

HAKSAR COMMITTEE REPORT

More autonomy for Akademis, NSD

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI, July 25:
GREATER autonomy for the Akademis and the National School of Drama (NSD) and a national endowment fund for arts with contributions from business houses and the corporate sector has been suggested in the long-awaited P. N. Haksar Committee report.

The voluminous report on the three Akademis and the National School of Drama was submitted to the minister for human resource development last week.

The report is not as critical as was expected of it considering that the Akademis are faction ridden and the very often headless National School of Drama has been crippled for a long spell with agitation by both students and staff. Criticism has basically been constructive with an eye to putting these institutions back on their feet.

Since government resources are invariably limited, the committee has suggested the setting up of a national endowment fund for arts.

The chairman of the committee, Mr P. N. Haksar, has written to leading industrialists who have expressed interest in contributing to the fund if they are given the necessary tax incentives.

PRIVATE SECTOR: The committee has said that the business houses should also be encouraged to provide infrastructural facilities like auditorium, art galleries etc. The ITC with its *sangeet sammelans*, the Tata's sponsorship of the National Centre for Performing Arts in Bombay, the Sri Ram groups' Bharatiya Kala Kendra and the Birlas with their science museums have already contributed to the propagation and enrichment of culture. But the Haksar Committee sees a bigger role for the private sector in promotion of art.

The committee also envisages a more dynamic role for the National School of Drama. It has pleaded for its development into an institute of higher learning to be called the National Academy of

Dramatic Arts.

The committee found that the courses run by the NSD were watered down as well as repetitive because it was felt the students were not able to absorb more intensive courses. This, the report has said, is "absurd" in an institution meant to provide specialised courses.

The report refers to the lack of leadership in the National School of Drama. At the same time it says it is not seeking to apportion blame. Students and staff are victims of circumstances, it maintains adding that there is no advanced school where teachers can update their skills or a living school that could be a source of inspiration.

There is need, the report says, for more studios, greater emphasis on children's theatre, linkages with institutions around the country and abroad. The report also talks of the need to strengthen the faculty and have greater discipline. Because of the national character of the drama school, it has been suggested that students should know at least two languages. The school itself could have repertoire companies, the report says.

STOP PATRONAGE: Instead of the government dispensing grants to performing troupes, cultural fellowships etc, it has been suggested that all this money be given to the Akademis to dispense. The increasing patronage by the government has to stop and the Akademis given greater autonomy.

The three Akademis has done good work but could have done better work, says the report. The other more serious charge is that they are "too Delhi-based". While pleading for facilities and funds for the Akademis, the committee has said the Akademis should spread their areas of influence to rural India.

The state Akademis, it has said, are "inadequately funded and imperfectly administered. Many function as limbs of the central organisations".

The internal bickerings in the Akademis have to be stopped and there should be a greater sense of participation by all artists, the report says. A large section of pro-

fessional artists is not participating in the exhibitions organised by the Lalit Kala Akademy or in any of its other functions. When problems like this occur, it has been suggested that some of the existing committees should be dissolved and restructured.

There is no reference to Apna Utsavs or the festival extravaganzas of the earlier regime since they were not in the mandate of this committee. But the committee questions the wisdom of the zonal cultural centres parading folk and tribal art forms in urban centres.

SURPRISING: The report says that not enough thought was given to the formation of the zonal cultural centres for there were enough institutions at the centre for promoting similar activities. "More surprising is the vast sums of money given to them as compared to the national akademis."

The Haksar Committee has not asked for the winding up of the zonal centres "since they have become entities which have made their presence felt." It has suggested that a portion of the funds allotted to them be diverted to creating infrastructural facilities for cultural activities like open-air theatres and art galleries in district headquarters and small towns. It has been suggested that the zonal centres should take up documentation and dissemination of authentic folk art forms in association with the Akademis.

The report has frowned on a cultural package being tagged to tourism and information. Culture should remain a part of human resource development and should be incorporated into school education, it has said.

Unlike the 1972 Khosla Committee report on the Akademi, which fell into cold storage, the Haksar Committee report, it is learnt, is to be implemented by the department of culture itself. A small group in the department will screen the report and its 168 recommendations to see what can be pushed right away. A list of the "agreed recommendations" is to be drawn up for adoption and those with financial implications taken up with the finance departments.

BLEM

C see it differently

process in the state.

Dr Abdullah is believed to have told the Prime Minister that his party would not be able to help the government unless Mr Singh himself takes more active interest in Kashmir affair than he does at present.

MISTRUST OF MUFTI: This demand appears to have been made because of the attitude of mistrust the NC has developed towards Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the Union home minister, since the days when the Mufti was president of the Pradesh Congress Committee and a sworn political enemy of the NC.

Apparently, it was because of this mistrust that Dr Abdullah refrained from meeting the Mufti in London recently, although he had detailed discussions with the West Bengal chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, and the railway mini-

ster, Mr George Fernandes, who were also in London about the same time. In fact, it was at the behest of the latter two that Dr Abdullah agreed to return for talks with the Prime Minister.

Although it is not known what the Prime Minister told Dr Abdullah during their meetings, the stated position of the government has been that it will not hold talks with the militants unless they shun violence and express a desire to hold negotiations within the framework of the Indian Constitution.

It is felt whatever peace initiatives the government may take, it would be difficult to make a success of it unless the mistrust between the home minister and the NC leadership is removed and a cohesive plan formulated to find a permanent solution to the problem.

NATIONAL POLICY ON CULTURE

18.01 The Department of Culture has been engaged in the task of eliciting the views of Experts, Critics Administrators etc. in the field of art and culture for quite some time towards drafting a National Policy on Culture. As a first step in this direction, the Department organised 10 regional seminars in September 1990 at different parts of the country where in about 460 eminent persons from the field of art & culture, media etc. participated. The recommendations made in those seminars were compiled in the form of a brief note which was placed in a meeting of State Ministers and Secretaries of Culture held in New Delhi in May, 1992.

18.02 Based on the recommendations made in the meeting of State Ministers & Secretaries of Culture, an Approach Paper on National Policy on Culture was drafted and circulated among a large number of eminent persons from the field of Music, dance, drama, media, films, literature, education, archaeology anthropology and library etc. The Approach Paper was also discussed in two meetings of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Human Resources Development during August 1992.

18.03 A National Colloquium was organised in New Delhi during November, 1992 to discuss the Approach Paper wherein, a small compendium giving the recommendations/suggestions etc., received from various persons was circulated. About 100 eminent persons from the field of media, visual art, photography, architecture, archaeology, anthropology, literature, library, museums, education, music, dance and theatre etc., participated in the Colloquium and gave their recommendation.

18.04 The Approach Paper has been circulated to all the Members of Parliament and was also laid in both the Houses of Parliament. The Approach Paper was likely to be considered during the Winter Session of Parliament 1993. On the basis of the recommendations of the Members of Parliament and based on the various suggestions received, the Draft Policy will be prepared and placed before the Cabinet for their consideration.

