

16.57 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Decision taken by the Executive Committee of the NCERT on the Report of the Panel of eminent historians on the Text Books of History

Title: Regarding the decisions taken by the Executive Committee of the NCERT on the Report of the Panel of eminent historians on the Text Books of History.

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for permitting me to make this statement.

While answering the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 106 on 13th July, 2004, I had reported on the findings of the panel of three eminent historians, on the text books of History prepared by the NCERT. I had then promised that the recommendations of the panel will be put up for consideration of the Executive Committee (EC) of the NCERT and had hoped that the EC will no doubt keep the interest of students as their foremost concern.

The report of the panel was accordingly considered by the EC for two days and they have taken the following decisions:-

"The Executive Committee accepted the Report of the Committee of the Historians, Prof. S. Settar, Prof. J.S. Grewal and Prof. Barun De insofar as their finding that the history books were biased, badly written and full of inaccuracies rendering them unsuitable for continuation.

In view of the above, it was decided that from the academic session 2005-06, the earlier books of history will be restored with appropriate modifications in line with the existing curriculum and minor corrections wherever required.

It is because of the already advanced stage of the current academic session, it was, unfortunately, not practical to change all the books at this stage. It was, however, decided that the NCERT text books which were replaced by present text books will be printed in sufficient numbers to enable at least five copies to be sent free to each school taking the CBSE syllabus. These books would also be available in the market for purchase. These books could be used by teachers and students for reference.

A series of workshops and training would be organised for teachers to help them transact the curriculum with the current text books and reference to the old books, for a proper understanding of the issues in class room teaching.

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A short advisory should be expeditiously issued by the NCERT in close consultation with school teachers and historians to help them develop an appropriate perspective in teaching.

In accordance with these decisions, the HRD Ministry will issue appropriate directions to the CBSE to suitably guide the question-paper-setters and evaluators. The NCERT and the CBSE could constitute joint teams for this purpose.

The NCERT will forthwith take up the revision of the National Curriculum Framework in conformity with all the laid down and by conventionally-established procedures.

The Committee was also deeply concerned about the quality and content of text-books other than in History. While it expected that the proposed curriculum framework review will take care of the concerns in the medium term, it was important that all the text-books are subjected to a thorough, quick review to take corrective steps wherever required, before the next academic session.

The Director, NCERT is authorised to work out all the operational details for effective and timely implementation of the above decisions."

The Government are in agreement with the decisions of the Executive Committee. I understand the anguish of the hon. Members of this House, and more acutely aware of the anxieties of students, teachers and the parents of children on this issue. The Executive Committee of the NCERT have deliberated on this issue in great depth and full understanding of the issues. They have given their decision which is optimum and comprehensive in the given circumstances. We hope that such a sorry episode in our academic history will help us to evolve a consensus by which the sanctity of academic institutions and processes are not compromised and no one is allowed to cynically play with the future of our children and diminish in any way, the idea of India that took shape during our freedom

struggle and is so sacredly enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. today.

00.53 hrs

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock
on Wednesday, July 21, 2004/Asadha 30, 1926 (Saka).*
