

**SPEECH OF DR M M PALLAM RAJU, MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AT THE 61<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION ON 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL, 2013 AT NEW DELHI.**

I have immense pleasure in welcoming each one of you to the 61<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). This is my second CABE meeting scheduled at a crucial time after the formal approval of the XII Five Year Plan and after the deadline for schools to become RTE compliant. We have entered the second year of the Plan and have a lot to be achieved.

As mentioned in my first meeting, I intend to continue the tradition of regular consultations through CABE meetings. In a country as diverse and as large as ours, the task of developing national policies while at the same time respecting and incorporating regional aspirations and an inclusive agenda of growth is indeed really challenging. The need is for a participatory approach in which all of us, be it Central Government or State Governments, academics, autonomous institutions, private sector and all other stakeholders, work together towards a common goal which is empowering the children and youth of India through education.

In the 60<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2011, wide ranging issues covering the school and higher education sector were discussed. These include the recommendations of Justice Verma Commission on Teacher Education, CABE Committee Report on prevention of unfair practices adopted by schools, CABE Committee on expanding RTE upto Class X and to include preschool Education and Review of implementation of RTE Act.

The issues relating to higher and technical education that were covered are the CUBE Committee Report on University Reforms, Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), National Framework in Higher Education, Role of States in Mandatory Accreditation, All India Higher Education Survey and Reforms in polytechnic sector. The Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs had urged the State Education Ministers and the CUBE members to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution relating to establishment of educational institutions by Minorities should be respected in letter and spirit so as to ensure the educational development of minorities. The proposals put forward by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on the need for awarding credits under National Service Scheme, the note of Ministry of Women & Child Development relating to gender issues and protection of children were noted. Consequent to the deliberations, it was resolved that:

- The recommendations of the Justice Verma Commission were endorsed and the suggested Action Plan for implementation was approved.
- The progress under the roll out of the RTE Act, 2009 was noted which shows substantive efforts by the States and UTs to implement its various provisions and the support extended by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in augmentation of school infrastructure in order to meet the gaps in the opening of neighbourhood schools, recruitment of teachers and in improving quality of schooling. Education Minister of Bihar pointed out to the need for extending the RTE deadline for completion of school infrastructure by March end 2013, while some other members of CUBE did not support such an extension. CUBE took the view that redoubled efforts should be made by State/UTs to achieve RTE standards for school infrastructure in 2012-13 as over 12,000 new schools remain to be opened, over 2,50,000 additional class rooms and large number of toilets, drinking water facilities, and ramps are under construction under SSA

as also by other national programmes for sanitation and drinking water supply. It was also resolved to review the progress again in its next meeting.

- The need for the initiative to curb prevalent unfair practices in the school education sector including charging of capitation fees, misleading and non-transparent processes adopted by schools for admission of students in higher classes, appointment of ineligible and unqualified teachers was emphasised and the proposed legislation was unanimously endorsed.
- The report of the Committee on extension of RtE to preschool and secondary school was discussed and it was decided that the issues identified and the recommendation by the subcommittees be further deliberated on a wider scale.
- The Report of the CAGE Committee on University Reforms was discussed and the recommendation to incentivise the state universities & institutions was accepted and the proposed Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was endorsed in-principle.

You will recall that due to paucity of time, we had decided that the other issues such as National Higher Education Framework, role of States in mandatory accreditation, and reform in polytechnic sector be discussed in the next meeting. Accordingly, we will take up these items including review of implementation of RTE . The new items which we propose to discuss include.

- Use of ICT in Higher Education
- Proposed Education Commission
- Inclusion of NCC as an Elective Subject in Autonomous Colleges

- Regulatory Mechanism for the Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks taught in Schools outside the Government System” – Draft National Textbook Council Bill ,
- Best Practices in implementation of School Sanitation and Hygiene Education.
- Proposals for enhancing welfare of our teachers through the National Foundation for Teachers’ Welfare.

Detailed agenda notes have been circulated on these items.

I would like to state our focus for the XII Plan. The vision of the XII Five Year Plan is **Faster, More Inclusive and Sustainable Growth**. The monitorable targets for education are:

1. Mean Years of Schooling to increase to seven years by the end of Twelfth Five Year Plan.
2. Enhance access to higher education by creating two million additional seats for each age cohort aligned to the skill needs of the economy.
3. Eliminate gender and social gap in school enrolment (that is, between girls and boys, and between SCs, STs, Muslims and the rest of the population) by the end of Twelfth Five Year Plan.

Under Employment, the target set to generate 50 million new work opportunities in the non-farm sector and provide skill certification to equivalent numbers has a critical bearing on education sector.

In alignment with the XII Plan vision, the Ministry of Human Resource Development will continue to focus on the three E’s of expansion, equity and

excellence in education across all levels. Our vision is of providing quality education for all with special focus on marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and the inclusion of Article 21-A in the Constitution of India has far reaching implications for elementary education and for the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), in the years to come.

Further, the debate on education has shifted from access to quality of education, for all sub-sectors and levels of education. Strengthening of the secondary school system in the country through Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is a major priority area so as to raise enrolment in secondary education, focus on science, mathematics and English teaching, reduce the gender, social and regional gaps in enrolment, dropouts and improve school retention.

In keeping with the MDG goals and achieving literacy targets as also reducing gender gaps, Saakshar Bharat Scheme would give greater focus on female literacy as well as synergy between literacy and skill development.

Several initiatives are lined up for increasing capacity of our higher education system. The bulk of enrollment in higher education takes place in universities and colleges supported by the state governments. An umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan(RUSA) will be launched to address the needs of State institutions so as to strengthen them and enhance their quality. RUSA will also address a major challenge on regional imbalances in higher education. Alongside this scheme, we will strengthen Undergraduate and Postgraduate education in Colleges.

A plethora of reforms are to be introduced in higher education that would ensure meaningful quality. A National Mission on Teachers and Teaching will be launched to address, current and urgent issues such as supply of qualified teachers, attracting talent into teaching profession and raising the quality of teaching in schools and colleges. It is also envisaged that the Teacher Mission would pursue long term goal of building a strong professional cadre of teachers by setting performance standards and creating top class institutional facilities for innovative teaching and professional development of teachers. The Mission would focus in a holistic manner dealing with the whole sector of education without fragmenting the programmes based on levels and sectors as school, higher, technical etc. It is considered that programmes dealing with teachers in all sectors and levels of education should grow and function in a mutually supportive manner.

Technology Enabled Learning is an important asset of education. If we wish to provide access to education along with quality, the same is possible with increased use of technology. Technology enabled learning should be taken to all the institutions across the country and both institutions , faculty and students must be empowered them to harness technology for improving the quality of education. The infrastructure and content resources created through National Mission in Education through ICT needs massification. Setting up of new Inter-University Centers, Meta Universities encouraging inter-institutional collaborations, Strengthening open and distance education are all planned. Similarly, focus on Research & Innovation includes setting up of cluster innovation centres, design innovation centers, technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, greater industry academic linkages, inter-disciplinary research in grand challenge areas, strengthening education in intellectual property rights and social science research.

Development of skills in Higher Education space through setting up of community colleges and polytechnics is another priority. To ensure equity in higher education, regional and social imbalances will be reduced through National initiatives for greater inclusion of disadvantaged sections of SCs, STs, Minorities, backward classes, girls and persons with disabilities. Similarly, Indian languages will be strengthened to ensure balanced linguistic growth. National Initiative to foster social responsibility and community engagement in higher education is also on the agenda.

I would urge the Members to consider the tabled agenda items. We would like meaningful discussions on all the agenda items and I would expect each one of you to be brief as there are several items for discussion across the spectrum. I say this only because I want to ensure that each one of you gets an opportunity to express your valuable views and share your inputs. Let us discuss in the spirit of cooperation and keep the paramount importance of our children in mind and how decisions can shape their future in a better manner. With these words, I wish the proceedings all success and eagerly look forward to having a very fruitful deliberation.