

SECONDARY

REFORMS

NINE YEAR SCHOOLING REFORM PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

Debate no 39 of
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(No. B/870) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Nine Year Schooling, she will state if prior consultations were held with the unions in the private and public school sectors in relation to the implementation thereof, and, if not, why not.

Reply: The reply is in the affirmative.

Further to the endorsement of the draft Concept Paper on the Nine-Year basic continuous schooling (NYS) by Cabinet in May 2015, my Ministry engaged in consultations with a wide cross-section of stakeholders of the Education sector on the policy orientations of the NYS Reform Project and its eventual implementation. This included Unions of Primary and Secondary sub-sectors (public and private), the Bureau Education Catholique (BEC), the PTAs, Educators (Std IV), the Federation of Managers, Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) and its Education Commission, and even my colleagues Members of Parliament and the Press; so that information on the NYS Project could be diffused to the public at large.

I must emphasise that I personally made it a point to chair the Consultative sessions with them and we received a number of live suggestions and comments that are being taken on board.

It has been gathered that stakeholders are generally agreeable on the policy guidelines of the NYS Project and that they really want it to see the light of the day.

In fact, I would like to add that a striking feature of the outcome of the consultative process is the encouragement which I have received to pursue this Reform Project which is above all in the interest of the child – it is a golden opportunity to seize in the wake of general acceptability on the policy guidelines.

This major Reform Project has the blessings of this Government which will provide the necessary resources and support to ensure its successful implementation.

The House may wish also to note that my Ministry is shortly coming up with a detailed Communication Strategy with a view to further sensitising the public in general on the implementation modalities of the NYS Reform Project.

NINE YEAR SCHOOLING PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/644) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Project, she will state the policy being envisaged by her Ministry concerning private tuition at primary school level.

Reply: I wish to draw attention of the House that the Nine Year Schooling (NYS) project being introduced in the context of educational reforms will bring in a transformation of our current educational structure and the accompanying measures are likely to bring about a systemic change which would lay emphasis not only on the cognitive development, but also on the integral development of the Mauritian student.

This is a holistic and integrated approach, Madam Speaker, which will involve a paradigm shift, a change in the mindset of people. The focus will be on the pupil's attainment and achievement.

The pupils would be provided with the opportunity to develop their talents, multi-skills and their personality in a holistic manner. The whole evaluation process itself will be revisited. The new mode of assessment will allow a better evaluation of their cognitive development and recognition of their talents and skills as well.

Another important pillar of the reform is the introduction of the remediation. The implementation of the remediation system right from Grade 1 will allow the early identification of any pupil showing learning difficulties and the provision of pedagogical support in a timely manner helping the latter to overcome his/her difficulties. *"Cela nous permettra de mieux encadrer les élèves et faciliter l'apprentissage"*. Putting the pupil back on the right track in a timely manner through remediation during his or her schooling will in the long run reduce the dependence on private tuition.

Moreover, this new system would entail an elimination of the A+ grade.

The National schools will no longer admit students to Grade 7.

The admissions to secondary schools will be done on a Regional basis. All students will get the opportunity to progress to Grade 7 after the Grade 6 exams which will culminate into an achievement certificate, known as the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC).

Pupils will thus be learning in a more conducive, competition -free environment without the intense pressure or stress that currently exists. Parents would themselves realise that, with this new learning set up where the child's cognitive and meta cognitive faculties will be enhanced, private tuition will find less and less space.

We are confident that private tuition will by itself lose its '*raison d'être*' in the near future. The Ministry, therefore, does not intend to come forward with a new policy in regard to private tuition in the Primary sub-sector as we firmly believe that in the long run this demand for private tuition will subside on its own.

We are coming up with a system which will relieve the undue stress that the Mauritian students have been subject to for decades now, it is the duty of one and all, all stakeholders, decision makers, heads of schools, parents and educators to cooperate and make this happen.
