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Maharashtra govt bans sex education books

30 Mar 2007, 1918 hrs IST,TNN

MUMBAI: The Democratic Front government of Maharashtra followed in the footsteps of the BJP governments in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat on Friday by banning sex education books prescribed by the CBSE.

Prior to the announcement made by minister of education, Hassan Mushriff, the state legislative assembly was adjourned for 30 minutes and the minister was gheraoed by members who demanded a ban on sex education books. Some members even tore copies of the controversial books to express their protest.

The issue of sex education books was raised in the house by Rajendra Patni of Shiv Sena and Shobha Phadanvis of the BJP by way of calling attention motion objecting to the pictures and method of teaching sex education, especially in the sixth standard.

The minister said the provisions under which the state government had banned controversial book by American author James Laine would be used to ban these sex education books.

Under fire from members from treasury and opposition benches, the minister also declared that the adolescence sex behaviour programme scheduled to be introduced from the next academic year stands cancelled.

While tabling the calling attention motion, Patni alleged that the state government was influenced by the West and by agencies like UNICEF which wanted sex education to be introduced from the sixth standard.

Members said though the aim to impart sex education was per se not objectionable, the manner in which it was introduced in the schools was improper.

"The message reaching younger generation will be different from what the government aimed at. Instead of having a healthy attitude towards sex, the images currently used actually harm young and impressionable minds. These books are so bad and lacking in sensitivity that they will destroy Indian culture," Phadanvis warned.

Members who spoke on the issue lamented that the books prescribed by CBSE had not taken into Indian sensibilities into consideration and had just copied books from western universities.

These books will create "Sex Gurus" instead of educating students, observed NCP leader Nawab Malik outside the house. Members from the upper house had also opposed these sex education books when the issue was raised on Thursday.

The issue was raised by the leader of the opposition Pandurang Phundkar (BJP). DF sources said the government had to ban the books since several MLAs belonging to the ruling coalition had also expressed their strong resentment.

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