

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 9, 1990/Chaitra 19, 1912
(Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO: Sir, we congratulate the people of Nepal at this moment when they have achieved a great victory in the restoration of multi-party democracy.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: We should welcome wherever democracy takes stride.

[English]

SHRISAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: The House is Happy that Nepal has got the multi-party democracy now.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: We should welcome wherever democracy makes its mark. Advent of democracy is the best thing that has happened in Nepal.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): The Government is coming forward with a statement.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Committee to Review Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme

*371. SHRI P.M. SAYEED: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a Committee to review the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme under the New Education Policy;

(b) if so, the structure and terms of reference of the Committee; and

(c) the time by which the aforementioned Committee is likely to submit its report and final decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M.G.K. MENON): (a) to (c). Government have decided to review the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme. Modali-

ties of the same have not yet been worked out.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: My question was whether the Government has decided to review the Navodaya Vidyalayas. The Minister says, yes. This scheme was launched in 1985, with the main intention of providing quality education to the weaker sections in the rural areas. At that time when the decision was taken the hon. Prime Minister was the Finance Minister and the hon. Minister of State Prof. M.G.K. Menon was in the Planning Ministry. Now, in the National Front manifesto they have termed it as an elitist scheme. About the implementation of the scheme, so far 261 schools have been opened. 18 per cent of the admission happens to be from Scheduled Castes and 12 per cent from Scheduled Tribes.

MR. SPEAKER: Please put your Question. You have to put two Supplementaries.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: I am only putting my first Supplementary. I just wanted to know as to whether it is because of the new National Front party which is opposed to such a scheme, the Government is also opposing or whether they will make it clear to the country as to whether this Scheme benefits the rural backward, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. I would also like to know from the Government as to whether this will be continued.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: Sir, as already explained, we have planned to review the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme. This will take note of what has happened in the past few years in terms of setting up these schools the admission policies, what we have actually accomplished, the problems that have been encountered in setting them up—and there have been many—which I am quite prepared to bring to your notice. This review will be taken on an objective basis with a view to understand how the Scheme, set up with certain objectives has actually been able to achieve these. This will be part of the review which has been promised of the National Policy on Education, 1986 as a whole. We

also have to keep in mind the fact that there is always, for any programme or scheme, a unit cost, namely what is the per capita cost. This analysis will have to take note of that also and we will then find out as to whether this is the best way of spending money or not, from the view point of priorities for education in the country. But, the Government have not taken a view, one way or the other, concerning the scheme except to say that it will be reviewed within the context of the National Policy on Education 1986 and this will be done.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: My second Supplementary is this. He only said that they have decided to review the policy. This Government is known as 'the Committee Government'! To solve any problem that faces, a Committee will be set up and it will go on. Therefore, here also they have decided to review that. I would like to know what are the terms and conditions that have been laid for the review committee and by which time the decision of the Committee will come before this House to give a final shape to the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: Sir, the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme still exists. As the hon. Member has pointed out, there are already 261 schools have been established. It is not as though these are being closed down. It is not as though they have not been supported. There was a certain set of objectives in the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme. There has been scheme for implementation which has been carried out in the past few years. This needs to be reviewed before expansion and further investments on new schools. The fact of the matter is that even though a very large number of schools—261 schools—have been set up, many of them are still in temporary accommodation; and Phase-I construction has lagged behind. I am sure that my hon. friend Shri P.M. Sayeed knows about this, because the very school for which he had always been arguing which is under Navodaya Vidyalaya School in Lakshadweep, located in Minicoy does not have a permanent building. We have therefore, to ensure that whatever has been

set up, is set up properly and that is being progressed. But on the other hand, the Scheme as a whole, whether in terms of expansion, or in terms of its priority.

SHRI P.M. SAYEED: There should not be any uncertainty.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: There is no uncertainty, Sir. Since the Scheme is there, in terms of the Schools opened, and which will receive support to consolidate.

SHRI L.V. SINGH: May I request the hon. Minister to throw some light on the reasons that have necessitated the review of the present policy and the defects identified in the policy?

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: Sir, I have already indicated that we have set up 261 Navodaya schools over the past few years. Only a limited number of them have yet been able to move to what is called permanent accommodation. Many of them are still in temporary accommodation. We are still, in many cases, in the so-called zero phase, or phase-I of construction. The total number of teachers have not yet been recruited for the schools set up. Therefore, if one wants to talk of the scheme in terms of its success, we have to yet to accomplish all these basic needs. But in addition to this, what we have to take note of is that the objective was to have one Navodaya Vidyalaya in every district of the country. The original plan was to allocate Rs. 500 crore in the Seventh Plan which was just not possible. It was not possible for the Government then in position to allocate Rs. 500 crore. That is why these are in the present situation. Therefore, the whole thing needs a review.

MR. SPEAKER: Please remember that we are discussing the Navodaya Vidyalayas for the second time during question hour in the last fifteen days.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ever since this New Education Policy was propagated by the erstwhile Central Government, there has been a lot of

discussion on and criticism of it within the teaching community itself. So, now that the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme under the New Education Policy is being reviewed once again, I would like to ask the hon. Minister how does the Government propose to accommodate these criticisms, these discussions, these debates that have been going on within the teaching community.

And if a committee is formed for the review, how is this committee to respond to these?

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: Sir, the hon. Member has asked a question concerning the review of the National Policy of Education, 1986. I would like to assure the House through you that this review will be started soon. This is being finalised in terms of the membership, terms of reference and modalities of functioning. The review will take note of the various objections that have been raised as pointed out by the hon. Member. I would like to appeal one basic aspect. As far as education is concerned, it should not be considered as a matter which relates to one political party or the other. We are concerned with the future of India, with the future of our children and making sure that they get the right education.

In our Constitution, we had made a promise about universalisation of elementary education. We have not yet been able to fulfil it. We are also in a situation where we have got less than 40 per cent literacy in the country. So, the needs of early childhood education and universalisation of education, of removal of illiteracy are prime features to which we have to pay attention. The objection which have been raised with regard to priorities and the allocation of resources in different sectors will all have to be taken note of. I would like to assure the hon. Members through you Sir that all those who have views on the subject would be able to present them to this committee.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO: From the reply given by Prof. Menon, do I understand that what will be reviewed is the work-

ing of the scheme—not the scheme itself but the working of the scheme? How it is working and if it is not working well, how to make it work well? That is one part of it, one way of looking at it. From the reply he gave, it appears that he wants to go into the details of how the scheme has been working. If that is so, will he kind clarify?

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: I would like to make two points here, Sir. The hon. Member who has asked for clarification is one of our very distinguished Member, who plotted the national policy of Education 1986.

PROF. N.G. RANGA: He is author of the scheme.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: Yes, I am aware of that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: That's why he is feeling guilty.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: I noted him in great respect, I would like to point out through you Sir to him that there are two components in respect of the clarification he has asked for. The first in any review is to look at what is being done and how it is being done. The effort would be examine whether the implementation is being done properly or whether there are flaws in it. That is one component. But there is a second aspect which relates to the priorities. When you have limited resources there is the question of, where you would invest the money? Would you put it on elementary education, or on literacy or on the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme or on university education or on vocationalisation of education which enables generation of employment opportunities? These are questions of prioritization which are important. The plan of action relating to the National Policy on Education 1986 had, as the hon. Member knows, addressed itself to some of these questions. But ultimately this is a question of the resources we have and the involvement we get into this and the priorities coming into the picture. All these aspects will give a sense of direction.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: What are you going to do about the very existence of the scheme?

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: I would not like to pre-judge what the reviewing committee would do. We would certainly ask them to look at the orientation of the scheme from the viewpoint of priorities.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: In the past, we had always opposed the two types of education that have been continuing in our country. The first type is the general type and the second type is the elite type. We very much wanted a new education policy that would try to remove this disparity. Instead of that, we find that the Government is taking action to reinforce elitism in schools in a big way. Now the point is by abandoning the idea of Navodaya Vidyalayas, whether or not the Government will take steps, on a war-footing, to see that all the schools are upgraded and properly helped so that real genuine education will be imparted to millions of students in our country.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: That is exactly the point which I had in mind when I replied to the earlier question asked by the hon. Member, Shri Narasimha Rao. I said that there is a real question of priorities. If you have limited money, where will you put it? Would you put it in making the single teacher schools into two teachers schools and expand the availability of school rooms in the vast number of rural schools or would you put it in Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme or in universities? It is this question of orientation which the new review committee will look into.

SHRI RAM NAIK: The general consensus is that these Navodaya Vidyalayas have failed and they are differentiating between different sectors of the society. Now that the Government has decided to review it, my question is, in order to avoid further wasteful expenditure, whether or not the Government will promise that no new Navodaya Vidyalaya will be opened till this review will be completed.

PROF. M.G.K. MENON: I can assure the hon. Member through you Sir that the basic decision is not to open any new Navodaya Vidyalaya until the review is completed. But I would also like to say that the existing Navodaya Vidyalayas will be given support to make sure that they are established properly, in terms of accommodation the right number of teachers and so on.

Research Articles on Electronics and Computer Technology

*372. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:
DR. A.K. PATEL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the average number of research articles on electronics and computer technology published in India every month;

(b) whether there is a need for such articles originally written in Hindi being published in Hindi and to get some translated in Hindi so that research vistas in India may be widened for larger openings;

(c) whether Government propose to widen the scope of such research work by starting a journal on electronics and computer science research in Hindi; if so, the broad outlines thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. M.G.K. MENON): (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Technical and research articles on electronics and computer technology are

published in several journals and magazines in India. It is estimated that the average number of such articles published every month will be around sixty.

(b) to (d). Publications of research articles in Hindi or in the form of their translation into Hindi will help to widen the research base. Steps have been taken by the Department of Electronics to bring out information in Hindi relating to developments taking place in the country in this area. The Department of Electronics has been publishing from time to time scientific and technical articles in Hindi.

[Translation]

SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government had, last week, given an assurance in this House that an elaborate scheme for development of technology in respect of Sanskrit and other Indian languages would be devised in the Eighth Five Year Plan. I would like to know whether the Government, is going to launch a research journal under this scheme which would have a blend of articles on electronics and computer technology? My question is simple. Is the Government going to launch any research-journal?

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Sir, I have a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: You know that points of order can not be raised during the question hour. You may ask your question and I shall ask him to reply.

SHRI KALP NATH RAI: Why is the Prime Minister absent? Is it not contempt of the House? (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Let us listen to the reply of the question. You please take your seat. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A CHARLES: Rose..... (Interruptions)