nation. This is a thing which we cannot ignore, and I am sure the House will take a serious view of it. The President says :—

“The General Election just concluded has effectively and decisively demonstrated the power of the people, the vitality of the democratic process in India and the deep root that it has taken.”

I have no objection to this part. But the other part of it, the second limb of the paragraph says :—

“The people have given a clear verdict in favour of individual freedom, democracy and the rule of law and against executive arbitrariness, the emergence of a personality cult and extra-constitutional centres of power. The election marks an important milestone in the evolution of our democratic polity into a healthy two-party system.”

Sir, every one in this country is aware—and to an extent in the outside world also—on what basis this election has been