

Summary of discussions: NKC consultation on School education

A meeting of diverse stakeholders consisting of education experts, private school principals, NGOs/philanthropic organizations and education administrators was convened by NKC at Delhi on 10 December 2007. This was the last in a series of consultations, national and regional, carried out by NKC over the last one year. This was intended to provide inputs into formulating NKC recommendations on school education. A summary based on the previous consultations of NKC was circulated as a background for the meeting.

Broad consensus emerged on the following:

- a. There was a need for systemic reforms in school education.
- b. While the primary responsibility for providing quality education must vest with the Government, there is a need to recognize and encourage the increasing role played by non Government entities and forge mutually beneficial partnerships.
- c. Decentralised management of schools coupled with community participation will be the most effective instrument for enhancing accountability.
- d. Revitalising institutions engaged in teacher education and professional development of teachers would merit the highest priority.
- e. There is a need to focus on building capacity before teachers take up leadership roles in schools.

Specific suggestions for reforms made by the participants are detailed in the succeeding paragraphs:

1. Planning for education

- a. Need to evolve strategies for systemic reform with a 10-15 year perspective supported by institutions that remain engaged in implementation.
- b. Education policies to be supported by legislation to ensure implementation and continuity.
- c. State governments as primary contributors of resources should be charged with the responsibility for making education a priority sector within their over all plans.

- d. Relevance, reliability and timing of data pertaining to schools needs a major overhaul. Too much irrelevant data is being collected without any specific objectives, the data collected is not reliable and often very late.
- e. Planning for schools should be an integral part of town planning, particularly in Tier II cities; also Urban Renewal Mission to take into account spaces for education.
- f. Minimum common standards including standards for learning outcomes should be prescribed for each level for both government and private schools, key performance indicators be developed for measurement.
- g. Paradigm of funding by Central government be changed, rather than fund schemes formulated at Central Ministries, states be encouraged to formulate their own schemes.

2. Management of school education

- a. Greater community participation is essential for ensuring accountability. School management committees with representation from all stakeholders including parents should be empowered to make decisions. Social audits of schools/ education schemes need to be encouraged.
- b. Partnerships with private players to be encouraged.
- c. Recruitment of teachers to be done at school level.
- d. School to be the focus of reform.
- e. Build leadership for managing schools through appropriate capacity building, leverage expertise available in Navodaya, KV, and private societies. An appropriate mentoring programme for school leaders could be evolved to facilitate change management.

3. Teacher Education/ Professional Development

- a. Teacher education to be integrated with Higher Education making it more holistic
- b. At least five IIT level teacher education institutions across the country to focus on research and professional development of teachers
- c. Career progression linked to professional development
- d. Revitalise the academic support systems such as DIETs, SCERTs, BRCs
- e. Create a network for teachers to share best practices (portal)

4. Role of private sector

- a. Need to take cognizance of the proliferating role of the non government schools
- b. Create an enabling framework for setting up of schools by non government entities
- c. Forge private-public partnerships in managing government schools

5. Miscellaneous

- a. Comprehensive reform of examinations
- b. Make curriculum more relevant, add livelihood skills