

**Shri Kapil Sibal,  
the Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development  
visits NCERT,  
appreciates seminal role of NCERT in taking RTE and RMSA  
ahead**

The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India, and President of the NCERT, Shri Kapil Sibal visited the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2010. Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Smt. Anshu Vaish and Joint Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Shri S.C. Kunthia accompanied the Hon'ble Minister. The purpose of the visit was to interact with the faculty and staff of the NCERT.



At the outset of the interaction session of the faculty and staff of the NCERT with the Hon'ble Minister, Prof. Vasudha Kamat, Joint Director, CIET welcoming Shri Kapil Sibal Ji, esteemed guests and distinguished gathering on this great occasion, said that the NCERT is planning its Golden Jubilee year celebrations from September this year and to get geared up, this is the appropriate occasion to listen to the vision of our President. She further said that the present day world is fast changing and many reforms have been brought in the field of education. Right to Education Act can be seen as one of the most visionary decisions to bring all children in the age group 6 to 14 under umbrella of Free and Compulsory Education. It is unprecedented. No Government in the world plans to offer free and compulsory education to more than 20 crore children. With the huge success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of Government of India, a large number of students are passing out from upper primary classes creating a huge demand for secondary education. This need is taken care by the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, the most recent initiative of Government of India to achieve the goal of universalisation of secondary education. Expansion, Inclusion, Excellence is the mantra of Shri Kapil Sibal Ji. According to the Hon'ble Minister, the real challenge lies in primary education, in getting the Gross Enrolment Ratio up from the present 11 to around 30 in another 25 years. If India is to grow to its fullest economic potential, expanding the number of schools/colleges is critical.



Prof. G. Ravindra welcoming Shri Kapil Sibal Ji and the distinguished gathering said that the faculty and staff of the NCERT is much beholden by him for sparing his valuable time for interaction.



Presenting a brief report on the NCERT's activities in the field of school and teacher education for the last fifty years and also the road ahead, Prof. Ravindra said that the NCERT has been serving since 1961 as a think-tank and as a magnet for education's best minds to work with us in exploring solutions for the country's complex educational problems. He said that we should now begin to think about the next fifty years until 2061. Vision of our President in this regard will help us to move

further.

Prof. Ravindra giving an account of organizational structure, history and functioning of the NCERT said that the Council undertakes research, development, training and extension programmes. Further, throwing light on various activities conducted by its

constituent units: RIEs, PSSCIVE and CIET, he highlighted that of five Regional Institutes of Education, four offer various Pre-service and In-service courses in education. The RIE at Shillong is engaged in research and in-service training only. He said that a proposal of creating a few more RIEs had been submitted to the Ministry in 2008. The Council is looking forward to a positive response from the Ministry.

With regard to the activities of the Central Institute of Educational Technology, he said that the CIET has produced several audio and video programmes. In the recent past, we have used its educational satellite facilities to provide in-service enrichment to about 50,000 teachers across India. Further, with regard to PSSCIVE, Prof. G. Ravindra said that the Institute has developed more than 130 competency-based vocational and instructional curricula. He said that the National Curriculum Framework has always been one of the major responsibilities of the Council. These frameworks are a comprehensive statement, seeking to draw organic links between country's educational vision, curriculum, syllabus and textbooks and frameworks have invariably been futuristic, pointing to road ahead.

With regard to researches, he said that one of Council's significant tasks is to produce surveys of Research in Education, National Achievement Surveys and the All-India School Education Survey. The eighth All-India School Education Survey is now underway. In the context of continuous and comprehensive evaluation, he said that ideas regarding CCE took their birth in the NCERT in around 1960s and the '70s. The Council has actually coined the term, 'Comprehensive and Continuous (school-based) Evaluation'. Now the CBSE has implemented the scheme in all its schools.

Regarding National Talent Search Examination conducted by the NCERT, Prof. Ravindra said that this is one of our flagship activities and has gone a long way in nurturing scholastic talent.

Reflecting on the road ahead for the NCERT, Prof. Ravindra said that the NCERT has been designated as the academic authority in the context of RTE Act. He said that there is now a need to create a National Curriculum Framework for Elementary Education which will reflect on how children enrolling for school at ages well beyond 5 will be integrated into the system. He also said that the Council fervently looks forward to the implementation of the RMSA. The Secondary Education Group has submitted proposals for developing appropriate and easy-to-use kits in the Science and Mathematics and learning resource materials in Social Sciences.

Expressing Council's agreement on the idea of implementing a core curriculum throughout the country, he said that the National Curriculum Framework represent such a core curriculum. Many states and UTs have already adopted or adapted the NCF. The faculty at the NCERT would be happy to work with other organizations in the implementation of the core curriculum. He also said that there is need to have greater interface with schools. In this regard, interdisciplinary and empirical researches of school practices and interaction with schools will pave the way for future policies. He said that greater synergy with other educational bodies and with the states is needed. This will certainly help to reform the system effectively and to implement the ideas of NCF - 2005.



Extending his thanks to the distinguished gathering, he invited the Hon'ble Minister Shri Kapil Sibal Ji for providing NCERT the vision for future and also regarding Indian education as a whole.



The Hon'ble Minister emphasising the need for collaboration with various stakeholders in the field of education, said that people Working in any institution must have the sense of collaborative purpose. We often delineate boundaries within which we act in isolation with others and the same we expect from others. This obstructs



our efforts towards implementation of new ideas. Education is an exercise which cannot be handled by any one stakeholder. We can deliver education to our children only when we collaborate and work together. While appreciating NCERT's enormous contribution in last five decades in the field of education, Mr. Sibal said that the Council needs to put much more efforts in this field, in the present context.

Shri Kapil Sibal further said that the Right to Education Act is now a reality on paper and needs to be translated into ground. As per this Act, we need to have all children in schools. The Act gives us three years time for physical infrastructure to put in place and five years time for teachers to obtain essential qualifications. We have to cover a long passage to achieve the goal that RTE puts before us. The NCERT has very crucial role to play in this, we need to sit together and decide how to implement Right to Education to the ground. For this, the NCERT needs to work with various other organizations such as NUEPA, NCTE, SCERT, and NCPCR and also with the State Boards. People working in various organizations need to understand their mutual problems and identify roadblocks. This is essential for us to march together. The Hon'ble Minister said that the National Commission for the Protection of Child's Rights (NCPCR) has been performing very important tasks although with limited human and physical resources. Institutions such as NCERT need to join hands with NCPCR for translating its efforts to the ground for the country's children. The Council needs to have allies with various organizations. The Council needs to empower them. Mr. Sibal also said we need to move forward cautiously but comprehensively.

Shri Sibal expressed his surprise on the fact that the idea of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) has been mooted by the NCERT four decades back and took forty years to reach to the ground. He said that we need to see the gaps, why any idea takes a long time to reach to the ground. Further, in the context of CCE and Examination, he said that the NCERT can play a very important role in this area. Shri Kapil Sibal also said that the National Curriculum Framework-2005 recommends moving away from the examination system and de-stress children integrating evaluation with the classroom activities and assessing them continuously on various parameters on routine basis not merely on the basis of test of their rote learning. For the effective implementation of CCE, our examination system needs to follow that. We need to reform our examination system in consonance with CCE working with CBSE and other organizations such as state boards so that, our children will be assessed on their fundamental capacity to understand and their inherent potential not on their capacity to mugging up information and answering the questions based on the content given in the textbook. Evolving a broader framework of knowledge is now essential and a major task, which must be carried out collaboratively by the NCERT, CBSE and state boards. Now in urban areas, parents, teachers and students began to understand and accept CCE. There is a need to put efforts for implementing CCE in the schools in rural areas.

Shri Kapil Sibal said that for examination reform NCF – 2005 provides a broad framework and it must not be diluted but at the same time there is also a need to move beyond the curriculum framework. This was the reason behind setting up of committee under COBSE for the preparation of the core curriculum in Science and Mathematics. The basic idea was to bring all the state Boards on the same platform. While evolving this core curriculum the NCF – 2005 always served as the basis.

The Hon'ble Minister in the context of technology said that technology plays a transformative role. We need to develop e-content in different subject areas as well as in other areas. The Council is in the process of developing e-content. We do have challenges of access to technology but once we will have the broad band we will be able to overcome this challenge and also move forward towards e-governance.

Shri Kapil Sibal said that the NCERT must come out with its annual plan of its activities to be accomplished within one year and also to draw road map for next five years in different areas such as examination reform, e-content, strengthening of RIEs, specifically NERIE for improving education in North-East areas and also creation of new RIEs. Shri Sibal also said that the PSSCIVE, a constituent unit of the NCERT has developed 130 courses for vocational education, these all need to be implemented in the ground. The NCERT will provide the feedback on the implementation of these courses in the ground. The Council will also explore the areas in which more courses can be developed for around 160 million children who will not be able to go to college in years to come in contrary to 42 million children who will be attending the college.

For around 160 million children, thousand of vocational courses will be needed and hence we need to closely work with industry, sector of economy, the state governments and other regional centres. In this endeavour the MHRD will help the NCERT to connect to the various institutions. We all need to sit together and discuss about the vocational framework that a particular discipline require. We need to move forward. This is the area which need enormous investment in the country. Shri Sibal said a few other countries would want to come here to exploit the situation in India for various short term and diploma courses in vocation education to serve the global economy. He informed that in a recent meeting of CABE, the issue of evolving a National Vocational Qualification Framework had been taken up. The NCERT can be an integral part of this effort.

The Hon'ble Minister said that in the present context distance education and e-content as well as ICT in school education and higher education are important areas in which NCERT requires to make its efforts seriously.

Shri Sibal raising his concern about the All India Education Survey said that this needs to be completed by 2011, before the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The NCERT needs to work hard to collect quickly all the relevant data. He also emphasized the need of expanding the scope and number of scholarships in the National Talent Search Examination in view of the 220 million school going children. Another big challenge is the teacher. We need to move very fast in the direction of educating our teachers. Absence of teachers will not take the implementation of RTE forward. He also said that all the knowledge is interdisciplinary; we need to recognize the nature of knowledge. Knowledge has no boundaries; hence we need to move towards an education system which does not believe in boundaries. Shri Sibal said that the NCERT has conquered the world in the past and now there is a whole new world before the Council to be conquered in the future. The Institution has to play a seminal role in this conquest.

### **Interaction Session**

Prof. K.K. Vashishtha, Head, DEE said that the NCERT has been serving as a nodal agency for SSA for more than six years. Now, there is a need to develop a modified curriculum framework for elementary education. The Department of Elementary Education has been working in the area of assessment at elementary stage. The Department has also been contributing in the area of corporal punishment with a purpose to collaborate with NCPCR by developing posters and films with the help of CIET. The Department is also in the process of strengthening SCERTs and other state functionaries for the implementation of RTE and NCF – 2005.



Shri Kapil Sibal said that instead of modifying the NCF – 2005, we need to align state curricula to RTE and to the NCF – 2005 perspectives.

Dr. Ranjana Arora, Reader, SEG said in the context of RMSA that we must work towards reducing the gap between the intended curriculum, the enacted curriculum and the received curriculum. She said that the newly constituted Secondary Education Group at the NCERT has begun efforts towards Benchmark Surveys. One of our surveys reveals that of 3184 secondary schools in Punjab, only 224 have laboratory facilities for classes IX and X. This points out towards the gaps in the curriculum. Moreover, gradual decline of practical work and experimentation at secondary level in all the curricular areas is a major concern for quality. The NCERT has developed low cost time effective micro-science kits that could possibly replace costly labs. Apart from such kits, the NCERT also hopes to develop bridge courses, audio-video material, training packages as well as manual and handbook for teachers and also build the capacity of teachers in using these resource materials.



Shri Kapil Sibal said that the NCERT is a nodal agency for taking RMSA forward and has to play very important role in it.

Mrs. Anshu Vaish said that presently Secondary Education Group has been working in the NCERT under RMSA. There is an urgent need to set up a Department of Secondary Education within the existing faculty of the NCERT to take RMSA forward.



Dr. P.V. Prakasa Rao, PSSCIVE, Bhopal said that a separate cadre for vocational teachers needs to be created for strengthening this area to address the need of vocational courses in the years to come. He has also raised the issue of providing essential facilities of dyslexic as well as gifted children.

Mr. Kunthia said that we have a new scheme of inclusive education for secondary stage. At elementary stage inclusive education scheme is the part of SSA where we target dyslexia. Like other countries we also need to provide separate resource room and required facilities for dyslexic as well as children with other learning disabilities. We need to strengthen the Department of Education for Group with special needs at the NCERT and it should act as nodal agency to provide ideas in this area to be mooted in all the states/UTs. Regarding Vocational Education, Mr. Kunthia said that it was planned in the very beginning to divert 25% children towards vocational stream. Now, the time has come when many children are interested to join vocational courses. To address their needs we need to work with PSSCIVE and state functionaries. We also need to explore the possibilities of accessibility through ICT and open learning. He also said that under the new scheme of vocational education issues related to teacher training and teacher cadre will be dealt.



Shri Kapil Sibal said that an initiative is being taken to start vocational course in hospitality in collaboration with State Government, Central Board of Secondary Education as well as Industry. There is a need to start these kinds of courses as per the local needs of the state/UT. We need to explore possibilities for courses in village industries, textiles, etc.

Reflecting on the issue of gifted children, Mrs. Anshu Vaish said that when we are talking about including all children under inclusive education, the issues related to treating gifted children separately needs reflection. In this context serious researches are needed to clarify and address these issues related to inclusive education.

Prof. Avtar Singh said that for expanding the scope and seats of NTS, the Council has already submitted proposals to the Ministry. Regarding CCE, Prof. Singh said that earlier the examination system was so strong that the schools did not feel the need of CCE, but now in view of increasing pressure of heavy syllabi on children it is very much needed. The Council is working towards evolving a feasible scheme of CCE to be handled by all the schools. He further said that the Council has also initiated efforts towards bringing improvement in question papers set up for board examination. Shri Sibal stated that strong efforts are required if we want to take any good idea forward for implementing it to the ground.



Prof. Santosh Sharma, DTEE said that pre-service and in-service teacher trainings are important under RTE Act. The Department of Teacher Education and Extension is the nodal department at the NCERT for teacher education. This Department has already initiated its efforts in this direction. She further said that for training these teachers, teacher educators are also required. Our RIEs offer courses for teacher educators. In this context, the NCERT needs to be accorded the status of University to for initiating innovative course and issuing degrees and certificates independently.



Mr. S.C. Kunthia informed that under RMSA, there is a provision for regular in-service teacher trainings. However, there is an urgent need to develop comprehensive curriculum for teacher training

Dr. Pratyush Mandal, Reader, DESSH said that subject Departments at NIE are in the process of preparing material such as Teacher Manuals, Teacher Handbook, etc. which can be effectively used for teacher training.

Prof. S.K. Yadav, DTEE said that the Department of Teacher Education and Extension has conducted a study to discern the status of teacher education in the country and prepared a scheme for Teacher Education. The Department has also prepared an annual plan with the help of Directors of SCERTs for the implementation of RTE. Further, raising his concern about the parallel organizations providing same kind of training to teachers, said that this is merely wastage of time and resources and this need to be addressed.



Smt. Anshu Vaish said that the MHRD has formulated a modified scheme based on the inputs of the study conducted by the NCERT and the new scheme has been circulated to all states for feedback. It will be finalized soon. In this new scheme as per the recommendation of NCERT, SCERTs have been brought into the hold of teacher education structure.



Shri Kapil Sibal said that it is being discussed with states to have separate cadre for teacher educator in DIETs in each state and University system will send its teachers to DIETs on deputation for strengthening Teacher Educator cadre in DIETs. The states have responded to this proposal positively.

Dr. Srinivasan said that for moving away from rote learning in Social Sciences we need to have separate social science resource room containing audio-video materials including photographs, charts and maps, replicas of archeological and material cultures in each school. This will help children learn by doing which will further help them to draw relationships between past and present and also to understand changes taking place in the society.



Mr. S.C. Kunthia responding to this issue said that provision for Social Science Resource Room for each secondary school has been made under RMSA.

Shri Kapil Sibal said that we need to develop a template or a capsule for value education. Presently, the NCERT integrate that into the various subjects. So, it is an integrated theme. The NCERT needs to develop a separate Value Education Curriculum.

Prof. Hukum Singh said that core curriculum in Science and Mathematics developed by the COBSE will burden children of higher secondary level. As a follow-up of NCF – 2005, NCERT has developed syllabi and textbooks for all the stages of school education drawing insights from the Report 'Learning Without Burden' brought out by a Committee chaired by Prof. Yash Pal in 1993. These syllabi and textbooks at all levels address the problem of curriculum burden by reducing information load and making learning participatory and linked with the day-to-day experiences of the children. These syllabi and textbooks have been brought out by the syllabus and textbook development committee passing through a process of monitoring and approval by the National Monitoring Committee set up by the MHRD. Moreover, at Higher Secondary level seventeen states are following NCERT syllabi and textbooks. Now the exercise done by COBSE adding 5% more topics to NCERT's higher secondary syllabi in Science and Mathematics is creating confusion among states.



Shri Sibal said that all the states are ready to implement core curriculum at higher stage.

Mr. S.C. Kunthia said that it has been made clear to states that textbooks will not be changed.

Dr. Anupam Ahuja said that there is an urgent need for training in various sectors on inclusive education other than school sector for making inclusion reality in our society.



Mr. S.C. Kunthia said that NCERT needs to undertake serious and comprehensive researches in the area of school and teacher education. This will help us to march forward in RMSA and in the implementation RTE Act. This must be considered as the priority area in the NCERT.

With this the interaction session ended. Prof. Anil Sethi has moderated the interaction session since he was also the compere of the programme.

Shri R.K. Singh extending his vote of thanks said that this is the historical moment when the Hon'ble Minister and President, NCERT is here to meet and interact with his family members. He has extended his thanks to Smt. Anshu Vaish, Mr. S.C. Kunthia, Prof. G. Ravindra and Prof. Vasudha Kamat and to the distinguished gathering and also to others who had contributed towards the conduction of this programme.



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