

Draft Proceeding of the First Meeting of the State Level Task Force on Higher Education

The first meeting of the Task Force on Higher Education was held at Pustak Bhawan, Bhubaneswar at 10.30 AM on 19.10.09.

At the outset, **Shri Madhusudan Padhi**, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Higher Education welcomed the Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education & Tourism **Shri Devi Prasad Mishra**, Padmabhusan Prof. Trilochan Pradhan, Chairman of the Task Force and members present at the first meeting. He expressed the hope that the expertise and experience of the Task Force will immensely help the preparation of the road map on Higher Education at the most crucial moment of educational planning in the state.

Moreover, interactions at the state and regional consultative workshops will facilitate preparation of a vision document- 2020 and the Annual perspective plans. He expressed his deep commitment to this historic planning initiated and nurtured by the Department of Higher Education. The funding for Education in the Central Budget has increased and the state funding has also increased substantially. Hence, it is "the best of times" for future educational planning. Higher Education stands on the foundation of primary and secondary education, therefore, the Higher Education vision document 2020 should consider the major thrust of educational initiatives at three levels: Primary, Secondary and Higher Education.

Hon'ble Minister Higher Education & Tourism, **Shri Debi Prasad Mishra** inaugurated the Task Force and highlighted his policy statement on Higher Education at the Orissa Legislative Assembly. He aptly pointed out that the Vision Document would enable us to spell out the future course of action. Hon'ble Minister welcomed the views of all stakeholders with an open mind. The inputs for future action plans should embody planning of Higher Education, Industry, Agriculture and Medical sciences. The pursuit of excellence, steps for increasing GER, strengthening quality education, building up infrastructure are some of the areas in which he invited suggestions of the educationists for preparing the road map for vision- 2020 and the Annual Plans. He suggested that we should leverage on the long traditions of culture, knowledge and education in Orissa.

Prof. (Dr.) T. Pradhan, Chairman of the Task Force, Higher Education appreciated the initiative of the State Government. He looked forward to the inputs of retired teachers who have great experience and idealism. He referred to Sarkar Committee Report of 1948 which laid stress on educational inputs of character building and thinking skills of students for transforming them into useful citizens. He gave valuable suggestions on transaction of teaching learning, blackboard work by teachers, access to Higher Education and the steps for supplementing useful notes to students for promoting home-study. Technology-enabled learning, multiple role-play by teachers, satellite-based teaching, econophysics, extensive research inputs, R&D activities constituted the major thrust of his proposals. In addition to this, the ambience of undergraduate courses should be upgraded for incorporating super specialized areas of study. Students should be motivated to pursue Higher Education. Both formal and non formal

education should be nurtured. The input of specialized areas of study such as astrophysics should be provided at the Undergraduate level.

Prof. Omkarnath Mohanty, VC, BPUT neatly summed up the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Committee and Kothari Committee reports and stressed the importance of access, equality, relevance and ethics. Since India has advantages of demographic dividend, this will enable us to equip our young people with requisite skills. For this purpose education should be student centric. He stressed the importance of accreditation system and measurable parameters in learning process and leadership strategies. In addition to this, he highlighted priority areas like Post Graduate courses and research programmes.

Dr. D.P. Ray, VC, OUAT stressed the role of agriculture, home science, forestry, veterinary science and horticulture. He pleaded for expansion of the present practices i.e. direct interaction with the farmers, students' exposure to practical practices, rural internship and facilities for students. The Chairman suggested to have the framing of an agricultural policy along with expansion programme.

Prof. Sunil Sarangi of NIT highlighted the autonomy of institutions and universities. He pointed out that, incentives should be given to teachers for attracting the best. In fact, there should be a limit to the involvement of the bureaucracy in the Governing Bodies of the institutions. It is unfortunate that small colleges are being treated on par with the big institutions.

Dr. Bijaya Mishra a noted educationist opined that, women empowerment can be achieved through soft skill development, career counseling and mandatory M Phil qualification for college teachers. We need adequately qualified teachers to carry forward our goals in higher education. In fact, social work should also be a part of the curriculum. Adequate hostel facilities should be provided to girl students.

Prof. B.K. Sahoo, VC Berhampur University expatiated upon the anomaly in the existing educational system. He was in favour of new courses of marine sciences, remote sensing, geophysics, marine microbiology and Post-Graduate courses in industrial safety. Such courses may start at the under graduate level.

Dr. Achyut Samant, Member UGC and Chairman KIIT highlighted various aspects of our higher education. He pointed out that there should be quality infrastructure to ensure quality education. There should be qualified teachers irrespective of place of the teaching. In addition to this, governing bodies should be made free from political interference to promote good governance.

Dr. Rajiv Sahoo, Resource Consultant suggested that the growth of higher education should be left to market forces and employability of the students should be enhanced through intensive training.

Prof. M.P. Jain of SoA University pointed out that there should be more autonomous colleges and universities and less number of accredited colleges. Students should be provided with the best possible teaching and teachers should be well-trained. There should be complete autonomy of the teachers to teach and evaluate.

Prof. Binayak Rath, VC Utkal University favoured restructuring of old universities, emphasize on socially significant resources and community inputs through NSS.

Mr. Mukti Mishra, aptly suggested Industry-academia interface and value-based education. He aimed at creating good citizens.

Prof. S.B. Rath, VC North Orissa University pointed at the deplorable conditions of the colleges. He was in favour of a new package for social disadvantaged students.

Mr. Devdas Chhotray, VC Ravenshaw University highlighted improvement of governance in the higher education. In addition to this, reform of finance is necessary and in the process, there should be fiscal autonomy to the universities. There should be satellite-based virtual class room.

Prof. Abani Baral thanked the minister for the great initiatives and pleaded for good governance of all aided and government colleges. He opined that the standard of recruitment should be evolved. Moreover, the standard of Ph.D programmes should be ensured. Useful and effective refresher courses should be organized for teachers. New courses should be introduced. He also expatiated upon the +2 colleges.

Dr. Bhagwan Prakash reminded us of UNESCO motto, learning to know, learning to be, learning to do and to live together as the focus for our educational policy. He quoted succinctly to impart a new dignity to teaching profession, to innovate, to check commercialization and provide learning environment. He also suggested the structure framework of the forthcoming draft higher education policy.

Prof. L.N. Mishra former VC suggested structural changes in educational administration and the inputs of quality, equality and students' feedback etc. In addition with this, he pleaded for accountability.

Prof. Swadhin Pattnaik, Director, IOM pointed out that, education institutions are controlled by market processes. Therefore, we should create opportunity for those students who cannot afford the facility of higher education.

Prof. D.V. Ramana, XIMB highlighted the increase in public spending the creation of Educational Development Bank Education Regulatory Commission. In brief, he suggested the TRACT (teaching, research, administration, consulting and training) as the main parameters of growth.

Dr. Dhanada Mishra (HDF) drew attention of all the members to Prof. Chitta Barala's website (www.orissa2020.org) on educational inputs.

Prof. D.K. Ray's involvement as Secretary of the Task Force was approved by the Chair. This was followed by informal discussion about the frequency of holding meetings for interaction.

Prof. D.K. Ray extended a vote of thanks to the Chair, members, invitees of the Task Force and Executive members of HDF. He thanked Hon'ble Minister Higher Education Shri Debi Prasad Mishra and Shri M.S. Padhi, IAS, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Higher Education for their commitment and initiative.

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