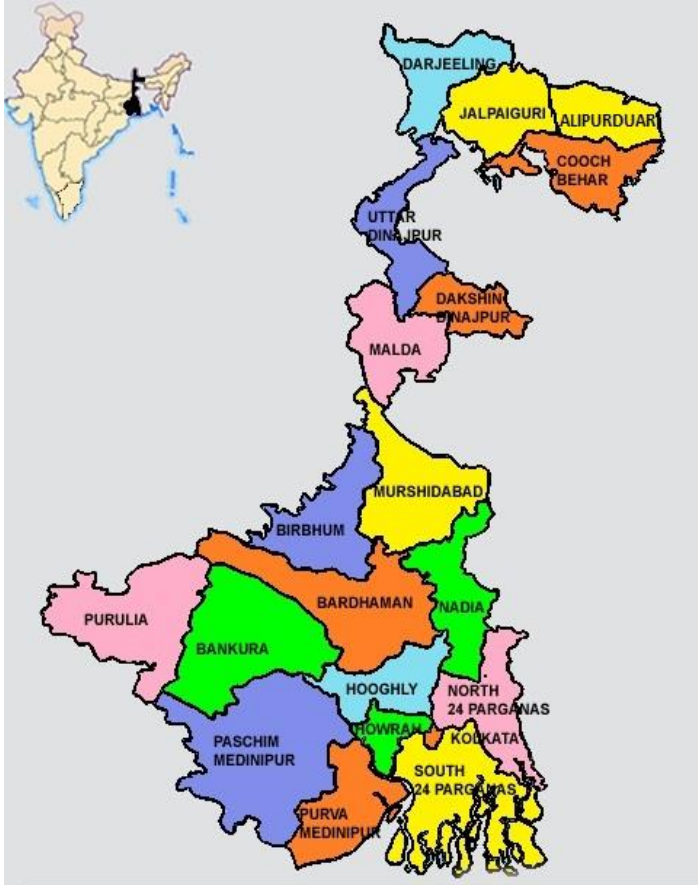




सत्यमेव जयते

Government of West Bengal



West Bengal Education Commission

Supplementary
Annexure II to Final
Report

Contents

Proceedings of the meeting of the Education Commission on 25 th November 2013,	3
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission Members on 17.01.2014,.....	9
Record notes of meeting with selected representatives from Schools - 18.01.2014	21
Record Notes for Meeting with Selected University Vice Chancellors held on 17.02.14 at Nano Technology Centre, Calcutta University	26
Record Notes for Meeting with Selected College Principals held on 18 th February, 2014 at IACS, Kolkata	31
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission Members on 19.02.14.....	39
Proceedings of Meeting with representatives from Madrasah Education of West Bengal held on 03.03.14	48
Record Notes of Meeting with Various Teachers' Associations of West Bengal on 19.03.14.....	51
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission WBEC Members on 20.03.14	55
Record Notes of the Meeting with Principals of Christian Minority Colleges held on 10th April, 2014 ..	67
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission WBEC Members on 20.06.14	71
Record Notes for Meeting held on 10 th July, 2014 at State Council of Higher Education.....	75
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 11.07.14.....	80
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 22.08.14.....	90
Record Notes for Meeting with representatives of Research Institutes held on 26.09.14	94
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 09.10.14.....	98
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission with officials of Urdu Academy and Vangiyo Sanskrit Shiksha Parishat on 07.11.14	102
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 15.01.15...	106
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members with the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) on 08.05.2015	110
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 16.07.15...	114
Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members on 17.08.15...	116

Proceedings of the meeting of the Education Commission on 25th November 2013,
Venue: Conference Room of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education

Members present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari (Chairman)
2. Dr. Amitabha Bose
3. Dr. Abu T. Khan
4. Prof. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
5. Dr. John Felix Raj
6. Mr. Asokendu Sengupta
7. Dr. Kalyan Rudra
8. Smt. Susmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
9. Smt. Supti Pandey
10. Smt. Renu Barman (Singha)
11. Shri Vivek Kumar (Member Secretary)

Shri Vivek Kumar, Member Secretary of the Commission welcomed the members of the Commission and informed that two Hon'ble members could not attend the meeting due to unavoidable reasons. He emphasised the vision of the Government of West Bengal to be amongst the top States in India within 2020, and said that with this end in view, Government is eager to review the present education system, assess the existing impediments and find solutions to improve it, and accordingly prepare a roadmap to achieve this goal. **He laid stress on concerted efforts to maintain time line and prepare an interim report within 6(six) months and the full report within one year.**

2. The Chairman during his opening remarks mentioned the need to make education tension free, stress free and enjoyable. He emphasised the importance of freetime for encouraging creative and lateral thinking that leads to innovation. **Thus the Mission of the Commission is to make education enjoyable with sufficient productive free time**

for creativity by developing an inclusive and transformational education policy. Conversion of the existing education system into Education 2.0 that focus on self-learning, e-learning and interactive education using IT and IT-enabled mechanisms should be the primary goal of the Commission. The Vision of the Commission has already been mentioned in the 'Terms of Reference' of the notification issued by the State Govt. for constitution of the Commission. The Commission targeted the year 2020 as the time line for short term goal and the year 2030 for long term goal. The Chairman emphasised on the drawing of the Road Map or Vision Document to achieve the Mission or Goal.

3. While responding to the suggestion of Member Secretary on the inclusion of Chairman/ Vice Chairman of West Bengal State Council of Higher Education, Secretaries of various departments of the State Government, Director of Public Instruction and Director of Technical Education as permanent invitees, the Chairman of the Commission agreed to invite them, as and when needed, depending on the specific requirement of the Commission.

4. Prof. S. Bandyopadhyay opined that introduction of activity-based education, reduction of academic load from the students. It was opinioned that while advent of modern technologies enables students these days to find desired information with ease, absence of mentoring often acts as an impediment towards proper scholastic development and thus the conversion of teachers to mentors is necessary.

5. The Chairman emphasised on the need for dedicated teachers with an improved pay structure. Following the proposal of Mr. A. Sengupta, the House agreed to go through the reports of earlier Commissions, such as, Asok Mitra Commission, Bhabatosh Dutta Commission, H.B. Majumder Commission, Pabitra Sarkar Commission, and also Reports of Pratichee Trust, Expert Committee on Higher Education, School Education etc. But at the same time the Chairman made it clear that while learning from the past, the strategies

adopted should be futuristic and the Commission should look forward to listening to the demands and suggestions of various stake holders of education. Online data collection through the interactive website of the Commission (which is to be created), Social Media etc is to be adopted. However, the Commission will reach out to experts/scholars of different fields in the conventional way through questionnaires also.

6. The Chairman further emphasised on the need of a database and information regarding 3G availability together with tower locations across the state and the location of all schools and colleges. Secretary, Information Technology, Government of West Bengal will be requested to provide information in this respect. The State Government has initiated a survey to collect data about the education scenario of West Bengal. This data collection is expected to be concluded by 30th November, 2013. The Member Secretary assured that data relating to higher education will be available within the first week of December 2013.

7. It was decided that Secretaries of the Departments of School Education (Primary & Secondary), Mass Education, Madrasah Education, Technical Education & Training, Women & Child Development & Social Welfare would be requested to make presentations, to the Commission within the 3rd week of January 2014.

8. Prof. Abu T. Khan has been entrusted with the responsibility to hold a meeting with all the Vice Chancellors of the State aided universities to seek their opinion as to what are needed to be done in the field of Higher Education and the Commission will hold video conference with the Vice Chancellors of Universities to listen to their presentations in this regard. Employability of the persons emerging out of the universities is of great concern. Commission may invite the Chairman of AICTE for sharing his experiences in this regard.

9. The Chairman advised that the state Govt. is to work in alignment with Central Schemes to meet up financial requirements. He has targeted the following:-

- a) To create exceptional talents in the field of Science, Humanities etc by nurturing creativity.
- b) To create vocational courses and market–ready HR by improving the employability of students.

10. To look after the different sectors/streams of education of this state, responsibilities were distributed among the members of the Commission in the following manner:-

- a) Dr. John Felix Raj –Humanities stream, Financial Resources and Private Investment.
- b) Dr. Abu T. Khan –Vocational Education and Madrasha Education.
- c) Smt. Susmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee) and Smt. SuptiPande - to write the proceedings of the Commission.
- d) Prof. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay – Technical Education and Information Technology stream. She will also prepare the interim and final Reports of the Commission
- e) Smt. Renu Barman(Singha) – Primary Education.
- f) Dr. Kalyan Rudra and Prof. Asokendu Sengupta –Higher Secondary Education, Higher Education, Acts, Rules & Regulations, Functioning of statutory bodies of the Higher Education etc.
- g) Smt. Supti Pande and Smt. Susmita Bhattacharya(Chatterjee) –School Education, Pre- School Education, ICDS etc.

The Chairman closed the meeting with advisory to all the members that care should be taken so that the recommendations of the Commission are in sync with the policies of the Government of West Bengal.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

Summary of key ideas that emerged from the meeting:

- 1) A vision document for the Commission to be prepared.
- 2) Education 2.0, based on cyber technology to be implemented.
- 3) Create space within the education pedagogy that provides free time and thus enables creative thinking among the children.
- 4) Nurture value and activity based education and focus on improving the creativity and employability of students.
- 5) Emphasis on mentoring students rather than on teaching.
- 6) Seek ideas from the students and young people about their vision about making education tension free and enjoyable.
- 7) Follow Eric Maskin's "mechanism design" approach to create the roadmap of the Commission.
- 8) Other functionaries such as Secretaries, DPI etc be co-opted/invited to the Commission and engage in consultation with various educationists to have their views incorporated.
- 9) Request Government to maintain a policy status quo till the Commission submits the report as suggested by many members.
- 10) Presentations of Secretaries of all the relevant departments before the Chairman, through videoconferencing to be held in 45 days from the date of first meeting.

Meeting Schedule and Venues:

- The Commission would meet every four weeks.
- Interim meetings if necessary could be held through skype or videoconferencing.
- CSIR-CGCRI or CSIR-IICB could be the venue of the meetings if desired, for availing video-conferencing facilities.
- Secretaries meeting could be held over Friday/Saturday either on the 10th/11th Jan or 17th/18th Jan, 2014.

Manpower:

- Six temporary manpower under the age of 32 years to be engaged for work related with the Commission.

Miscellaneous:

- The Commission shall maintain a comprehensive data repository and analytics covering all aspects of education (including policy imperatives).
- The Commission website shall be in the form of an interactive web-portal in the line of National Innovation Council website.

The Commission shall focus more on macro issues and provide a comprehensive framework that is adaptive, inclusive and self-correcting; contextualised against the needs of present day India.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission Members on
17.01.2014,

Venue: Atma Ram Hall, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari – Chairman
2. Prof. Abu T. Khan
3. Prof. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
4. Dr John Felix Raj
5. Mr. Asokendu Sengupta
6. Dr Kalyan Rudra
7. Swami Shuvakarananda
8. Swami Suvirananda
9. Smt. Susmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
10. Smt. Supti Pandey
11. Shri Vivek Kumar – Member Secretary

Others present:

1. Shri Arnab Ray – Secretary, School Education Department
2. Shri H. Mohan – Secretary, Technical Education Department
3. Smt. Madhumita Ray – Addl. Secretary, Higher Education Department
4. Dr Prabir Kumar Das – Member Secretary, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education
5. Shri Tushar Kanti Ghara – Jt. D. P.I., Education Directorate
6. Mr. Arup Dutta – Technical Director, KPMG
7. Mr. Kumar Shankar Dutta – Advisor, KPMG
8. Mr. Rajarshi Dasgupta – Consultant, KPMG

1. Minutes of the first meeting held on 25th November, 2013 were read and confirmed.
2. The Action Taken Report was on points discussed and decision arrived at in the first meeting was circulated amongst the members and noted.
3. Confirmation of Selection of a Transaction Advisor to assist the Commission:

Member Secretary, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education placed all documents relating to the selection of the Transaction Advisor for assisting the Commission. Documents such as the invitation of 'Expression of Interest' from amongst the Finance Department's pre-qualified and empanelled firms (vide G.O. No. FS-116 (PPP Cell)/2012 dated 10.09.2012), comparative table showing the respective bids received etc. were placed before the Commission. Satisfied that all the rules and procedures prescribed in this regard, including the Finance department's above-mentioned G.O. had been followed, the Commission approved the tender process and the work order issued in favour of M/s KPMG, the L1 or the lowest bidder who had quoted Rupees nine lakh as the transaction fee.

The Chairman introduced the KPMG Team to the Commission and mentioned that they would be assisting in conducting primary and secondary research, preparing Minutes of the Meeting and the Draft & Final Report of the Education Commission.

4. Presentations by the Secretaries of School Education, Technical Education and Higher Education:

Shri Arnab Ray, Secretary, School Education Department made a power point presentation. This was followed by presentations by Shri Hridesh Mohan, Secretary, Technical Education Department and Shri Vivek Kumar, Secretary, Higher Education Department.

Summary of the presentations

School Education Department

The literacy rate of the state has gone up from 68.64% in 2001 to 77.08% in 2011.

The number of government and government aided schools in the district has increased by 7 % Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) between 2007-08 and 2012-13 indicating the strong efforts of government to strengthen primary and upper primary education system.

It is observed that there has been stagnancy in the enrolment of students in both primary and upper primary level with a growth of 0.89 % and 3.1 % CAGR between 2008-09 and 2012-13 respectively. This does not match the growth rate of the number of institutions. The GER at primary level has not changed significantly and remains to be 114.81 in 2013 as compared to 116.89 in 2008. On the contrary, the GER at the upper

primary level has improved from 88.14 in 2008 to 107.69 in 2013. The %age of SC students enrolled in primary schools has increased from 28.34 to 29.23. A similar trend is observed in upper primary education where the %age of SC students has increased from 26.69 to 29.04 which indicate a reduction in drop-outs. The number of out-of-school children both at the primary and at the upper primary level has reduced by 39.45 % and 34.22 % respectively. On the other hand, the drop-out rate for primary school has reduced from 6.58 to 4.81 between 2007-08 and 2011-12 whereas it has remained relatively consistent for upper primary level to be around 6.

In terms of quality, the pupil-teacher ratio of the district has improved in both primary and upper primary school. It has reduced by 8.78 % and 3.33 % CAGR between 2007-08 and 2012-13 for primary and upper primary schools respectively.

There have been multiple initiatives to improve on the quality of education including development of new syllabi and textbooks, Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation, Early Childhood Education, Computer Aided Learning, Nirmal Vidhyalaya Abhijan, etc.

The state government has an extensive roadmap to upgrade the education system. It looks forward to increase the accessibility of elementary education and evolve more students from the state in premier examinations. It is also focusing on inculcating the culture of innovation and diverse education. Moreover, it aims to take inputs from international curricula and create an interest based study eco system. The government looks to link education to employability, starting at school level. The rules and policies for staff need multiple amendments for them to stay motivated and avoid complexities.

Higher Education Presentation

Mr. Vivek Kumar mentioned that more than 90 % of the State's higher education institutions have registered and uploaded data under the online All India Survey on Higher Education and this information would be very useful for planning and monitoring further initiatives.

The state of West Bengal has 26 universities and 1180 colleges and standalone institutions of which 40 are Government Colleges. Most of the colleges are general degree colleges and are not specialised resulting in low number of technical institutions, medical, law colleges and management colleges. There are only 50 general degree girls' colleges of which only 56 % have hostel facilities. The districts of North Dinajpur, Cooch

behar and Purulia do not have any girls' general degree colleges. Burdwan University and Calcutta University have the maximum number of colleges affiliated under them and there may be a possibility for reducing the number, for better supervision by the University.

The State's estimated population in the age group of 18 to 24 is 88.8 lakh of which it is estimated that 17 lakh students are enrolled in higher education institutes resulting in a GER of 19.59. Data which is available for 12 lakh students enrolled in higher education shows that only 9 % are post graduate students. It is observed that 74.4 % of the students are studying arts at undergraduate level whereas only 9.9 %, 8.1 % and 6.1 % of enrolled students are studying science, commerce and engineering respectively as of 2012-13.

The districts of Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Jalpaiguri and Koch Bihar have an urgent requirement of setting up of new institutions as the number of people per institute at a district level is 46676, 27697, 22978 and 22000 respectively as compared to state average of 17,871. The lack of institutions has led to a high pupil-teacher ratio of 114.51, 110.16, 124.13, 98.88 in these districts respectively. It is observed that 54.5 % of the total teachers in the state are present in the urban/semi-urban districts of Kolkata, Hooghli, Burdwan and North 24 Parganas indicating absence of teachers in rural and remote areas.

Strength

- Cultural and societal premium on intellectual pursuits
- Large number of educational institutions set up from a long time
- Premier national research institutions located in the State
- Availability of large number of retired faculty
- Large number of academics teaching abroad and willing to return to the state

Weakness (for 35 years)

- High degree of unionisation of higher education
- Appointments to high offices made on considerations other than merit
- Degeneration in quality of higher education
- Lack of accountability at all levels
- Governance structures dysfunctional
- No significant public investment in higher education
- Large number of vacancies in the staff

Opportunities

- Political will of the Government
- The State Government is committed to increasing public investment
- It is also welcoming private investment in higher education
- RUSA – has come at an opportune time
- Effort to de-politicise appointments to senior positions

Challenges

- PTR: adverse compared to UGC norm
- Skewed distribution / expansion
- Attendance of students and teachers not satisfactory
- Unemployable graduates
- Syllabi have not been revised / updated for **decades**
- Low priority to research
- Less number of women institutions
- Representation of SC, ST & OBC is low

Technical Education & Training

TVET (Technical Vocational Education & Training) system in India covers education and training from grade 8 onwards. Technical refers to post higher secondary qualification whereas vocational refers to courses offered in grades 11 & 12, and Industrial or Vocational training has a minimum qualification requirement between grades 8 to 10 depending on the requirement. Apart from the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE), there are seventeen other Ministries, e.g. Ministry of Tourism, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises which also offer various types of vocational education and training.

West Bengal's overall Literacy rate of 77.08% (Census 2011) is better than the national average of 74.08% with a 68.11% of rural population vis-à-vis 68.84% as that of the nation's. West Bengal's population is 9.13cr which accounts for 7.55% of the Indian population. Of this 7 lakhs per year do not join any form of higher education. More than 40% of the employment is in agriculture and allied services and more than 90% of the population is in the informal sector. In 2009-10, 70% of all reported vocational training was through non-formal means and 10-11% of youth took or received any form of vocational training whether formal or non-formal.

There are 2 types of skill education institutions in West Bengal – Institutional which comprises of ITI's, Polytechnics and SDCs (Skill Development Centre) and Non Institutional which comprises of SDIS (Skill Development Initiative Scheme), School based and community college based. West Bengal is placed amongst the bottom 3 states with Manipur and Assam when ITI seating capacity of per lakh population is considered. It also produces significantly fewer diploma graduates of 0.4% when compared to India's 1.3%. In the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17), Skill Development Mission has been approved as one of the 66 CSS (Centrally sponsored Schemes) by the GoI with a mandate of skilling and certification of 50 million individuals.

There are a number of challenges that TVET sector faces in West Bengal for Institutional and Non Institutional sectors. Some of the challenges in Institutional sector are – Challenges of numbers, uniformity, quality, mismatch between Industry's Skill Set Requirement and Training imparted, challenge of quantity & quality of trainers, employability, etc. There are some major policy decisions which were taken like setting up of one ITI in all 341 blocks in 12th five year plan with the increase in intake capacity of 75000, mapping a convergence process for existing skill training programmes of various government departments of the State, establishing one polytechnic in each of

66 sub-divisions and West Bengal Skill Development Mission chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister undertaking the task of skilling suitable numbers of youth per year and raising the bar every year. A special drive has been taken since 2011 for both ITI's and Polytechnic institutions. The major ones are - By 2015 March 82 more ITIs become functional in the Government Sector with a total training potential of about 28,000 in the Government Sector; and 42 more Polytechnic Institutions to become functional with total training potential of 21,750 in the Government Sector. The Institutional capacity would go up to 90,000. The Non Institutional sector comprises Vocational Training Centers (VTCs), and Vocational Training Providers (VTPs). There are currently 2535 functional Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) and 530 Vocational Training Providers (VTPs). Also there are 13 Community Colleges that are being set up in the state.

In order to overcome the challenges in the ITI sector there needs to be a paradigm shift regarding the focus from a conventional Institutional Technical education to a mix of Institutional technical educational and Non Institutional skill development. This would also need to provide a mechanism to bridge the divide between industry requirements and training imparted. For the Non institutional sector a dual implementation strategy needs to be undertaken, which is to reorganise and reorient existing setup and Institutional arrangement for Skill Development. Some steps to be undertaken to reorganize and reorient existing step up are - Merging existing Directorates for better coordination, reorienting the functioning of ITIs and Polytechnics and each ITIs/ Polytechnics to have a "Sector in Focus"; and for Institutional arrangement for skill development - West Bengal State Skill Development Mission (WBSDM) and Paschim Banga Society for Skills Development (PBSSD).

Currently a dynamic employment bank is being created in the state with cooperation among three government departments – MSME, technical education and labour. It is envisaged to develop the state as the skill capital of India.

Issues Discussed during the meeting:

1. Promotion opportunity in Rural Areas in Primary Schools –The Chairman asked for a check on the current promotion policy and suggestion of ways by which it could be improvised. Performance based promotion for teachers are to be implemented and the designations of teachers need to be renamed. It was noted

that there is not much difference between the designations of a teacher when he joins and when he retires. This could be a de-motivating factor.

2. Pay of Primary school teachers – It was mentioned that the grade pay and Pay Band of primary school teachers need to be re-looked into. As per data available the following pay bands are in effect:
 - a. *Primary Teacher*: Pay band - Rs.5,400 – 25,200; Grade Pay – Rs. 2,200 (for untrained teachers) & Grade Pay- Rs. 2,600 (for trained teachers).
 - b. *Secondary Teacher*: Pay band - For Assistant Teacher (Graduate teachers without Hons.): Scale - Rs.7,100 - 37,600, Grade Pay – Rs. 4,100; With Honours: Scale - Rs. 9,000 - 40,500, Grade Pay – Rs.4,600; With PG qualifications: Scale - Rs. 9,000-40,500, Grade Pay- Rs. 4,700.
 - c. *Asst. Head Master (with Honours)* Same scale, Grade Pay – Rs. 4,900; *Asst. Head Master (Post Graduate)* Same scale, Grade Pay – Rs.5,100
 - d. *Head Master*: Pay Scale: Rs.9000 - 40500, Grade Pay – 5600.

3. Qualifying marks and number of subjects for College Admission – The Chairman suggested that an applicant's marks(X+II) for the primary subject for which he/she has applied, should be considered and given maximum weightage along with 1 more subject's marks should be looked into. In the other subjects the applicant just needs to have minimum qualifying marks/grades in order to be qualified for admission. The current requirement of 4 subjects for qualifying may seem unwarranted. For eg. an applicant who has applied for Physics Hons. needs to be judged on his/her physics marks and 1 more which may be Mathematics or Chemistry. This will allow students to focus on the subjects they like and develop in-depth knowledge in those subjects.

4. MSME clusters – The Chairman suggested that there needs to be specific institutions which would focus on training students for the MSME cluster. The MSME cluster has to recommend the required skills which are needed for

successful individuals from the industry and then accordingly connect with the higher education institutions to identify such skills and talents amongst students. These students can further be recommended for MSME institutions in order to chart out their effective career plans. To enable the growth of various sectors of industries in West Bengal, such focused institutions needs to be established.

5. Transfer policy of teachers – The Chairman sought to know about the current transfer policy of the school teachers. It was noted that some teachers made use of their political connections for a transfer in urban location after getting appointment in rural schools. It was necessary to implement a “No Transfer” policy in the first five years. Post five year term, an incentive could be worked out or awarded in a way of transfer which would serve as a reward, but strictly on a performance basis.

Suggestions Discussed:

1. The existing educational GIS available with the West Bengal School Education Department should be maximally utilised and also enlarged.
2. A map having the distribution of schools superposed on the habitation map should be prepared so as to enable planning setting up new schools.
3. Tele Class rooms – The Chairman suggested to imbibe technological advancements into classrooms with the use of video conferencing facilities and other hi-tech devices. He asked for a map showing the mobile towers with 3G facilities across the state which in-turn could be brought into use for e-teaching centers. He mentioned the necessity to have television programmes for differently abled children which would be valuable learning & development. Also digital materials are required to be created for text books and they are to be made accessible through websites.

4. Tablets for school children – The Chairman emphasized exploring the financial viability of issuing smart learning devices to students at school and college level. This would enable students from rural areas to use technology at a very early age and hence get comfortable with the changing trends in the early phases of their lives.
5. Development Centre – The Chairman suggested that Bengal should aspire to become a development centre for ITES companies like Google & Facebook which encourage *disruptive creativity*. This point was discussed as West Bengal is known to have an abundance of creative young people who are yet to be tapped. Kolkata has always been known for art but there is a major lack of Art schools in the state. The maximum number of artists at their best can be found during Durga Pujas implementing their skills at the pandals. Practitioners need to be trained and nurtured so that their talent can be recognised and due recognition can be given. West Bengal can take up the leadership in public art and create a major economic activity in this area.
6. Alumni – There was a suggestion for schools to take active interest in the formation of Alumni Association which will enable a better connect with successful past students and the present management. Some of the better known schools and colleges like Presidency College and St. Xaviers have an active Alumni Association which helps their Alma Mater in more ways than one.
7. Mobile Laboratory – The Chairman mentioned about the Karnataka Model of mobile science laboratory and its replication possibilities which are to be worked on.
8. National Knowledge Commission – There have been some knowledge commissions which were set up in the past. The Chairman suggested to run a

check if any of the National Knowledge Commission's directives and recommendations been implemented in the state

9. Industrial Training Institutes (ITI), Art & Design Centers and Hospital accommodating Training Institutes – There was a discussion about very few ITI's and Art & Design centers being present in the state of WB. This leads on to create a lack of industry professionals. As the BPO industry has been thriving in this state, the Chairman suggested to establish some BPO/Call Center Training Institutes which would help nurture the required skill set. The Chairman also mentioned about the possibilities to convert a part of hospitals into colleges. This would also create medical tourism and if properly implemented, then the state could be the hub of creating nurses. Creating opportunities for similar drop-outs in the domains of para-medics or nurses (non-professional category) could be yet another possibility.
10. Language Barrier – The Chairman drew the attention of the Commission towards implementing technology and creating a translatable medium which would solve the language barrier amongst students of the state. He emphasised that thinking in mother tongue should be encouraged while communication skills in English should be improved.
11. Performance Measurement – The Chairman mentioned to create a performance measurement strategy initiative which would follow the PDCA (Plan Do Act Check) steps. This will help in understanding the organisational restructuring that is required and the kind of barriers that are faced and needed to be worked on. This could be done without criticising the past and learning from the present institutions around the world making them as the benchmark. It was discussed that teachers in schools should have a more competitive and defined career development path. It was also suggested that special promotion incentives should be put in place particularly for teachers serving in the rural areas.

Members also deliberated on taking a re-look at the designations and replacing the current classification of Assistant Teacher, Assistant Headmaster and Headmaster with more motivating nomenclature such as Senior Teacher, Associate Teacher, Principal Teacher, in addition to Asst. Headmaster and Headmaster.

12. Infrastructure enhancements and Solar & Alternate Source of Energy in schools and colleges - The Chairman mentioned that the possibilities of implementing solar and alternate source of energy should also be checked.

13. Crowd Funding – In this model a large number of people contribute small amount of money for a common cause. This is the Cooperative Model while West Bengal currently follows the State Model (i.e. public funded system) and the Business Model (i.e. private funded system through trusts) of education. Examples of this Cooperative model can be seen in Ramkrishna Mission and Tirupati University. This needs to be explored as a potential way out for the education institutes to gather funds.

Some Highlights of Discussion:

- During the high school examinations, there should be assessment on a smaller number of subjects so as to highlight the inherent interest of the student in a given area.
- Call centers and IT-enabled services could be a useful option for school drop-outs. Corrective courses to equip such students in the domain could be looked into.
- Creating opportunities for similar drop-outs in the domains of para-medics or nurses (non-professional category) could be yet another possibility.
- In order to chart out effective career plans, it is necessary to study, ascertain and document the growth of various sectors of industry in West Bengal including MSMEs.
- During the planning process, it has to be ensured that the indigenous industries of the state do not suffer because of supply of manpower. For example migration of plumbers to high-paid assignments in the Middle East has left Indian metros like

Delhi with a severe dearth of such workers. Effective measures need to be taken to avoid such a scenario in Bengal.

- Along with the aforesaid industrial sectors, focus should also be given on industries that require high creativity and low process oriented.

Educational transformation to achieve the above goals would require disruptive thinking through entirely non-conventional methods.

WBEC

Record notes of meeting with selected representatives from Schools - 18.01.2014

Venue: West Bengal State Council Conference Room at 2pm.

Members present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari – Chairman
2. Dr. P.K. Das
3. Headmaster – Mitra Institution
4. Headmaster – South Subarban Main
5. Asst. Teacher – Ballygunje Govt. High
6. Vice Principal – South Point
7. Headmaster – R.K. Mission Rahara
8. Dr. Papiya Nandi - JBNSTS
9. Dr. Krishna Hajra - JBNSTS
10. Dr. Amit Sanyal – Spl Secretary, Higher Education
11. Secretary – Al Ameen Mission
12. Dr. D. Bandopadhyay – CGCRI
13. Mr. Kumar Shankar Dutta – KPMG
14. Mr. Rajarshi Dasgupta - KPMG

Issues initially taken up for General Discussion (without any decision):

1. Pay Bands of Teachers were reviewed: The different pay bands of the teachers at various hierarchical levels were discussed.
 - e. *Primary Teacher*: Pay band - Rs.5,400 – 25,200; Grade Pay – Rs. 2,200 (for untrained teachers) & Grade Pay- Rs. 2,600 (for trained teachers).
 - f. *Secondary Teacher*: Pay band - For Assistant Teacher (Graduate teachers without Hons.): Scale - Rs.7,100 - 37,600, Grade Pay – Rs. 4,100; With Honours: Scale - Rs. 9,000 - 40,500, Grade Pay – Rs.4,600; With PG qualifications: Scale - Rs. 9,000-40,500, Grade Pay- Rs. 4,700.
 - g. *Asst. Head Master (with Honours)* Same scale, Grade Pay – Rs. 4,900; *Asst. Head Master (Post Graduate)* Same scale, Grade Pay – Rs.5,100
 - h. *Head Master*: Pay Scale: Rs.9000 - 40500, Grade Pay – 5600.

2. Focus of Teachers – The Chairman mentioned that with the advent of technology, the correct focus and role of teachers were gradually shifting from being mentors to facilitators. He added that Google in today's day and age has come up to be the actual teacher. A teacher should ideally help in identifying students with special needs or those who are differently abled and also help and identify talent and creative students. This would help such children to be nurtured in a way which would be most effective for them.
3. Enrolment of suburban and rural school children – It was brought to the notice of the Chairman that the count of the suburban and rural school children have been depleting. The mid-day meal program didn't work towards its actual intent of attracting children to the schools. Children attended school only during the time when meals were served.
4. Teachers' motivation needs to be increased. Discipline among teachers is becoming a major issue. They are more concerned about their service conditions rather than the service which people expect of them.
5. Internet access of schools – Schools should have a proper infrastructure for a computer lab with internet facilities.
6. Lottery system affecting students' quality – Ramkrishna Mission expressed severe disapproval of the lottery system as it was heavily affecting the quality of students and hence maintaining discipline was coming across as a big problem.
7. Scarcity of English faculty in schools – A severe scarcity of English faculty was felt by almost all the schools.

8. Focused training of the teachers and headmasters – This would engage in training the trainers and enabling them to be better facilitators/administrators & faculties.

The Decisions arrived at the following points:

1. Recognition of learning and other disabilities among children should be properly addressed.
2. The retired teachers of excellence who are still able physically and mentally, are to be engaged into Govt. and Govt-aided schools as a policy, if required.
3. The highly motivated and committed teachers are to be rewarded without putting pressure on public exchequer. The reward may be symbolic. An example of such a reward may be being invited by the Governor for tea, was suggested.
4. A process to be developed which would allow flow of funds from Missionary to Non Missionary and general educational institutions.
5. Performance appraisal of teachers and online self-appraisal of teachers should be introduced which would make them feel connected and empowered.
6. Value education as a subject was suggested to be mandatorily introduced in schools.
7. Various teaching and non-teaching staff posts were suggested to be restructured.
8. GIS mapping of private schools was suggested be done in order to know its spatial spread and to correct geographical imbalances.
9. CCRT (Centre for Cultural Resources & Training) training for teachers was mentioned to be introduced.

10. The importance of creating Magnet schools was discussed along with possible ways of changing the existing pedagogic methods.
11. Online aptitude tests for the students were needed to be introduced which would help a candidate in future academic and professional fronts.
12. There was a suggestion to convert alternate Saturdays from a half working to a full working day. This would increase the productivity level of the schools on an overall basis.
13. It was decided that teachers with a Ph.D are to be recognised and incentives may be offered to them for acquiring such degrees. This would help in enhancing the quality of education.
14. There was a concurrence on implementing mandatory demonstration classes for teachers as a part of their recruitment process. The demonstration would be graded and a score would be awarded to the candidates which would form as a basis for their recruitment.
15. During the High School examinations, there should be an assessment on a smaller number of subjects so as to highlight the inherent interest of the student in a given area.
16. Call centres and IT-enabled services could be a useful option for school drop-outs. Corrective courses to equip such students in the domain could be looked into.

Additional Points discussed and decisions taken:

1. During the planning process, it has to be ensured that the indigenous industries of the State do not suffer because of supply of manpower. For example, migration of plumbers to high-paid assignments in the Middle East has left Indian metros with

a severe dearth of such workers. Effective measures need to be taken to avoid such a scenario in Bengal.

2. Along with the aforesaid industrial sectors, focus should also be given on industries that require high creativity and low process oriented outcome.
3. Educational transformation to achieve the above goals would require disruptive thinking through entirely non-conventional methods. This should be kept in mind.

WBEC

Record Notes for Meeting with Selected University Vice Chancellors held on 17.02.14 at Nano Technology Centre, Calcutta University

Background:

The Chairman, along with some members of WBEC, held an interactive meeting with the Vice Chancellors (or their representatives) of the following universities:

- University of Calcutta
- Jadavpur University
- Aliah University
- North Bengal University
- Vidyasagar University
- Presidency University
- West Bengal State University
- Sidho Kanho Birsa University, Purulia

Four members of the Commission namely Prof A.T. Khan, Prof. S. Bandyopadhyay, Prof. A. Sengupta and Dr. P.K. Das were also present in addition to Special Secretary Shri Amit Sanyal

At the very outset, the representatives of all the universities identified the following pressing problems which need to be attended to by the WBEC

Identification of Single Most Pressing Problem that needs to be solved:

<i>University</i>	<i>Perceived Problem</i>
Jadavpur University	No platform where faculty and students from different disciplines can interact with the University
Calcutta University	Too many affiliated colleges need to be managed
Vidyasagar University	Autonomy of the University is not adequate
Presidency University	Infrastructure is not sufficient to cater to the increased activities and requirement.

	Funding for infrastructure augmentation is not satisfactory
Aliah University	Disparity in pay structure between state and central institutions is an impediment factor in attracting good faculty
North Bengal University	Filling up of vacant teaching/non-teaching positions is long overdue
West Bengal State University	Recognition under Section 12B is yet to be obtained
Sidho Kanho Birsa University	Recognition under Section 12B is yet to be obtained

Inputs from Individual Universities:

1. Calcutta University:

- a. The university is too large and trimming the university to make it a smarter entity is to be explored
- b. Implementation of the adjunct faculty system, that has already been mulled by the UGC and is yet to be accepted at the state government level. This would also offset the acute shortage of qualified faculty in certain disciplines.
- c. The decision on whether to resort to the centralised online admission system as suggested under RUSA need to be taken.
- d. A mechanism needs to be evolved so as to provide equivalence to foreign degrees.
- e. A patent cell should be set up at state level in order to bolster the IPR scenario of the various universities
- f. The ICT infrastructure in universities and colleges need to be augmented and the expanse of the National Knowledge Network in the state widened.
- g. New entrants into the college and university education systems should be made to undergo orientation training. A West Bengal Teacher Academy could be set up for this purpose.
- h. The universities and colleges should be integrated into innovation clusters so as to spur creativity in the region.
- i. Institution of 'block research grants' for cutting edge research

- j. Develop a mechanism of providing start-up grants for new faculty.

2. Jadavpur University

- a. Inter-disciplinary education needs to be given a priority
- b. Lack of centralised data for university performance indicators is a major hurdle in monitoring that needs to be addressed

3. Presidency University:

- a. The university relies on three focal points namely intertwined approach towards teaching and research; focus on building an innovation university; and adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to education.
- b. Too much reliance on precedence in various administrative and academic practices has been a major impediment in delivering excellence.
- c. The university is keen to organise a conference on best practices for officers from the world wide context in order to make the university procedures more competitive
- d. Performance management may be undertaken by the Harvard model i.e. 40% weightage to teaching; 40% weightage to research and 20% weightage to contribution in university affairs.
- e. Some new categories of manpower such as Chief Digital Officer, Director of Planning and Development etc. are envisaged.

4. Vidyasagar University

- a. The autonomy to the university should be substantially enhanced
- b. A comprehensive mechanism for quality control in teaching and research to be designed and put in place.

5. North Bengal University:

- a. The university has identified some focus areas for North Bengal around which the educational programmes of the university are structured. These areas are tea, pharmacy, medicinal plants, agro-processing, tourism, financial services and retail management.
- b. Employability of students is currently restricted to schools, colleges, universities and also in the legal sector, banking sector and the corporate sector to some extent.
- c. Infrastructure and power are among the major impediments of the university.

- d. The university envisages setting up technology faculty and also a school of performing arts.
- e. New categories of manpower e.g. System Analyst is envisaged to be recruited in order to put in place a robust data system.
- f. Currently a very large number of PG pass-outs (which is about 1400 annually) join the school service, with enrolment for further higher education and research being dismally low. In some disciplines such as management or tea science, there is a 100% local placement.
- g. Students intending to enter research after the PG courses are often faced with problems of fellowship as there is an inordinate delay in release of JRF by the UGC. This has a demotivating effect on the students. Many time, they opt out of the fellowship.

6. Sidho Kanho Birsa University

- a. New universities being set up by the state government should be provided with adequate piece of land
- b. Location of the campus should be such that it is accessible to the students, teachers and other employees.
- c. The university is contemplating setting up courses in physical education and performing arts

7. West Bengal State University

- a. Distance education would be started soon
- b. Location of the university is an impediment to attract good students and faculty

Some General Recommendations that could be made based on the discussion with Vice Chancellors:

- Due to shortage of faculty and requirement of UGC rule 12B (Minimum 7 faculty per department), individual departments in universities could be replaced by schools e.g. various language departments could be merged into School of Languages, especially for new institutions, in the line of JNU.
- Need analysis across various domains being taught in universities are to be carried out. Such data should provide information about market demand of various disciplines, job availability across various disciplines, mapping production versus requirement of Master's and PhDs in various disciplines etc.
- Each university to develop a specific sports focus.
- Creation of centralised inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary facilities. Explore the potential benefit of up gradation of CU and JU to central universities.

- Trim Calcutta University to make it a smarter entity
- Institute adjunct faculty position in the universities drawn from various National Laboratories in the state.
- Set up the West Bengal Teacher Academy in the premises of North Bengal University in the line of LBSNA administration.
- The planning for location of the universities should be revisited and drastic changes even amounting to relocation of universities under extreme cases should be considered as an alternative, in order to have effective eco system.
- Different metrics should be evolved for various universities. For example Presidency University, CU and JU should be assessed only through production of excellence and its ability to retain students who would have otherwise gone abroad for PhD. Appropriate yardstick should be evolved for every university.

Issues to Address:

- There is an overall concurrence to enhance autonomy in universities and also trim the universities by shedding affiliated colleges. One of the ways of doing this is to encourage formation of autonomous colleges. However, all colleges are not geared to take the status of autonomous colleges. Thus the mechanism of implementing this decentralisation continues to remain a challenge unless new universities are created including various clusters of colleges.

Like Cambridge University model, faculties of the University departments to be affiliated to specific affiliated colleges of the universities, in order to foster research collaboration and impart teaching at higher level.

Record Notes for Meeting with Selected College Principals held on 18th February, 2014 at IACS, Kolkata

Members Present

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari
2. Dr. Abu.T. Khan
3. Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay
4. Dr. K.Rudra
5. Dr. P.K. Das
6. Shri. A. Sengupta

Others Present

1. Dr. D.S. Ray, Director IACS
2. Dr. D. Bandyopadhyay
3. Dr. Amit. Sanyal – Spl Secrerary, Dept. Of Higher Education
4. Prof. Malayendu Saha – Vice Chairman, W.B. State Council of Higher Education
5. Rajarshi Dasgupta - KPMG

Background:

The Chairman held an interactive meeting with the heads (or their representatives) of the following colleges:

- i. Chandrakona College
- ii. Kalyani Govt Engineering College
- iii. Sorojini Naidu College for Women
- iv. Barasat Government College
- v. Mekliganj College
- vi. Hooghly Moshin College
- vii. Institute of Engineering and Management
- viii. Salesian College Darjeeling
- ix. Heritage Institute of Technology
- x. Asutosh College
- xi. College of Leather Technology
- xii. MUC Women's College
- xiii. Vivekananda College, Madhyamgram

The above colleges span both the general degree and engineering colleges; as also government colleges, aided colleges and private colleges.

The following districts were covered during the consultation:

- North 24 Parganas
- Cooch Behar
- Kolkata
- Hooghly
- Darjeeling
- Nadia
- Paschim Midnapur
- Burdwan

Some Overarching Features and Issues for Colleges:

- Most of the colleges make multiple use of infrastructure - the same building being utilised for morning, day and evening colleges.
- There is an over-burdening of colleges with students (usually 3000 to 4000), without commensurate number of available full-time faculty members.
- There is no mechanism in which the college can restrict admission. In some cases, more than 2000 students are admitted annually in the pass course itself.
- Delinking of pass course from the colleges if possible was suggested.
- Politicisation of college education is the single biggest problem that needs to be removed in order to inculcate excellence.
- The current structure of college Governing Bodies is anomalous. In some cases, for small colleges, with 6-7 faculty members, often 4-5 of them are members of Governing Body. Restructuring of the Governing Bodies is a matter to be explored.
- Autonomy of Principals needs to be augmented substantially.
- The current practice of Teacher in Charge in colleges (where Principals are not in position) needs to be replaced by a designation such as Principal in Charge.
- Coping with student absenteeism is an important issue.
- Lack of coordination of classroom teaching with the examination system
- Coping with the problem of 'idle teachers' in certain disciplines i.e. teachers who do not have adequate classes due to lack of students.
- College principals should be freed from the responsibility of conducting student union elections.

Inputs from Colleges:

1. Chandrakona College

- a. There are 12 departments, 7 running courses, 22 sanctioned posts and 8 of such incumbents in position. The student strength is more than 3000.

Thus, there is a imbalance of teacher number vis-à-vis students and also a large number of positions that are not filled up.

- b. Idle teachers in some departments exist

2. Kalyani Government College

- a. Acute faculty shortage (43 incumbents in position out of 87 sanctioned posts)
- b. It is felt there should be a differential treatment given to engineering colleges vis-à-vis general degree colleges

3. Sorojini Naidu College

- a. Erosion of brand as a result of migration of the college from Calcutta University to West Bengal State University
- b. Vocational course on communicative English has run very successfully in the college which is proposed to be wrapped up by the university.
- c. There is a need for good quality teachers
- d. Programmes for English skill improvement should be taken up
- e. Adequate stress should be given to inter-disciplinary topics
- f. Online knowledgebase in college should be developed
- g. Appropriate measures should be adopted for involving parents in the college education.

4. Barasat Government College

- a. There is an increment of 10% seats for SC and ST plus 17% increment for OBC seats each year. This had a detrimental effect on the overall educational standard of the college with regard to worsening of student-teacher ratio.
- b. Teacher exchange programme between colleges need to be practiced in order to address the diverse and specialized faculty needs.
- c. Heritage government colleges should be upgraded appropriately through grant of autonomy.
- d. Introduction of uniform syllabi for undergraduate level should be done. Currently, there is a significant degree of dichotomy.
- e. Provision of e-journal facility for PG teaching colleges
- f. Provide mechanism of compulsory training in industry as part of the college curriculum
- g. Resort to online admission procedure
- h. Switch to five day week with abolition of the off day concept.

- i. Students Union should be renamed as Students' Council and its functions made more focused
- j. Currently, the financial powers of the government college functionaries are extremely out-dated (Rs 15000 for Principals; Rs 25,000 for DPI; Rs 30,000 for Secretary; beyond which concurrence of the Finance Ministry is required). The financial powers of the government college Principals should be enhanced.
- k. Student fees should be restructured so as to make them competitive with the present trends in the market
- l. Specialised centres in colleges such as on chromosome biology, medicinal and aromatic plants etc should be established.
- m. A government degree college should be set up in the South 24 Parganas district.

5. Mekliganj College

- a. There is an acute shortage of teachers. There are only 4 teachers in all for 5 honours and 8 pass course subjects.
- b. The college has a predominance of students from the weaker sections of the population; and thus is instrumental in delivering inclusive education.
- c. The college has no infrastructure and sanitation facilities.

6. Hooghly Mohsin College

- a. There is a fading glory of the government colleges as they are no longer the preferred destination for students and teachers.
- b. The general morning course which sees a poor attendance (around 25%) nevertheless ruins the ambience of the college. In contrast, the UG honours and PG classes attract good students.
- c. 50% of the teachers are committed and there is no mechanism to differentiate between performers and non-performers in the regular performance appraisal. This is an undesirable trend.
- d. The scope of curriculum planning at the college level is very limited. Present curriculum structure lacks multi-disciplinary approach
- e. Institute-institute and institute-industry partnerships need to be developed
- f. University examination schedules are quite long and often hampers the teaching schedule in colleges

7. Institute of Engineering and Management

- a. There is no major problem regarding faculty number, student enrolment etc.
- b. Administrative intervention into academic matters is an impediment
- c. Assignment solving for all students should be made mandatory

- d. The entry level of faculty should be regulated so that the overall motivation profile of the faculty in engineering colleges is increased and remains high. This is an essential pre-requisite for improving quality education.

8. Salesian College Darjeeling

- a. This is one of the oldest missionary institutions that has no public funding
- b. State government support is required in order to retain quality
- c. New models of self-financing need to be evolved. It is felt that courses that have larger market requirement should be self-financed while those which have academic and/or social-good requirement should be state financed.
- d. Digitisation of university procedures shall energise the educational system substantially.

9. Heritage Institute of Technology

- a. There is no funding problem as the financing is through trustee board. Also, faculty number, faculty retention and student teacher ratio are no major problems
- b. Lack of funding in research is an impediment. As this is a private institution, it is not considered at par with government institutions while competing for funds from government agencies.
- c. Fees of the college are around Rs 10-75 thousands per year. This is lower compared with the other states which charge around Rs 1.5 lakhs per year. 10% free studentship is provided which is equal to the number of students in the management quota.
- d. Going by the national average, the requirement of engineering seats in West Bengal is 1.38 lakhs, while the current availability is only 38,000 (i.e. one-fourth the number). In spite of this, 16,000 seats i.e. 50% of the available remains vacant. It is important therefore to understand and determine the cause of this discrepancy.
- e. Lateral entry into undergraduate engineering programmes is fraught with inconsistency. Entry from polytechnics has been a key problem as often such students are not equipped with the requisite background in mathematics. The cause of this is probably the student counselling process, where adequate clarification about the requirements of various engineering disciplines is not provided.
- f. Many accreditation anomalies exist that need to be solved.

10. Asutosh College

- a. There are around 6000 students with 24 honours subjects and 4 PG subjects plus diploma, distance and certificate courses
- b. There is a reasonable faculty and non-faculty shortage out of the 58 sanctioned positions.
- c. Rationalisation of fee structure in the colleges is required
- d. The concept of community colleges and meta colleges to be evolved in the state
- e. Courses should have trans-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary nature along with presence of digital learning initiatives.
- f. Evaluation linked to teaching learning processes need to be evolved
- g. Autonomy to be given to colleges to build upon a framework syllabus that the affiliating body shall provide
- h. Evolve the concept of cluster colleges
- i. Introduce newer subjects at undergraduate level.
- j. Academic auditing in colleges
- k. Newer genera of administrative personnel to manage college affairs such as finance, planning, student affairs, welfare etc.

11. College of Leather Technology

- a. Mechanism for intra and inter-university credit transfer system should be put in place

12. MUC Women's College

- a. Absence of coordination between teachers and examination system proves to be detrimental
- b. It is required that the actual span of academic year during which classes are held be substantially increased
- c. The practice of periodic tests should be encouraged
- d. Detailed statistics for various educational indicators should be developed and appropriately disseminated
- e. Motivational programmes such as 'best teacher award' could be instituted
- f. Research should be given its rightful status in undergraduate level
- g. Digital class rooms should be made a routine in all colleges

Some Recommendations

- **Rationalising Entry into Colleges:**
 - Creation of job opportunities after the high school level so that smaller number of students comes for joining the pass course in colleges.

- Setting up of an All Bengal Meta University where students desirous of pursuing pure pass course might register and undertake courses without attending classes.
- **Rationalising Fee Structure:**
 - Differential fee structure might be conceived where fees would be less for students who wish to undertake courses in distance/e-learning mode while higher fees would be charged for those who attend classes physically. This would enable improvement in ambience in colleges.
 - The financial subsidy model currently followed in colleges need to be revised. As the government is unable to cater to a pay for the vast number of colleges, it is suggested that only a few colleges might be kept under direct government control. A large number of the remaining institutions might be moved into the private sector where the students would be required to pay fees at market rates. In case of needy students, who have proven track record in pursuing education, government might provide 'fee vouchers' based on which the college shall admit/continue students in the subsidised category. Such vouchers shall be redeemed by the college from the government directly and the government shall transfer the subsidy funds directly to the colleges proportional to the number of students admitted against vouchers. 25% of the total value of the voucher shall be provided during admission and 75% during pass-out.
- **Rationalising Availability of Faculty:**
 - Initiate a National Teacher Scheme whereby retired or in-service teachers who are willing to devote time could be identified across disciplines and attached to colleges of their choice /or as per felt needs. Government shall fund this scheme and initiate a one year pilot with Rs 60 crore allocation.
 - Restoration in accountability of teachers and Principals of colleges.
 - Lessons taught by eminent teachers could be telecast across the entire college network.
- **Rationalising Choice of Subjects:**
 - Linking subjects to be taken up by the students should be rationalised and the design of the total portfolio available should be decided by the contemporary need.
- **Redesigning of College Organisational Structure:**

Cluster colleges should be established. Those colleges having faculty strength below 30 should be merged into defined clusters. Components of clusters should share faculty, infrastructure etc and come under a single Management Council that governs the entire cluster. The Clusters should be endowed with smart class rooms and high speed Internet connectivity so as to effectively communicate and operate in cyber space.

WBEC

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission Members on
19.02.14

Venue: Atma Ram Hall, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari – Chairman
2. Abu T. Khan
3. John Felix Raj
4. Asokendu Sengupta
5. Kalyan Rudra
6. Swami Shubhakarananda
7. Swami Suvirananda
8. Susmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
9. Supti Pandey
10. Prabir K. Das

Others Present:

1. Amit Sanyal – Special Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Principal Scientist, CGCRI
3. Kamal Dasgupta – Director CGCRI
4. Ajith Basu – Chief Program Executive, Agastya International Foundation
5. Rajarshi Dasgupta – KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman. He briefed the Board about the meetings with the Vice Chancellors and College Principals that were held on 17th February and 18th February respectively. He made a special mention of the Salesian College,

Darjeeling and appreciated the college for publishing a college journal about humanities and science. The House appreciated the need of proliferating a model where spirituality and education are intertwined into an institution to create a centre of excellence with holistic discipline.

The Chairman expressed his desire to utilise the expertise and services of Dr Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Principal Scientist, CSIR-CGCRI , from time to time in the meetings of the Commission.

The Commission also noted that some general degree colleges have a massive difference between the students enrolled and students actually attending classes. But Principals of such colleges preferred not having a full attendance else they would face a shortage of space due to lack of classrooms! The House realised that steps are to be initiated for resolving this issue. It was decided that an interim report from the Education Commission would be prepared for the State Government in the month of April 2014, mentioning discreet suggestions and action points that could be implemented immediately to address the present bottlenecks.

Agenda No.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 17.01.2014

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections. Authenticity of the figures given in the minutes was cross checked and verified. KPMG was instructed to verify the data recorded in the minutes. It was suggested that the sources of data need to be given as reference in each case. While discussing the minutes of the previous meeting it came forth that one of the recommendations regarding school level HR management could be to incentivise the transfer process. Thus, teachers employed in rural schools could seek transfer to urban locations if they so desire, provided their performance is good.

Agenda no. 2: Presentation by Agastya foundation on Mobile Laboratory

Mr. Ajith Basu, Chief Program Executive of Agastya Foundation was invited by the Commission to present Agastya's contribution to Karnataka and other States' Education Sector. Agastya International Foundation (1999) is an Indian education trust and non-profit organisation based in Bangalore, whose mission is to spark curiosity, nurture creativity and build confidence among economically disadvantaged children and teachers in rural India. It runs hands-on science education programmes in rural and semi-urban regions across 12 Indian states. By making practical, hands-on science education accessible to rural government schools, Agastya aims to transform and stimulate the thought process of underprivileged children and teachers. It streams its vision and mission through a variety of innovative methods and channels including a Creativity Lab located on a 172-acre campus near Bangalore, 80 Mobile Science Labs (Vans) and 29 Science Centres. It has implemented

programs for over 1 million children (50% girls) and 500 teachers from vulnerable and economically disadvantaged communities. Currently Govt. of Karnataka has asked Agastya to build 5 campuses to create hands-on Science Education Eco System.

The main problems that Agastya deals with are:

- Lack of School Labs and access to quality education
- Lack of hands-on methods of teaching and learning
- Rote-based learning discouraging creativity and problem solving
- Uninspired students

It takes Agastya 3 interactions (1 interaction is a full 1 day exposure) to create a basic awareness in a child. It instills a certain level of curiosity in the child which acts as the main catalyst for further development. The target is to create leadership qualities in the child which would enable the child to interact with his/her peers and imbibe creativity skills.

Agastya also has Lab on a Bike and Lab in a Box programme to reach remote locations where a van may not be accessible. These boxes are left in a school for two weeks for the teachers to do a follow-up programme. A full set of boxes cost about 1.5lacs which consist of 11 boxes. The main challenge here being the distribution system and training of the school teachers. A mobile bike costs around 4.5 lacs and a mobile van costs around 22 lacs, including capital and operational expenditures. Agastya was mentioned in the National Knowledge Commission report. The organisational revenue model of Agastya works on a partnership between their benefactors and the State government. The entire capital expenditure is mainly funded by the government and the basic operational and day to day admin costs are borne by the benefactors. Agastya has started work also in Punjab and Bihar.

Bengal being very rich in Art & Craft, the Commission agreed that a Mobile Art Labs capable of reaching the interiors of Bengal disseminating skills related to this field is recommendable. Specific art centers need to be mapped where natural artisans exist and practice art that has commercial implication and economic viability. Dr. Debashis Bandyopadhyay mentioned that under the MSME Cluster Development Programme, around 10 craft centers have already been mapped.

Mr. Basu of Agastya was asked to submit a comprehensive plan and budget estimate to execute the entire eco-system as per Agastya's terms. Moreover, he was requested to submit a proposal in conjunction with Ramakrishna Mission for replicating the mobile laboratory

model that has been successfully implemented in many States of India. Time lines would be around 2 weeks to prepare the preliminary concept and 4 weeks henceforth to work with the RKM. Thus, a proposal could be ready within 6 weeks.

While the mobile lab initiative of Agastya could be followed up, some of the existing infrastructure could be suitably upgraded and/or re-oriented to provide hands-on training in identified areas of science. In this context he was further asked to submit a plan/ proposal for the creation of an Eco study laboratory/observatory at Eco park, Rajarhat, New Town, where students may undertake specific ecological studies This might be taken up in a pilot mode and depending on success, the model would be appropriately replicated elsewhere in the state.

Agenda No. 3: Discussion on the Action Taken Report

Resolution: Noted and approved.

Agenda No.4: Confirmation of the proposed structure and contents for the Interim Report.

It has been decided that in the “Structure of the Report” there should be an additional section on ‘Present Bottlenecks and how they can be removed’.

Resolution: The proposed structure of the Report was approved with the note that ‘Specific recommendations for effective implementations would be made by the end of April 2014. It was felt that by April, there should be some action points suggested by the Commission that can be implemented by the government immediately without waiting for the final report.

Agenda No. 5: Discussion on obtaining students input through social media network

Deferred

Agenda No. 6: Discussion on requirements for the creation of EduCom website

The Member Secretary, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education reported that quotations for the website has been invited through Council’s Notice Board as well as Council’s website. The same would be opened on 20.02.2014. All members were requested to give inputs on the content of the proposed website to the following email ID: amitsanyal34@gmail.com and pkdas.ms@gmail.com as early as possible.

Agenda No. 7: Discussion On School Education based on reports sent by

a. Ms. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay

- b. Ms. Supti Pandey
- c. Ms. Renu Barman
- d. Fr. J. Felix Raj

Discussions deferred as two of the members were absent.

Agenda No. 8: Discussion on Higher Education based on report sent by

- a. Fr. J. Felix Raj
- b. Mr. Ashokendu Sengupta and Dr. Kalyan Rudra

In view of the discussion with schools, universities and colleges, it is felt that while school education and university education are by and large okay, disruptive intervention is required for the college education.

The house discussed on their inputs and noted as follows:

1. Fee Structure –It was felt that colleges need to generate more resources for infrastructure. The commission noted that there is a huge difference between fee structures of schools (under private management) and State-aided colleges in West Bengal. This was due to a reasonable flexibility that was allowed to private schools to structure their tuition fees according to their needs. For example, an average private school charges around Rs. 1000 per month whereas an average government aided college charged less than Rs. 80 per month. It was suggested that students who can afford to pay higher tuition fees at school can afford to pay higher fees at college also. There was also a suggestion to link tuition fees with the attendance of a student. This has two facets: 1. Principals of colleges need not submit false data on attendance while sending the forms to the university before a particular examination and 2. The students may be more interested towards classes as they would have to pay more if they are absent from classes. One of the reasons for the extreme disorderliness of college education is the anomalous fee structure. It is ironical that the same people who are paying hefty fees for school education are not ready to pay for the college education. It was imperative to judge the economic background of a child by the school fees being paid and the college fees should be comparable to the last school fees paid. Such a system would enable removing the college fee anomaly. This matter needs to be discussed with the education ministry and college authorities.

2. Approach towards Higher Education: The approach towards higher education should be demand driven compared to primary and secondary education which should be driven by the mandate to create good citizens. It is therefore important to map the places where those with UG/PG/PhD degrees are employable. These should take into account industries, public/private sector, MSMEs and so on. The numbers for admission at various levels of

higher education should be fixed accordingly in order to ensure maximal absorption of the pass-outs.

3. College Education – It was mentioned that college education in Bengal lags far behind compared at a national level. Unlike School Education and University Education, some colleges in Bengal struggle with a Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 1:300. There are various constraints for many colleges to get 7 faculties and a large number of colleges are run by part-time teachers only. It is also a matter of fact that many such colleges also apply for introduction of new subjects. Immediate action needs to be taken for filling up of all vacant posts in colleges which have been sanctioned by the Finance Department.

Therefore, it was resolved that the Higher Education Department be requested to primarily focus on this problem and initiate immediate action otherwise the State would not be able to retain the best talents, post their school education.

4. Education through Spirituality – It has been noted that education through spirituality is a major solution for injecting values and improving the current status of the State's education sector. Fr. Felix Raj was requested to arrange a meeting with the heads of all Christian Missionary College to discuss this issue.

5. Demand & Supply – The house agreed to the necessity of a thorough mapping of the total number of jobs that would be required by Bengal with an exact industry wise split and accordingly State's education sectors are to be designed to create courses for supplying the human resources. Thus State's education sectors are to be linked to job sectors to enhance the scope of employability.

6. Drop Out numbers – It was suggested that one needs to know exact number of drop outs at every level of exit from high school onwards. These numbers are very important for the planning of higher education and also to understand where these drop-out students at every level can be absorbed. A 10th level exit or a 12th level exit can be sent to a vocational institution to acquire specific skills of his/her interest. An undergraduate exit can be referred to mostly two sectors - professional and general.

7. Governing Body of Colleges – Dr. Kalyan Rudra raised a concern about the Governing Body of colleges comprising of a majority of people who do not possess an academic background. He suggested that there should be a mandate to only have people with good educational backgrounds (at least bachelor's degree) to be a part of such committees. The Chairman suggested an additional point of having a Governing Body for a cluster of colleges instead of an individual college and rules are to be framed accordingly. The size of the GB so created may be fixed at 7-9 persons.

8. Students Union & Electronic voting system– All the members agreed that the term “Students’ Union” should be re-christened to Student Gymkhana (like the IITs) or Students’ Council. Students interventions in the college administration need to be restricted only on such activities that concern developmental functions rather than on issues such as appointments etc. . There was also a strong suggestion by the Board to change the method of entire student body election and introduce a transformation from old conventional methods to electronic methods (online). Students can use social networking sites for their promotional activities and this will help save the college buildings from unwanted graffiti. Currently, apart from the widely prevalent structure of student activities, three models are also in operation. These are the St Xaviers’ Model, Ramakrishna Mission Model and the WBUT Model. These models need to be analysed in detail and the most appropriate of the three could be adopted in the colleges. Further, the Calcutta University Statutes prior to 1979 (which were substantially different from the existing one in terms of students’ involvement) should be scrutinised so as to understand the implication of the difference.

9. College & University Audits – The Board suggested that all colleges and universities must be audited regularly and there needs to be a financial and functional transparency and accountability in the functions. In case audit of accounts are pending for many years (more than 3 years) the Government must stop release of further grants to the defaulters until audit of accounts are up to date.

10. Conversion of College Library into Public Library – The house discussed over new utility of libraries in this age of technology. The new generation students are more used to e-books, e-resources and therefore the need of visiting a library for this sector of the population has been decreasing. However, it is a matter of fact that a library is used by a good section of people still following the conventional method of learning. In this view it was suggested that

i. The teaching-learning functions of the library should be discharged through the use of information technology. Thus, intranet access to digital repositories, e-books and e-journals accessed through the Internet, use of Internet tools in data-mining should be made widespread among the students and teachers.

ii. In view of the above, large scale augmentation of Internet bandwidth, securing nodes of the National Knowledge Commission should be taken up in right earnest.

iii. Big libraries of colleges could be converted into public libraries for providing access to a larger cross section of population rather than only those associated with the college.

11. Meta University – The Chairman strongly recommended the creation of a Meta University, which is essentially a collaborating cluster of renowned colleges. This can maximize resource mobilization and use. Shri. Asokendu Sengupta emphasised that all government colleges in the State are to be brought under a University for better functioning. As per suggestion of the Chairman the house agreed that all government colleges may be brought under one or more Meta Universities, without putting much pressure on State's exchequer.

12. College Administration: Members welcomed the idea that a centralized selection of non-teaching staff in colleges might be undertaken. The possibility of setting up of a Non-Teaching Staff Selection Commission could be explored and a Dispute Redress Cell for the cluster of colleges should be established.

Agenda No. 9: Any other item with the permission of the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed the discussions and suggestions on value based education. Value Education – Swami Suvirananda emphasised on the need of imparting value education to the students i.e. attaching some special significance or meaning to some objects or events, in different forms and means from early schools. This will help in character building of the students which will ultimately help the society. The Chairman asked for inputs on all the systems that are currently available and operational for the creation of value education. We are to leverage on their capacities and synergise all of them and thereby we have a proliferation irrespective of caste, creed or religion, acceptable to all. a. A dedicated TV channel could be launched or collaborated with Bengali channels for value education, airing the life and work of great personalities of Bengal.

Key Highlights of the Meeting :

- 1) Agastya International and Ramakrishna Mission to work together towards developing a novel hand-on education model in Science, Arts and Environment catering to the need of students residing in rural areas.
- 2) Action Taken report was noted and approved.
- 3) "Structure of the Report" to have an additional section on 'Present Bottlenecks and how they can be removed'.
- 4) Commission to suggest some action points that can be implemented by the government immediately.

- 5) All members were invited to give inputs on the content of Commission website.
- 6) Need of disruptive intervention particularly in the context of colleges was discussed and many action points suggested.
- 7) Revision of college fee structure particularly tuition fees paid by students and their attendance.
- 8) Immediate action to be taken for filling up of all vacant posts in colleges.
- 9) Education through spirituality and value education to be promoted through various channels.
- 10) The linking of State's education sectors to job sectors to enhance the scope of employability was recommended along with gathering the accurate statistics on drop –outs to determine the scope of employability in different levels.
- 11) Creation of a GB for a college cluster instead of every college where number of faculty is very small, having a GB to reduce the administrative work load for the faculties.
- 12) Reorganisation of the Students Unions recommended for enhanced efficiency in students role.
- 13) Conducting regular audits of educational institutions and penalty for defaulters recommended.
- 14) Up gradation of college libraries with recent IT enabled technologies and conversion of few, large college libraries to public libraries are proposed.
- 15) Creation of Meta Universities – linking the government colleges to be initiated.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was proposed to be held on 20th March, 2014

As per suggestion of Prof. Abu T. Khan the venue for the next WBEC Meeting will be at Aliah University.

The meeting ended with the Chairman thanking all the members and other participants present during the meeting of the West Bengal Education Commission for their valuable inputs.

Professor Samir K. Brahmachari
Chairman

Proceedings of Meeting with representatives from Madrasah Education of West Bengal held on 03.03.14

Background:

The Chairman held an interactive meeting with selected representatives from Madrasah Education in West Bengal. The following dignitaries were present:

- i. Shri. S. Islam – Secretary, Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education Department
- ii. Prof. Abu T. Khan – Vice Chancellor, Aliah University
- iii. Md. Fazle Rabbi – President, West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education
- iv. Shri M. Ray – Deputy Director of Madrasah Education, West Bengal
- v. Dr. Amit Sanyal – Spl Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, West Bengal
- vi. Dr. P.K. Das – Member Secretaries
- vii. Rajarshi Dasgupta - KPMG

The Secretary made a consolidated presentation highlighting the Madrasah Education of West Bengal. There were many problems and issues that were brought forth and discussed with the Chairman.

Discussions & Concerns:

The following were the points of discussions and concerns that were shared:

- Madrasah System - There are two parallel Madrasah Education systems, viz – Affiliated Madrasah and the Non-Affiliated Madrasahs. The Affiliated Madrasahs are further categorised as – Senior Madrasah and the High Madrasah Education. Senior Madrasah Education is the older scheme and is further classified as Alim Madrasah (X std), and Fazil Madrasah (X+II std); High Madrasah Education system is classified into Junior Madrasah (VIII std), High Madrasah (X std), Higher Secondary Madrasah (X+II std).
- Employability – There are around 50,000 students who come out of Madrasahs at the age of 16-18yrs. There is an urgent need to create employability for these students to ensure that they have multiple career options. There needs to be a proper mapping of the number of students completing the Madrasah Education with the number of jobs being made available on an annual basis in Islamic Theology.
- Drop Out Ratio - There are immense number of students who drop out from the Madrasah Education system from VIII std onwards. Reasons of such drop outs range from early marriage to poor economic conditions. De-motivation of teachers

also play a very crucial role as lack of proper guidance and compassion make a student lose focus on the education system. Implementation of skill development and vocational training institutes for these drop out students may put them into effective use ensuring and preserve their talent.

Suggestion & Recommendations

The following suggestions and recommendations were discussed with valuable inputs from the Chairman.

- Special Committee – The Chairman suggested forming a Four Member special Committee comprising of the attendees. The committee could conduct workshops with Madrasah school principals and teachers and take their inputs on the current problems. The Committee could submit a report by April 2014 mentioning some actions and resolutions which could be immediately implemented.
- Middle Eastern countries education system model – Countries like Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia education system models could be studied and taken as an example and reference to improvise on the current Madrasah system in West Bengal. The Committee can take help of Aliah University and have visiting faculty from these countries to address the Madrasah students here to help motivate and re-instil the believe in the education system.
- Arabic architecture, Unani Medicine & Computers – The Committee can study the viability of introducing Arabic Architecture, Unani Medicine and Computer System into the Madrasah Education systems. In addition students could also be taught about famous people who have attained scientific breakthrough from the Arab World.
- Conduct Skill Competitions – To induce competitiveness among Madrasah students, there could be various skill competitions conducted like Rubix cube and Lego set competition. This would help improve the hand and mind combination and coordination of the students and to identify talented students having gifted ability in puzzle solving and design.
- Training & Recruitment of Teachers – Teachers play a pivotal role in the education system of the students and also one of the main reasons for drop outs. A constructive training session for madrasah teachers would help act as a motivator to the teachers making them more effective towards their students. Also recruitment of teachers to be as per the merit list but preference of postings need to be made as per their local address.

It was suggested that the Committee report would be made a part of the Interim report being prepared by the Education Commission in the month of May 2014. The immediate actionable points would be presented to the Government for its quick implementation. The Chairman mentioned that the focus should not be towards making new curriculum, but to bring in modifications to the existing curriculum in order to have better employability and effectiveness of the Madrasah Education System.

WBEC

Record Notes of Meeting with Various Teachers' Associations of West Bengal on
19.03.14

Venue: WB State Council of Higher Education

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari – Chairman
2. Prabir Das
3. Amit Sanyal
4. Ashokendu Sengupta

The following organisations were invited:

- A. WBGCTA
- B. ABSGCTA
- C. WBCUPA
- D. WBCUTA
- E. ABUTA

Some Highlights of Discussion:

A. West Bengal Government College Teachers Association (WBGCTA):

- Against the cadre strength of around 2000, there is a substantial number of positions (reaching almost 50%) that are lying vacant.
- There is a need of academic audit in colleges covering both human and non-human resources.
- Equivalence should be achieved in terms of syllabi and curriculum among all the government colleges across West Bengal. A uniform syllabus across the state is called for.
- Syllabi should nevertheless need to be diversified so as to subsume the present day developments
- There is a need to revamp the examination system and also the question structure

- Location of HEI that are being set up need to be done systematically and there should be presence of feeder schools in the vicinity so as to keep sustainability is supply of students.
- Uniform attendance policy needs to be followed
- Age of superannuation could be increased to 65 instead of the 60+5 concept. This is because of the fact that there is too much increase in the number of part-time and ad-hoc teachers.
- The modalities of implementation of RUSA should be defined and developed carefully. The 17.5% share of private sector in the 35% state government funding could be sourced through models of PPP and viability gap funding.
- The overall health and status of the government colleges should be revived. In this context, three points could be pivotal:
 - Convert all government colleges into unitary universities (this is a counter point and not very advisable)
 - Create a university comprising of all government colleges
 - Optimise the transfer policy in government colleges

B. All Bengal State Government College Teachers' Association (ABSGCTA):

- Revamping and improving the conditions of government colleges. It is not advisable to have new colleges without improving the condition of existing ones.
- Address the issue of mobility between government and non-government colleges by putting in place a mechanism of continuity of service, pension system etc.
- Incentivise fee structure by linking it with attendance

C. West Bengal College and University Professors Association (WBCUPA):

- Segment higher education into knowledge based and need based education
- Follow a differential question pattern that is dependent on subject. While science and related subjects could have MCQ pattern, the same should be subjective for literature and social sciences. This should be followed even for competitive examinations such as NET or the various admission tests.
- Allocate teaching resources more optimally particularly for subjects having less demand.
- College Service Commission and Public Service Commission should be treated at par. Currently there is level of superiority for the PSC.
- The role of administrative officers of the education department in college assessment promotions should be minimised.

- Sabbatical leave should be provided to college and university teachers in similar lines with IIT etc.
- Reopening of the Career Advancement System (CAS) which has been kept in abeyance for 28 months.

D. All Bengal University Teachers Association (ABUTA):

- Considering the present scenario of education in Bengal, the Vision 2030 is a realistic target with Vision 2020 a bit pre mature.
- Colleges should be brought under a separate council or a sub-council under the WB Council of Higher Education.
- The aspect of attendance in colleges should be given a more comprehensive relook with a focus on understanding the cause of poor attendance in classes.

Some Salient Recommendations and Take Home Points:

1. Developing a College Information and Control System:

- The aspect of poor availability of data regarding the college education system could be best addressed through designing of an online system with auto data collection and auto design of solutions.

2. Curriculum Design and Optimising Question Structure:

- There could be a common curriculum design by the Council of Higher Education.
- Question structure design should be done to ensure equivalence of marks
- Achieving an optimal modal mix of subjective and objective questions during examinations

3. Addressing the Problem of Attendance:

- Evolve a mix of physical education versus distance education in delivering the college curriculum. This would provide students with an option to choose from whether to attend a class physically or to attend remotely.
- Fees of classes delivered through physical contact to be substantially higher than those delivered in distance or electronic mode.
- Incentivize fees with attendance. For example, 100% attendance would lead to reduced fees at a later stage.

Point for Chairman: *We need to decide whether the Commission in its policy guidelines shall encourage physical attendance or shall discourage physical attendance. The policy should be positioned accordingly. For example, online banking or ATMs are actually measures to discourage people from physically flocking to banks yet use all its services. Both would have their pros and cons.*

4. Service Conditions:

- There should be portability of service among government colleges, government aided colleges and private colleges.
- Mechanism should be developed to achieve seamless interoperability of the PSC and CSC systems of recruitment of college teachers.

WBEC

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission WBEC Members
on 20.03.14

Venue: Atma Ram Hall, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari – Chairman
2. Abu Taleb Khan
3. Fr. John Felix Raj
4. Kalyan Rudra
5. Swami Shubhakarananda
6. Swami Suvirananda
7. Susmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
8. Supti Pandey
9. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
10. Renu Barman (Singha)
11. P.K. Das

Others Present:

1. Amit Sanyal – Special Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Principal Scientist, CGCRI
3. Kamal Dasgupta – Director CGCRI
4. Arfan Ali Biswas – Director, Madrasah Education & Minority Affairs
5. Rajarshi Dasgupta – KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman. He thanked the members for their inputs and interactions towards understanding the current status of the State's Education Sector. The context of his emphasis –was that:

Despite number of discussions, no clear path has emerged regarding the educational vision for 2030. So there is an immediate need to implement effective solutions for the identified problems:

- Amidst the current rapidly globalising society, the ecosystem changes can be so drastic that today's reference points might be rendered totally obsolete and meaningless in near future.
- Systematic efforts to develop a meaningful vision for Bengal's education in 2030 would thus require defining certain reference points against which we need to assess the action points.
- Setting up aspirations amongst the stakeholders.

The Chairman encouraged the members to come up with reference points and aspirations and the following suggestions with respect to reference points for Vision 2030 and Action Areas/Action Points to adhere to the Reference Points: were discussed:

- a. Inventions from Bengal – It was discussed that there needs to be a substantial increase in the number of inventions originating from Bengal for which the State has to create the required infrastructure.
- b. Excellence in all Fields – There was a mention of achieving excellence regardless the discipline or field that is in question. Education that enhances dignity of labour and enables every job to be discharged in a more professional manner is to be promoted. For example - a farmer needs to attain excellence in his farming skills in order to maximise the output and get highest returns for his investment. There should be major skill development programme and information flow. A person should be able to “Think Globally and act locally”.

- c. No Political Interference – The members suggested that although students should be politically and socially conscious, there should be a mechanism designed for conducting students’ union appointments in a manner that would totally be free from any political interference during the entire process.
- d. Complete Enrolment – It was suggested that total and complete enrolment should be achieved to make sure that 100% students have an opportunity of studying up to Class X.
- e. Target Vietnam & Germany – Bengal with a population of around 93 million compares with that of Germany and Vietnam. Germany is nevertheless far ahead of Bengal in terms of educational infrastructure, productivity, innovation and economic development. Vietnam on the other hand reduced poverty level below 10% and is moving towards 100% literacy rates with major economic developments. It was suggested that Vietnam’s education system could be made the short term benchmark and Germany’s education system could be made the long term benchmark to understand the reasons for differences in our educational infrastructure and to devise policy imperatives for leveraging the state.
- f. University Town/City – Like University cities and towns in USA and other countries, there should be a University town or a city designed in West Bengal. Such a University town can constitute of all types of colleges and institutions ranging from vocational and ITI’s to institutes of national importance. The Visva Bharati model and the Sriniketan model can be replicated and applied to create more such University Towns so as to have a cluster that imparts quality education and application skills. It was suggested that West Bengal develops two townships at identified locations that would host some of these schools and colleges. Each township may harbour 10 colleges and 20 schools and other vocational institutions. One such township should come up in North Bengal.

- g. Create New Schools & Colleges – It was stated and agreed by the Commission that the efforts required to build a new institution is much lesser than converting an old institution into a new one. Based on this theory it was suggested that 1000 new state-of-the-art schools and 100 new colleges be constructed. This will lead to the eventual influence and transform old institutions. The land for these schools can be procured from wealthy businessmen in the form of donations. These schools shall be model schools and feeder for the colleges and universities in the region.
- h. Practicing/Professional Allowance for Teachers – The need of state level intervention to substantially augment the social status and financial resources of teachers was discussed. It was recommended that teachers should get an allowance like doctors and engineers, in order to make the profession more lucrative. This would help attract people to take up teaching as a profession and make it a comparable career option along with other professional career options. Towards this endeavor, all teachers joining 2016 onwards could be provided an additional 25% of their basic as professional teacher pay /allowance for not doing private tuitions. They will give extra 2 hours daily after regular classes to teach weaker students in schools/colleges. It was suggested that the model to recruit teachers should be made in the same lines as that of Singapore's, as teachers here are highly respected and career in teaching is one of the most sought after professions.

Commission in addition to above points, summed up that in order to reach the aspiration levels, the new schools and colleges would have earmarked financial allocation. The 1000 new schools which would be constructed should have an annual allocation of INR 1cr per school and the 100 new colleges should have annual allocation of 10cr per college as government grant for the next 10 years. Therefore a INR 2000cr budget needs to be planned annually to reach the new initiatives, and these initiatives would be plugged in to the new University Townships.

- In order to mobilise non-governmental resources, industries should be encouraged to start schools as part of their CSR.
- A total list of profitable industries in West Bengal and the extent of such profit should be prepared by the Department of Industries so as to ascertain the total quantum of funds that could be mobilised through CSR.
- Creation of a climate of industrialisation in the state should be undertaken as this is likely to synergise with education substantially.
- Value education is to be made a mandatory requirement for all education curricula.

Agenda No.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 20.03.2014

Minutes of the Fourth meeting held on 20th March 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections. The Members requested for an early circulation of the minutes in order to come up with suggestions in case of any.

Agenda No. 2: Discussion on the Action Taken Report

Resolution: Noted and approved.

Agenda No.3: Discussion on School Education

In the context of School Education in the state, the Commission felt that the concerned sub-committee should collect more facts and figures e.g. number of schools, enrolment, age profile etc and compile the section on school education. The following points might be given particular consideration:

Linguistic Barriers:

The Commission acknowledged that there severe language problems are encountered by the school children due to the different dialects spoken in different districts of Bengal. This difference causes a hindrance in learning for rural children

especially when the teacher hails from an urban town or city. The Chairman requested the school sub-committee to design a mechanism that would address this issue.

West Bengal Education Portal

It was noted by the Board that majority of the educational content present online are in English, whereas most students of the state are taught in Bengali. In view of the fact that creation of suitable contents is an essential part of e-learning and/or distance learning programmes, the Commission suggested the creation of a portal with a language option so that the content, particularly those of science could be translated into Bengali if desired. This will increase penetration to the remote rural sectors. . This portal is to be designed embedding a content connector so as to enable the linking of the education portal with search portals across the world. The content of the portal is to be categorised into Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary Education.

Mid-Day Meal

The Chairman mentioned that Hon'ble Education Minister has requested for a solution for the mid-day meal service for classes IX & X. There have been multiple complaints from schools regarding the mid-day meal service as it is offered only upto class VIII. There are students from the lower strata of the society who have been given this meal service till class VIII and are barred from it from class IX. Discussions on changing the composition of mid-day meals were also undertaken. It was felt that the meals could include more quantifiable items e.g. eggs, bananas etc. rather than rice and dal. It was suggested to have mid –day meal for students up to class XII in school.

Linking of School and College Tuition Fee

The Commission explored the possibility of a mechanism to link the school and college tuition fee structures. This would even out the disparity which currently exists between both the fee structures and ensure that a certain student who has paid high school tuition fees pays comparable college tuition fees and someone who has paid low school tuition

fees pays college tuition fees accordingly. The possibility of having a flexible and differential fee structure and its implementation through fee vouchers was discussed in-depth.

Learning English in Elementary Level

At present English is taught in schools from elementary level. But it has been noted that children are unable to communicate in English. The Commission suggested by the Board that along with Bengali, English should also be given importance and children should be taught to converse in both the languages.

Induction Training and Retraining of Teachers

It was suggested by the Board that a full-fledged teacher's training course should be initiated and made compulsory for all newly recruited teachers. Experienced teachers could be attracted towards this course by incentivising them with the professional allowance on successful completion of the course. Hence:

- Newly inducted teachers would undergo 3-6 months of residential orientation and induction training at the West Bengal Teacher Academy.
- Teachers in the middle of their career would have to undergo a mandatory 3-6 months mid-career residential training at the West Bengal Teacher Academy so as to sharpen and update his/her skill sets.
- The Mid Career Training would be mandatory for being eligible for getting the Professional Teacher Allowance/Pay.

Agenda No.4: Recommendation on Madrasah Education

Mr. A. A. Biswas, specially invited by the Commission to present and share his views and thoughts about the Madrasah Education system in West Bengal, highlighted three points before the Commission which included his future aspirations for the Madrasahs in the state of Bengal.

a. Creation of Vocational Institutions – Mr. Biswas mentioned that the Madrasah Education system in West Bengal is looked after by the Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal. Even Aliah University is under the supervision of this Department. He also mentioned that in the year 2010 Aligarh Muslim University opened a new campus in Murshidabad district which has a number of Madrasahs in and around the vicinity of the campus. It was commonly agreed by the Board that a world class institution needs to be set up which would start from a primary level and lead up to vocational training, and help in ensuring secured jobs. Since talent and skills are inherited from family, it would be immensely beneficial for the residents of the districts living in and around such world class schools and vocational institutes.

b. Affiliated/Non Affiliated Madrasahs – Mr. Biswas pointed out that two parallel Madrasah systems are operative in Bengal – 20% being affiliated to government and 80% being affiliated to non-government agencies. The Madrasahs which are not aided by the Government of West Bengal and constitute around 80% of the total Madrasahs in the State are mostly affiliated to Darululoom-Deoband. They are also not receiving mid-day meal as informed.

c. Creating new Colleges – Mr. Biswas suggested that there should be new colleges created at strategic places which can be affiliated under the Aliah University. He mentioned that acquiring land wouldn't be an issue as it could be done in a way of donation. Some schools run by the Madrasahs might also be upgraded to colleges through diversification of the curriculum.

In light of these points the following suggestions were made:

- a. The Director of Madrasah Education is to provide a report about the interventions that the Education Commission might suggest to the government so as to make a difference

- b. There is a need to take a relook at the entire Madrasah system. This is because, in view the very limited scope of teaching/training that is provided in the madrasahs, the pass outs can be absorbed within the Islamic religious establishments only. Figures indicate that the supply far exceeds the demand in such institutions thereby making employability of pass outs a cause of major concern.
- c. In order to devise a suitable process to circumvent this anomaly, it is important to have a look at similar institutions in other Islamic countries of the world. While United Arab Emirates have completely done away with the system, Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia practice the same in more customised ways. Saudi Arabia, for instance has a far better record of GER than India.
- d. The State Madrasah Directorate should have an exposure to the systems prevalent in Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia through the embassies of these countries in India.
- e. The budgetary allocation of the Madrasahs are reasonable with the sum of Plan and Non-Plan budget in the order of Rs 800 crore annually. The funds might be more gainfully utilised so as to make madrasah education more market focused and relevant.
- f. The matter of recognition and equivalence of madrasah degrees should also be looked into so as to make integration easier.
- g. A sub-committee comprising of Prof A.T. Khan and the Director of Madrasah Education would compile the section for inclusion in the Commission's report. It would be desirable to get inputs from eminent personalities who have studied under Madrasah System.

The Commission decided that West Bengal needs to have a complete certification course for all types of Vocational trainings offered. These certificates would ensure that workers who complete these courses would not be underpaid, as the certificates would

mention in detail the trainings that had been acquired by the individual along with the marks secured.

Agenda No. 5: Discussion on St. Xavier's Students' Union Model based on the report sent by Fr. J. Felix Raj

Resolution: The Members were requested to opine on the proposal, methodology and the procedure that was shared by Fr. Felix Raj. The commission felt that

- The St. Xavier's model of students union might be adopted across the state.
- Role and objectives of the Students' Council needs to be more specifically defined.

Agenda No. 6: Appointment of Vendor for creation of Educom Website

The Tender Process has been completed and the Vendor selected has been referred to the Department of the Higher Education for the final decision.

Agenda No. 7: Any other item with the permission of the Chairman.

Contents of the Interim Report:

- Identification of the priority action areas with respect of Vision 2020 - this may be listed by picking up 20% suggestions that are likely to have 80% impact.
- The points might be categorised into the following sections:
 - Problems identified
 - Solutions proposed
 - Actions identified to deliver the solution
 - Annexure – comprising of statistical tables
- A total of 10 most important action points may be listed.

Cash Voucher System for Vocational Courses

It was discussed by the Board that the money allotted under the National Skill Development Mission was not being utilised in its right intent. Majority of the students

enrolled in various Vocational Institutions were observed to be discontinuing their courses mid-way. This adversely affected the Government budget as the funds allocated are being used unproductively.

The Board suggested to design a new mechanism for the National Skill Development Mission. According to this new design the Government should first recognise the non-affiliated vocational/training centers which have cropped up due to market demands. These institutions should be then made eligible for student cash vouchers which would be issued by the Government. These cash vouchers would be in two parts, and the first part can be en-cashed by a student at the time of admission. The remaining part of the voucher can be en-cashed post the completion of the course or after placement. If this is followed, then the Government need not own the vocational centres and at the same time have the flexibility to select the students for the issue of vouchers.

Key Highlights of the Meeting

- 1) Aspirations to be set high and quantifiable with complete clarity. The clearer the aspirations set, the easier would be for them to be achieved. Vague aspirations would defeat the process of achieving them.
- 2) Action Taken report was Noted and approved.
- 3) Interim Report to be submitted by the end of May 2014 addressing the present bottlenecks and the immediate actions to be taken.
- 4) Mid-day meal problem for higher classes to be resolved and school tuition and college tuition linkage suggested.
- 5) Teaching English along with Bengali as a language of communication from elementary levels
- 6) Teachers training course to be initiated and made mandatory for all new recruits

7) Creation of University Town/City with a total of 1000 new state-of-the-art schools and 100 new state-of-the-art colleges to be built.

8) Instead of Recognised and Unrecognised Madrasah the members suggested to use terms like “Affiliated” and “Non Affiliated” Madrasahs for better social acceptance.

9) Cash voucher system for vocational institutes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of WBEC was proposed to be held on 10th April, 2014. The meeting ended with the Chairman thanking all the members of the West Bengal Education Commission and other participants present during the meeting for their valuable inputs.

Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari
Chairman

Record Notes of the Meeting with Principals of Christian Minority Colleges held on
10th April, 2014

Venue: St. Xavier's College, Kolkata

Background:

The Chairman held an interactive meeting with the heads (or their representatives) of the following colleges:

- i. St. Xavier's College
- ii. Scottish Church College
- iii. St Joseph's College, Darjeeling
- iv. Bankura Christian College
- v. St Paul's College,
- vi. Serampore College
- vii. Loreto College
- viii. Salesian College

Inputs from Colleges:

1. St. Xavier's College

- a. Depoliticised the education system. Online election system for the selection of Student's Council in order to have clean and transparent process.

2. Scottish Church College

- a. Over the last decade, the college went through major reforms in its educational system and infrastructure to improve the quality of education and the environment of the college.
- b. Earlier they had a Students' Union in college known to be notoriously involved in politics and also illegally sold college seats which were allotted for the management quota. From 2006 onwards, the college abolished the management quota.
- c. A group of teachers were also involved in unwanted politics and were controlling the functioning of the college which resulted to its deterioration. Eventually the entire recruitment process of faculty were brought under unbiased administration of college and recruitment of efficient teachers was carried out to eliminate such problem.

- d. They introduced a transparent fully automated online admission process for all of its courses.
- e. The college is being harassed by Educational Directorate for conducting faculty recruitment without their permission. The minority colleges do not need any permission for same.
- f. The student's tuition fee is utilised for the development purpose and is not dependent on government grant/aid. Teacher's salary is paid by the government. There is need of substantial funding from the state government in order to improve the infrastructure of the college.

3. St Joseph's College, Darjeeling

- a. Being affected by the political instability in that area.
- b. Involve parents right from the day of admission to passing out.
- c. Time to time parents teachers meetings to discuss the progress of the student in studies.

4. Bankura Christian College

- a. Hindrance caused by the Director of Public Information in matters such as approval for recruitment of teachers and funding.
- b. Proposal of Rs.70 lakhs was submitted to Education Department for educational development purpose of the college, which was later not approved by the authorities.
- c. Lack of proactive support from government system to carry out any development or to introduce any constructive change in the college structure.
- d. Majority of the students in the college belongs to ST/SC community or from economically backward class. Bankura lies in a tribal belt with regular Maoist activities in recent years. There huge disparity in the human development index as compared to other areas of West Bengal.
- e. They demand for special initiatives and support from the government to overcome the problems faced by them such as lack of connectivity, communication and infrastructure.
- f. Attendance of students for various courses is quite low even after high enrolment. Students generally skip lectures scheduled after noon.

5. St Paul's College,

- a. Situated in a communal sensitive area. Communalism comes into play whenever there is political disturbance.

- b. Student Union created a lot of problem in past which disturbed the physical environment and ambience of the college.

6. Serampore College

- a. The college has a council, an apex body, and looks after the college administration. Secretary of the council appoints the Principal.
- b. They even also complained regarding the role of Director of Public Instruction and problems caused by his office.

Some Recommendations

- **Setting up of University Township**
 - Unlike USA and Germany where they have university township such as Penn State University, Princeton College, setting up same model in West Bengal with connection to the employment.
 - Responsibility of setting up these universities can be given to some community colleges. 3-5 such townships can be created with each township having 30-50 model schools and 10 colleges.
 - These townships can be developed in those areas of West Bengal where education has flourished or has been successful.
- **Creating Model schools:**
 - State government and Minority Institution partnership to set up the schools and colleges
 - Use of combination- Christian institutional expertise and philosophy of Ram Krishna Mission and Shantiniketan to create a model where teachers will be trained for primary to higher education through commitment strategy, and not through qualification or salary.
- **Depoliticise the education:**
 - To follow St. Xavier's College election model for the selection of the student's council to have clean and transparent process. Online social platform to be used for publicity and communication.
 - Students interventions in the college administration need to be restricted only on such activities that concern developmental functions rather than on issues such as appointments etc.
 - Lessons taught by eminent teachers could be telecast across the entire college network.

- **Infrastructure Development :**

- MP and MLA local area development fund to be utilised for the modernisation and development of needy colleges.
- Development fees to be collected from students in addition to the tuition fees which can be used for the laboratory, infrastructure development and maintenance.

- **Tuition fees :**

- There is need of raising fees of the colleges to make them financially sustainable.
- Linking of the college tuition fees with the school fees paid by student earlier. The tuition fees will be distributed among different slabs.
- The student enrolled for the online course has to pay lower fees as compared to the student enrolled for physical presence in the classroom.

- **Value education :**

- Use of value added education to educate and enculturate the students.
- The value flows from the spirituality of life. The spiritual dimension of life will be imparted to both students and teachers.
- Encourage students to take part in various activities other than attendance in classroom will help in developing a sense of social responsibility.

- **Madrasah :**

- Madrasah should also include people from outside to teach students.
- Career counseling to be provided to the students so as to help them to have diversified aspiration.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission WBEC Members
on 20.06.14

**Venue: Conference Room, Indian Association of Cultivation of Sciences (IACS),
Jadavpur**

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari - Chairman
2. Abu T. Khan
3. Supti Pandey
4. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
5. Kalyan Rudra
6. P.K. Das

Others Present:

1. Amit Sanyal – Spl. Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Debashis Bandyopadhyay - Principal Scientist, CGCRI
3. Deb Sankar Roy - Director, IACS
4. Rajarshi Dasgupta - KPMG
5. Madhurima Dutta - KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman. He thanked the members for their valuable inputs towards the preparation of the Interim Report. There was a strong emphasis towards the immediate need for reforms as Bengal recently ranked lower than many underperforming states of India in the educational sector. There was a mention of around 33,000 students out of one lakh students acquiring negative marks in the recently held WB Joint Entrance Examination. Students acquiring zero were also called for the counseling round.

Agenda no.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 20.03.14

Minutes of the Fourth meeting held on 20th March 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections. The Members requested for an early circulation of the minutes in order to come up with more information and suggestions wherever necessary.

Agenda no. 2: Interim Report presentation by KPMG

There were some minor changes that were suggested by the Commission members with regard to the presentation. The changes were duly incorporated.

Agenda no.3: Discussion on the draft Interim Report

The members of the Education Commission agreed to all the points of the draft Interim Report which was circulated prior for their perusal. It was collectively agreed by the members that the report would be presented to the Chief Minister around the second week of July post the confirmation of the appointment.

There were some minor changes that were discussed and incorporated in the report. There was an emphasis on the need to use the high coverage of post offices throughout the state and they are to be equipped with ICT tools and Wi-Fi so that everyone can use these whenever required.

Also the advantages of providing vocational vouchers were discussed. A few minor changes in the report were also suggested as follows:

1. Private Tuition - It was noted that most students were paying higher fees for private tuition than for college tuition. Hence the members suggested that classrooms after normal college hours could be used for tutorials and dedicated retired teachers could be engaged for coaching.
2. Madrasah education- Dr. Abu Taleb Khan was requested to collect information about the educational reforms introduced by other Muslim countries such as Iran and Dubai. Similar reforms could be introduced in the State's Madrasah education without conflicting with the religious sentiments.
3. All new government aided colleges which have been functioning for less than ten years may be offered a waiver on the fees that are paid to the government. At present all government aided colleges used to pay 50 % of their collected tuition fees to the government. This waiver would encourage them to invest in better physical infrastructure and human resource developments.

4. It was discussed that retired teachers who would be re-engaged must be IT trained. They could also be offered basic IT training by involving students to impart such training
5. It was mentioned in the meeting that students' identity cards should act as access cards for all State public libraries. These cards may not allow students to get books issued but they should be able to use them for references. Also there should be ample number of photocopiers available at subsidized rates which would discourage students from tampering the books.
6. The Chairman suggested that among the new model institutions which are to be created, some should attract excellent sports talents and also create the necessary infrastructure required to train these students. It was discussed that Bengal should concentrate more on sports requiring application of mental abilities like Chess, Table Tennis, Archery, etc.

Agenda no.5: Discussion on the launch of website

The website of the Education Commission was demonstrated to the Commission members for their suggestions. The following points were discussed:

1. All Commission members' photographs are required to be put up on the website.
2. Size of the photograph should be reduced to accommodate more text.
3. Quotes from the Chief Minister and the Education Minister are to be included.
4. The main purpose of the website will be to conduct surveys, create blogs, invite inputs, etc- a few examples on surveys may be given (via survey monkey for example)
5. The website's rank in Google's list of links needs to go up by using necessary software.
6. Suggestions of members of the Commission (available under the minutes of meetings) need to be added.
7. All Newspaper articles concerning WBEC should be gathered- as a link(pdf formats)
8. The website must be connected to Facebook and Twitter.
9. The speech of Ambedkar from the movie "Vande Mataram" about education must be referred and quoted.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of WBEC was proposed to be held on 11th July, 2014. The meeting ended with the Chairman thanking all the members of the West Bengal Education Commission and other participants present during the meeting for their valuable inputs.

Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission

WBEC

Record Notes for Meeting held on 10th July, 2014 at State Council of Higher Education

Members Present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari - Chairman
2. Smt. Susmita Bhattacharya Chatterjee
3. Swami Shubhakarananda
4. Dr. P.K. Das

The invitees:

1. Anadi Kundu – CEO, State Book Board:
2. Aweek Majumdar- Chairman, Expert Committee of school education
3. Utpal Ray – Secretary, All Bengal Teachers' Association
4. Bidyut Bhattacharya - Vice-Chairman, West Bengal State Council of Technical education
5. Saibal Mukhopadhyay – Secretary WBSCTE

The Chairman welcomed everyone and gave a brief introduction about the objective of the Education Commission. He mentioned that the major concern in West Bengal's Higher Education system becomes clearer if a comparison is drawn between the higher education sectors of West Bengal and Germany as well as between West Bengal and Vietnam (both the nations have similar population and sq. mile area to that of West Bengal). Thus the aim of the meeting is to gather ideas which can be implemented to restore West Bengal's previous glory in the field of education.

Dr. Anadi Kundu – CEO, State Book Board (SBB):

Prof. Brahmachari requested him to suggest ideas related to the publishing and printing of books which could bring about a change in West Bengal's education. The following are the main remarks made by Dr. Kundu on the issue:

- The salaries of the employees are given by the State government
- The whole cost of production of books is borne by the Central government
- SBB has printed books of around 28 subjects in Bengali pertaining to higher education.
- Most of the science students in higher education don't follow Bengali books. However, there is a demand for them in Arts.
- Due to the problem of piracy the market for Bengali books in Bangladesh no longer exists.
- One of the major problems faced by SBB is the marketing and lack of publicity of the books that are printed by them.
- The pattern of questions and syllabus may be changed.

The Chairman requested for making all books available in the digital form. Further he suggested if some of the best books of each subject can be translated in Bengali.

Prof. Aweek Majumdar- Chairman, Expert Committee of School Education

- This committee is in charge of the syllabus as well as printing and publishing books up to class X.
- He mentioned that under RTE (Right to Education) and NCF (National Curriculum Framework) act a new syllabus was proposed by the committee and accepted by the government.
- 54 new books were created by this Committee in two years.
- According to Prof. Majumdar, three points should be taken care of while trying to achieve development in the education sector- i) Extensive training of teachers is required with an emphasis on the new approach to teaching i.e. activity based learning ii) The scenario of classrooms must change and be modernised. iii) The issue of decreasing number of students in urban government/ government aided schools and the diminishing glory of these schools must be combated.
- A discussion on the RTE act revealed that this act was based on the principle of inclusiveness and not necessarily excellence. However, to create a balance

between the two, a recommendation of putting a limit to the number of students can be put forward. This can perhaps be done by restricting the entry of students to a particular school who stay further than 2km away from school.

- Prof. Aveek Majumdar further proposed that Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan should be extended up to class X. The Commission duly agreed with this suggestion.

Mr. Utpal Ray – Secretary, All Bengal Teachers’ Association

Mr. Ray mentioned that-

- The number of institutes for the training of teachers is very low which prevents willing teachers from receiving the necessary training.
- Teachers are often transferred or appointed to institutions where the students converse in a different version of the regional language.
- Many schools providing primary education often don’t provide pre-primary education. Similarly, the same school or a branch of the same school does not provide primary and secondary education simultaneously.
- Some of their observations on the text books made by the Expert Committee on School Education are not getting proper attention.

The Commission suggested if a proposal can be put forward to allow teachers an option about where they wish to teach and also suggested the chairman of the expert committee to review matters related to their comments/ observations regarding text books.

Mr. Bidyut Bhattacharya - Vice-Chairman, West Bengal State Council of Technical education

Mr. Bhattacharya mentioned that -

- Technical education includes ITI, Vocational training and diploma education.

- There are 22,000 students for diploma courses, 12,000 students for ITI, 1,50,000 students for vocational courses and 40,000 students for higher secondary vocational training.
- One of the problems faced by the committee is the lack of popularity and respect for vocational courses.
- He mentioned that there are 3000 schools for vocational courses. The annual budget for this purpose is INR 549 crore.

The Commission requested for

- Information about the % age of these students who are employed.
- A correlation between the employability and the training provided by them in order to match the supply and demand scenario.
- Collection of data about the syllabus of Indo-Swiss Center of Chandigarh and comparing it with the syllabus of the institutes providing technical education in West Bengal.
- Introduction of Public- Private Partnerships and enhancement industry association

Some Salient Recommendations and Take Home Points:

- The Commission suggested in order to provide a market for the books printed by the State Book Board, the books must be circulated in government schools and this must be included in schemes like RMSA.
- As a solution to the problem of developing the quality of teachers the Commission recommended the creation of a Teacher Academy for the training of teachers and providing extra benefits/ incentives to these trained teachers.
- The Commission pointed out that the dropout rate of girl students after class X is very high. To combat this issue the condition of toilets must be improved and also ultra-low cost sanitary napkins may be provided in schools.

- As a solution to the lack of linkage between pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, the Commission suggested that a thread is required and schools of each level must be linked based on geographical location.
- Under the department of Technical education, Animation and Gaming centres should be set up in West Bengal.
- The Commission also recommended the setting up of institutes of Entrepreneurship.
- The Commission insisted that under the department of Technical Education, silicon-wafer manufacturing training must be given due importance as this industry needs a substantial amount of water which West Bengal can provide.
- The Commission also mentioned that Bengal's art needs innovation and public art centres need to be started. Necessary training must be provided to match the demand for public art.
- The Commission also emphasised the need to match the courses provided by the polytechnics with the actual demand for jobs of students attending these courses.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC)
Members on 11.07.14

Venue: Atma Ram Hall CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Dr. Abu Taleb Khan
3. Ms. Supti Pande
4. Ms. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
5. Fr. John Felix Raj
6. Smt. Sushmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
7. Mr. Ashokendu Sengupta
8. Swami Subhakarananda
9. Dr. Kalyan Rudra
10. Dr. P.K. Das

Others Present:

1. Dr. Amit Sanyal – Spl Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Dr. Debashis Bandyopadhyay - Principal Scientist, CGCRI
3. Mr. Rudranil Ghosh- Chairman, Council of Technical Education (Vocational)
4. Mr. Aveek Majumdar- Chairman, Expert Committee of School Education
5. Dr. Kamal Dasgupta – Director CGCRI
6. Mr. Jayanta Banerjee – Secretary WBSCVE
7. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman. He emphasised the urgent need for the launch of the website so that feedback of the masses could be used for improvement of the draft report.

There was also a discussion about some ongoing problems with the recruitment of teachers which would affect the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. There are plans of recruiting 2700 teachers for higher education institutions which Mr. Amit Sanyal mentioned would be completed before the Pujas.

The Commission resolved that the roadmap of the recommendations will be made at par with Vietnam (for 2020) and Germany (for 2030) in the field of higher education.

Agenda no.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 20.06.14.

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections.

Agenda no. 2: Interim Report

A copy of the modified draft interim report was circulated and members were requested to mention any necessary changes.

Agenda no.3: To review the courses/ programme, their syllabi/ curricula of schools (primary to H.S) and to suggest changes

The Chairman briefed the Commission about the previous day's meeting with different officials from the education sectors. Prof. Aveek Majumder, Chairman, Expert Committee for School Education was present and was also invited for the Commission Meeting to share his books with the Commission Members. It was commonly decided that all books which were published after detailed analysis of the courses for primary and upper primary (classes I – VIII) were completely integrated books under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and no further amendments were required.

The CEO of the State Book Board, Dr. Anadi Kundu was also present in the previous day's meeting. He had mentioned a serious problem in sales of the books due to the lack of proper marketing and other political influences. The Commission after discussing several such issues with the members recommended that books need to maintain

uniformity in the languages, i.e. if some chapters have been started in Bengali then Bengali should be the language throughout and usage of English in between may be avoided. The Commission also suggested that these books need to be extensively available in all colleges and also digital versions of the books may be created.

Mr. Utpal Ray, General Secretary, All Bengal Teachers' Association who was present in the previous day's meeting submitted a letter to the Commission which was discussed. He mentioned about some of their observations on the text books prepared by the Expert Committee of School Education.

It was noted that the number of primary, upper primary and secondary schools in the State were much more than the total schools of Vietnam and Germany.

Smt. Pandey mentioned that –

- many schools in the State had started under political considerations which continued to be redundant and considered as mere waste of resources.
- she has made a proposal for increasing the number of residential schools to SSA which was accepted. At present, there are 14 residential schools in Kolkata which are functional whereas the demand for such schools is to accommodate around 1400 students. These residential schools provide the necessary ambience as well as shelter which our socio-economic environment often fails to provide specially to the lower strata of the society and women.
- providing a stipend to the families who send their daughters to school may improve the female enrolment ratio.

Also, the recommendation of re-engagement of retired teachers to provide private tuitions was again discussed. A suggestion for offering a non-tuition pay to teachers was proposed to the Commission for further discussions. The Commission mentioned that the most drastic change which could be implemented is by increasing the current pay scale of the new teachers ten times than the existing pay which would also attract the best of the minds as teachers and make them accountable.

The Commission discussed about making college education more affordable as most of the colleges in the State charge obnoxious amounts ranging anything from INR 2000 – 5000 for admissions into general degree courses. The Commission mentioned that a mechanism should be designed where an education that is likely to ensure a high paying job should be expensive whereas an education which would ensure a mere livelihood should charge a low fee.

Mr. Asokendu Sengupta mentioned that –

- higher education should not be considered a “free lunch”
- education till class XII should be imparted free of cost as per the RTE (Right to Education) act.
- a part of the professional tax which is collected by the State be used to finance school education over and above the SSA funds received from the Centre
- teachers in general be encouraged to reside within a specified area from the school to build up a healthy interaction with students outside school which was present earlier. To incentivise this scheme, teachers may be engaged in teaching the students after hours in the school campus itself to earn extra money. This will encourage teachers to reside near the schools they are engaged in.
- it is necessary to relocate schools of the State as per the requirement across every district as at present as schools are distributed unevenly.
- there is a big gap that exists between the education sectors of North and South Bengal which needs to be bridged.
- infrastructure and sanitation facilities of the institutions must be improved and checked regularly. It was suggested that the Block Development Office should be given the duty to provide a quarterly report on every school and its infrastructural facilities in the block. This task requires a workforce of at least 2000 people with 100 people in each district.

- Swami Subhakarananda suggested that like CPVF some volunteers may be used for this purpose. Further, the Commission requested for the list of West Bengal Government's presiding officers of last election as they may be used for the purpose of collection of data about all the schools of the State.

Mr. Sengupta expressed his desire to resign from the Commission due to his various involvements and commitments in other government bodies. However the Commission requested him to continue his presence as it would be difficult for the Commission to function in his absence.

The Commission mentioned that after a meeting with the Expert Committee Chairman, it was felt that the new books which have been circulated under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan meet all the required standards. However, Smt. Supti Pandey mentioned that guardians of the students appeared to be unhappy with the new integrated books and often complained about the school's policy of depositing the books in the school after school hours.

Additional speaker- Mr. Rudranil Ghosh

Mr. Rudranil Ghosh [Chairman of Technical Council of Education (Vocational)] mentioned that the major problem of vocational education is that the demand scenario of the market was not considered while introducing the vocational courses. Hence there is an urgent need to analyze the demand for each type of job in the economy and re-design the courses accordingly. For example- the course duration of beauticians may be reduced to 6 months instead of 2 years whereas new age courses such as robotics may be introduced and taught for 2 years. There are 5 ministries for vocational education and hence there is a need for a system by which he can stay connected with all of them. Mr. Ghosh further mentioned that there is a lack of skilled/ trained faculty who can impart new age vocational courses. At present there are around 20,000 faculties who impart vocational education in the State. Hence the training of faculties during vacations to meet the market demand and acquire necessary skills to train the

new age courses is necessary. These courses would be mapped as per NVEQF (National Vocational Education Quality Framework) and NSDC guidelines to ensure that students graduating are at par with students from other states. Moreover, a mechanism is required to improve the skill-set of existing labourers too. The low number of separate centres for vocational training also poses a problem. At present there are 2912 active centres whereas there are around 500 inactive centres. The Commission suggested implementing Public-Private investments to incorporate vocational training vouchers along with a mechanism designed where students could redeem the vouchers in parts as and when they complete their training and get recruited. Private companies would be interested to invest as they would get skilled staff in return. The Commission recommended that there should be statutory norms set by the Government in most of the labour intensive industries where only skilled labour could be recruited. This would make it compulsory for students to acquire specialised skills in order to get recruited.

The Commission also suggested that acquiring loan from nationalised banks for students to get admission into vocational institutions should be made easier in order to increase the seriousness of the students towards the course as they would be obligated to pay back the loan. This would also ensure that students would look out for jobs and be willing to start work immediately post completion.

The Commission requested for a list to be made mentioning courses that should be excluded and new courses which should be introduced. Present duration of each course needs to be reviewed and the new duration of courses should be scientifically planned. Further, it must also mention the jobs which women may engage in from home itself – such as stitching, making incense sticks etc. An analysis of the scale of earning of the students after the training must be done and 10% of this may be charged as the fee for the training. An employment-exchange bureau is required where an online registration and placement platform should be available.

Agenda no.4: To appraise the relevance of the existing Acts, rules, regulations and procedures in the education sector and to suggest improvements.

De-centralisation of the education system must be a priority and enough autonomy must be provided to all institutions at all levels. An online process of recruitment of all academic and administrative personnel must be started. The total number of sanctioned posts can be given by the ministry of finance and autonomy should be provided to the institution head to allow him to decide the structural break-up of the posts.

The Commission recommended that the notion of filling up vacant faculty seats is a liability that must be changed. It must be ensured that the same is treated as an asset for the future. Hence, the practice of non-abolition of academic posts must be introduced in the academic and R&D sector.

Mr. Asokendu Sengupta suggested that DTE, DPI, WB primary Education Council, WBBSE, WBHSC- for all such top posts including administrative posts like Secretary, Deputy Secretary, etc must be recruited through the Public Service Commission.

The Chairman mentioned that the main problem of the State Book Board is the lack of marketing, despite good standard of books that have been printed. Mr. Asokendu Sengupta suggested that the Board should print and translate more reputed books of each subject so that teachers can recommend all these books as references while teaching without facing a dilemma of referring one book in a regional language and another in English. Further, these books need to be popularized by exhibitions in colleges. Modern marketing techniques such as Flipkart, Amazon and others can be used.

Additional speaker- Mr. Aweek Majumdar

Mr. Abhik Majumdar gave an introduction about the objective and working of the Expert committee. He mentioned that –

- the committee was started in order to evaluate whether the standard of the books are in accordance with NCF (National Curriculum Framework) and RTE (Right to Education) acts.
- A new syllabus was proposed by the committee for pre-primary and primary education and accepted by the government.
- The committee had created 57 books within 2 years after analysing the contents of books in other cities and countries (especially Japan, Australia and South Africa). Integrated books were produced for classes I and II.
- while preparing the books, violence was avoided as much as possible and a sense of gender equity was maintained. Further, social issues were included while also keeping in mind the targeted age group of the books
- extensive teachers' training is required to make education child-centric and make learning activity based.
- one of the problems faced by his committee was that the private schools often used other books which were against the RTE act.
- it may be considered as an achievement that NCERT has accepted that the quality of government produced books in West Bengal to be the highest among all other states in India.
- There was a recommendation made for forming a research group to evaluate the curricula and syllabi all over the world and accordingly update the same here.

Few copies of the books produced by this committee were circulated among the members for review. Further, it was suggested by the Commission to link the digital versions of these books to the Commission's website.

Agenda no.5: To review the functioning of the statutory and other bodies in the education sector, so as to avoid jurisdictional overlaps among multiplicity of bodies, and to synergise them to work seamlessly towards the overall goal.

It was realised that no committee with required autonomy exists to look after holistic development and the functioning of all the statutory bodies.

The Commission recommended a creation of West Bengal Education Council comprising of all boards/councils and education departments together. This body would be ideal for looking into this project

Agenda No. 6: Any other item with the permission of the Chairman.

The Expert Committee was requested to give ideas about how the syllabus of higher education can be revised if required and also do a survey to find out if the universities and colleges are providing quality education as compared to the national and international level.

It was suggested that setting up new vocational colleges may reduce the pressure on general degree colleges.

It was recommended that a medical examination should be conducted every six months to judge the health conditions of children- for both the purposes- identifying weaknesses and providing them due treatment, support and also identifying the natural abilities and body framework suitable or advantageous for a particular sports. The schools may be provided with medical vans for this purpose which may be sponsored by the Sports Authority of India. Around 50 mobile health vans may be provided for this purpose in West Bengal.

Fr. J. Felix Raj mentioned the urgent need to recognise the autonomous institutions and work towards their improvement. Moreover, sufficient autonomy must be provided to existing institutions. It was discussed that government's objective should be to identify the trustworthy leaders and provide them the power of autonomy instead of reducing autonomy altogether.

It was highly recommended that Government buildings like Bikash Bhavan and Rajya-Karigari Bhavan and all important government buildings must be equipped with modern ICT tools in all levels and the usage of these must be made mandatory.

As a solution to the lack of linkage between pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, the Commission suggested that a thread is required and schools of each level must be linked based on geographical location. A list containing the data on which schools may be linked based on geographical location is thus required.

Swami Subhakarananda mentioned the need for a board promoting Sanskrit education as it has a great market in the country as well as outside the country. The issue of lack of availability of a board which is permitted to provide affiliation to Sanskrit medium schools and colleges must be discussed in the next meeting.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC)
Members on 22.08.14

Venue: Atma Ram Hall CGCRI;

Members Present:

1. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Dr. Abu Taleb Khan
3. Ms. Supti Pande
4. Smt. Sushmita Chatterjee
5. Swami Subhakarananda
6. Swami Suvirananda
7. Dr. Kalyan Rudra
8. Prabir K. Das

Others Present:

1. Amit Sanyal – Special Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee – Pushti, NGO
3. Ms. Garima Jaju – Oxford University
4. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman and a brief of the experiences on the Field visits in some institutions located in the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri during 20 -21 August 2014.

Agenda no.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 11.07.14.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections.

Agenda no. 2: Lessons learnt from North Bengal Trip

The Field Study, which include long trips covering a wide range of schools, colleges and madrasahs, revealed that –

- There is no dearth of talent among the students of North Bengal irrespective of their economic background. The members emphasised that the single most important responsibility of the teachers should be to harness the talent among students.
- The members also realised that the DI (District Inspector) of schools are not performing well. The Dept. of School Education may take care of them.
- The members after engaging in dialogues with students understood that majority of the students were happy with the quality of the mid-day meals provided in the schools.

Agenda 3: Report – Discussions on Inputs from Secretaries & Mr. Ashokendu Sengupta

Due to the absence of the concerned member, this agenda point was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

Agenda 4: Role of NGOs in Rural Education in WB – Presentation by Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee on behalf of Pushti, a voluntary organization

Dr. Mukherjee emphasised through his presentation that –

- Empowering of rural women directly affects the education sector of rural areas.
- There were concerted efforts made to ensure that self-help groups of rural women were empowered by allowing them to manage the supply of grain sacks to anganwadi centres [there are about 1 lakh ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and Anganwadi centres in West Bengal] and they could be involved in the mid-day meal management. The engagement of the rural women for the said work would ensure them training for job and make a living for their family.
- Pushti encourages many self-help group women to cultivate vegetables within the rural school premises for use in their mid-day meals. This gives ample exposure to children to learn the art and science of farming and cultivation.

- All the conventional chullahs used in the rural houses be replaced by improved chullahs developed by them in order to reduce respiratory infections, and environmental pollution.
- A part of the development funds allocated to local MLAs and MPs may be used to make a book bank for secondary and higher secondary levels in local schools. Pushti has already undertaken such an activity and has found positive results in secondary and higher secondary class enrolments. The number of female students have majorly increased, who otherwise would have discontinued their studies due to the lack of funds to purchase books.

The Commission suggested that an initiative may be made where all NGO activities undertaken towards the improvement of the education sector may be put up on a portal. This way the ideas would proliferate and could be used across the nation. Also it would allow the government to understand the various welfare activities undertaken by such NGOs and accordingly provide assistance monetarily or in any other way as required.

Agenda 5: Any other point with permission of the Chairman

Additional Speaker – Ms. Garima Jaju, a Doctoral Student of Oxford University

Ms. Jaju is studying different employment trajectories of madrasah educated youth. For her studies she focussed on Aliah University students who mainly have come from senior madrasahs. Some students, whom she referred as “shifters”, originally had started their education in non-affiliated madrasahs, but later shifted to senior madrasahs in order to get access to higher education.

Ms. Jaju mentioned of noticing a trend of madrasah students enrolling into vocational training institutions like mobile repairing, computer hardware assembling and other ancillary skills. The Commission opined that her research would need to be based on a broader sample in order to come up with a hypothesis that could be generalised across all madrasah students.

Letter from the District Magistrate, Jalpaiguri

During Commission’s field study at Japaiguri, the DM, Jalpaiguri submitted a letter from the hon’ble MP, Jalpaiguri to the Chairman of the Commission regarding opening of a Central Institute of Science and Research and a University of Arts and Visual Arts in Jalpaiguri. The Commission discussed the proposal and understood the importance of

such institutes for the promotion of creativity in that area. The members agreed to recommend an institute of Arts and Visual Arts to be set up in north Bengal for the promotion of arts. During discussions the DM requested for a science activity centre which will help the region to promote scientific temper among the students

Visit to Sanskrit College

A visit to the Sanskrit College was discussed and confirmed. The Commission members agreed to meet the faculty and students of Sanskrit College and take their inputs to make recommendations for promotion of Sanskrit within the State.

The meeting ended with the press conference and launch of the Educom Website.

**Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission**

WBEC

Record Notes for Meeting with representatives of Research Institutes held on
26.09.14

Ramakrishna Mission Institute, Golpark, Kolkata

Background:

The Chairman held an interactive meeting with the heads (or their representatives) of the following research institutes in West Bengal

- i. Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER)
- ii. Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB)
- iii. National Institution of Pharmaceutical Education & Research(NIPER)
- iv. National Institute of Biomedical Genomics(NIBMG)
- v. Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre(VECC)
- vi. Central Glass & Ceramic Research Institute(CGCRI)
- vii. Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute(CMERI)
- viii. Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics

The following Education Commission members were present in the meeting

- i. Prof. Samir K. Brahmachari
- ii. Swami Shubhakarananda
- iii. Swami Suvirananda
- iv. Smt. Supti Pandey
- v. Dr. P.K. Das

Others present were

- i. Dr. B.K. Gairola – Mission Director, Dept. Of Electronics & IT, Govt. Of India
- ii. Dr. Debashis Bandyopadhyay
- iii. Rajarshi Dasgupta - KPMG

The meeting started with a brief note apprising the representatives of the Terms of Reference of the Education Commission along with the areas that have been covered in the journey so far. It was mentioned that based on the geographic location of Bengal,

where availability of industrial land has been a major challenge, one of the recommendation points for the State's progress have been to focus on building water based industries and R&D centres which would be vertical in structure.

The Commission asked all the representatives for their suggestions and recommendations which according to them can improve the current education sector and help Bengal to get the due recognition not only in the country but in the entire world.

Inputs from Institutions:

1. IICB – Dr. Siddhartha Roy

a. Issues are at the foll levels:

- i. Text books – The present text books which are used in schools and colleges lag far behind when compared to international standards. This issue gets multiplied due to various languages in our country as creation of content in local language is a serious challenge. One of the ways by which this issue may be addressed is crowd sourcing where an open source for content creation in local language is created.
- ii. Teaching methodologies – Children need practical work along with textbooks in order to infuse the creativity from within. A basic science should be there in every school throughout the State.

2. NIBMG – Dr. Partha P. Mazumder

- a. There is a need to create a scientific temperament in schools. This could be done even in the absence of science laboratories. The teacher needs to devise ways of teaching that would instil the right temper in students which would lead them to learn science.
- b. Infrastructure is a major concern where most of the schools and colleges of rural Bengal lack proper classrooms. Also proper connectivity needs to be established between centres of excellence and the major cities. For eg. connecting Kolkata and Kalyani with high speed trains that would ease the commute for faculties and students

3. IISER – Dr. Ananda Dasgupta, for Director

- a. Kolkata had been the only centre of attention for a long period for which the other areas were neglected.
- b. Mobility has been a great problem as commuting from Kolkata and Kalyani is not smooth.

4. CMERI – Dr. Piyush Pal Roy

- a. The major hindrances in the education sector of the State has been
 - i. Lack of Entrepreneurship
 - ii. Negative thinking
 - iii. Non conducive environment
 - iv. Lack of discipline
- b. All the above mentioned hindrances can be addressed by having the right leadership. Negative thinking can be avoided by celebrating all the positive outcomes and highly rewarding everyone who were involved.

5. Dr. B.K. Gairola

The following presentation was made by Dr. Gairola

- Facts about present state
 - Shortage of teachers and more so quality faculty
 - Gap between what is taught and industry needs
 - Unable to provide education to all desirous students at all levels -- scale
 - One time heavy dosage in a world where knowledge in exploding
 - Need to re-look at the higher education sector
- Following major requirements to be met:
- Expand the reach of H education
 - Improve quality of H education
 - Change the learning process from one time learning to life-long learning
 - Specific need based learning over time
 - Collaborative research and education shared courses (IIIT Raipur)
 - Innovation as an integral part of teaching and research
 - Bridging the gap to make a student job ready

3) How can we achieve through ICT?

4) What does ICT provide (Annihilate time and distance)

- Access NKN, NOFN, college LAN, Wi Fi,
- Connectivity in schools
- Common services Mail, web hosting, MOOC hosting, courseware for schools
- Blended learning
- Global education and research community

5) What should State govt do?

- Create a common ICT infrastructure across all Campuses
- Look at the feasibility of setting up the concept of flexible course selection by the students
- Create a mechanism to build the course lecture / material repository for blending with the courseware
- Pilot a few courses suited for such a transition
- Setup a permanent group of educationist and tech professionals to work out a road map and guide the system for pedagogical transformation in H education
- Examine the feasibility of Collaboration with other Universities Globally to leapfrog in knowledge gathering NKN enables it. . NRIs can also help

It is high time that we put all our efforts in transforming the higher education suited to the 21st century needs, or else Googles of the world will be making Indian education system redundant.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members
on 09.10.14

Venue: Atma Ram Committee Room, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Abu Taleb Khan
3. Supti Pandey
4. Sushmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
5. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
6. Kalyan Rudra
7. P.K. Das

Others Present:

1. Dr. Amit Sanyal – Spl Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal
2. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman and a summary of the presentation that was made by Dr. B. K. Gairola Mission Director (e-Governance), Department of Electronics & Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. Govt. of India, during the meeting held with heads of research institutes.

Agenda no.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 22.08.14.

Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd August 2014 were discussed and accepted with some minor corrections.

Agenda no. 2: Discussions on the responses received from various stakeholders

Due to the absence of the concerned members, this agenda point would be discussed in the next Commission meeting.

Agenda 3: Discussions on Inputs from heads of research institutes

The commission discussed “content creation” as the key point that was brought up by Dr. Gairola in his presentation at the research institution meeting. It was pointed out that Bengal, in order to prepare for the future needs, must create internet based content in local language as well as in English. This would be required to keep pace with the future online system of teaching and learning.

The Commission suggested recommending a small committee to be formed of very talented teachers and scholars from various disciplines of academia who would take charge of creating digital learning content at various levels.

The Commission opined that the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education should take the responsibility of digital content creation for college level onwards.

The Commission discussed about a possible location and site for creation of University Townships in north and south of Bengal. The Commission asked its members to conduct a study and revert with possible options keeping in mind to avoid fertile land as much as possible.

There was a discussion about addressing the issue of discipline among the higher education institutions of the State. The Commission suggested that in order to bring in discipline, the institutions should incorporate a sense of competitiveness amongst the students and teachers of the institutions. The Commission drew references from the impeccable management committees of various Durga pujas around the State where the entire show is carried on flawlessly. This is made possible by the intense competition that exists among all the Durga puja managements. Similarly, the Commission recommended

that various drives like cleanliness drive, “going green” drive, best maintained library, etc. may be introduced in a competitive manner across the colleges of the State which would act as a motivating factor and help bring in discipline among the students.

In addition the Commission discussed about possible ways to overcome negative thinking amongst students as this was a point raised during the meeting with research institutes. It was recommended that there should be a process of rewarding successful people, the achievers and this may change the mindset of people who indulge into negative thinking.

The Commission mentioned about changing the present examination system where students should be tested for knowledge and not the amount of information that one can retain. With the advent of technology, access to information has become much easier than before and therefore the present examination system where a student is mainly tested for retention of information has become redundant. The ideal way of examination should be to assess the ability of students’ power to observe, analyse and deduce.

The Commission also recommended that the education system in schools should be converted into five day weeks with one day in a week dedicated for students to learn on their own and carry out activities which would bring out the creativity in them.

Agenda 4: Discussion on selection of Institutional Leaders

This agenda point would be discussed in the next Commission meeting

Agenda 5: Preparation of the Final Report

The Chairman requested Dr. Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Dr.P.K. Das and KPMG representative to be present at Delhi during 2nd November – 6th November for the preparation of the final report. The first draft of this report would be presented to the Dr. Partha Chatterjee, Hon’ble MiC, Education Dept. /Chief Secretary on the 10th of November, 2014.

Agenda 5: Any other point with permission of the Chairman

No further points were discussed and the meeting ended with a thank you note from the Chairman.

Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission

WBEC

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission with officials of Urdu Academy and Vangiyo Sanskrit Shiksha Parishat on 07.11.14

Venue: State Council of Higher Education

Members Present:

1. Swami Suvirananda
2. Dr. P.K. Das

Invitees:

1. Syed Manal Shah Alquadri – Vice Chairman Urdu Academy
2. Atanusasan Mukhopadhyay – Secretary Vangiyo Sanskrit Shiksha Parishat
3. Swami Vedutattwananda – Principal (Off) Veda Vidyalaya Belur Math

The meeting was held to especially discuss the state of Sanskrit and Urdu Education in West Bengal and to come up with suggestions to improve the level of education.

Sanskrit

Various issues in relation to the traditional form of Sanskrit education, the learning curriculum of Adya, Madhya and Upadhi examinations conducted by VANGIYA SANSKRIT SIKSHA PARISHAT, and the improvement of the position of Sanskrit Pandits are discussed in detail in the meeting. Sri Atanusasan Mukhopadhyay, Secretary, Vangiya Sanskrit Siksha Parishat had made a presentation covering these issues, and the following matters came up for discussion in course of his presentation :

1. It was discussed that the traditional Tol system of education in Sanskrit, has its long heritage in our country, and is quite distinct from the anglo-Sanskrit education of the modern era. In Bengal, there are families which for generations, have employed their whole-hearted attention exclusively in the Sanskrit shastras, darshanas, kavyas etc. without feeling urge to broaden their learning in any modern English language-based field of education. The issue needs to be properly addressed through right career building plan for Pandits as their gainful profession of earning. Minor overhaul in the learning curriculum of Adya, Madhya and Upadhi

examinations conducted by Vangiya Sanskrit Siksha Parishat would, therefore, be necessary.

2. In this connection, Communication No. F.46-1/63 dated 23.1.64 issued by Ministry of Education, Government of India, has been brought to the notice of the Commission. In the same, equivalent examinations in the general educational set up for the Madhya and the Tirtha (i.e., Upadhi) examinations conducted by Vangiya Sanskrit Siksha Parishat have been mentioned as the Intermediate and the M.A. examinations respectively. In the second para of point (b) of the said communication, it is mentioned that this was the Central Sanskrit Board's suggestion of interim equivalence of traditional Sanskrit Examinations conducted by various examining bodies to certain standard examinations in the general educational set-up. The purpose was guiding in matters of employment of Sanskrit Pandits in Universities, Secondary/Higher Secondary Schools / Colleges.
3. Secretary, Vangiya Sanskrit Siksha Parishat also informed that the classical teachers of Sanskrit have been facing problems in getting jobs educational institutions as per existing Govt. orders.

In view of the statements made by the Secretary, Vangiya Sanskrit Siksha Parishat, it is resolved that formation of a Sanskrit Board and a Sanskrit University would be a good solution. The matter of Sanskrit up to school level would be taken care by the Board, while that of higher studies (Under UGC) would be best dealt by the University. Government may be moved accordingly.

It was discussed in the meeting that the Tol system of education needs revival. The major aspects mentioning the importance of the Tol system are as follows:

- i. The modern system of BA/MA in Sanskrit is insufficient to produce the scholars of the glorious repute. Hence, the need for the preservation of the Tol system can't be ignored.
- ii. Tol system is the ancient Indian way of imparting education. It is time-tested and proven method of teaching-learning.
- iii. Many scholarly books are written in West Bengal on Nyaya and Vedanta which have become the text books for all the Sanskrit students.
- iv. The Pandits, who are remembered proudly by Bengal for their scholarship and writing the monumental works, came from the ancient Tol system.
- v. All these scholars came from various Pathashalas /Chatushpathis or Tols, and we don't find even single scholar of that repute produced by the modern BA/MA system. This proves the strength, importance and necessity of the Tol system

Ramakrishna Mission would render every possible help in the operation of the

Sanskrit University, Board and any Government arm, if not the Board, to look after the Tols.

Few points must be kept in mind while approving grants, equivalence and powers for running the Tols:

- a. While naming the courses and granting the equivalence adequate care must be taken that students are accepted all over India.
- b. The primary, middle and high school education is a matter to be dealt by the Boards and Councils whereas higher education is dealt with by the universities. UGC has the stipulation that the universities should not meddle with school education etc. Hence, creating or approving a common body which will take care of school, college and university education under one umbrella is poised to face tough legal problems from UGC.
- c. The syllabus of the Sanskrit education either traditional or modern should make the students eligible for the vertical and horizontal mobility of the students as impressed up by UGC.
- d. If the present structure of syllabus of Tols doesn't address the issue of feeder institutions, there should some provision to take care of this.
- e. Need for open education is always felt and hence, stressed by all the Govts. It is evident from the data of open education system that there is always a large chunk of students in need of open system of education. Hence, there should be a system of examining and issuing certificate to the students who would like to take the route of open system of education.
- f. Right set of rules needs be created to run the Tols due to following reasons:
 - i. The very basic nature of Gurukula/Chatuspathi/tol can not be looked at from the stand point of modern schooling system where, the subjects teachers and students come to the schools and take part in their stipulated classes and go home etc. The system is evaluated by periodic exams.
 - ii. The moment Tols are asked to function like modern schools they are bound to lose their originality. At the same time, there can't be full freedom regarding syllabus, number and age of the students, qualification and number of the pandits to employed etc.
 - iii. Tols have and should have their own system of admitting a student, keeping him with Guruji, imparting lessons to him, homework, and

continuous evaluation of the pupil, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

- iv. Citizens produced under the care of able Guruji in the Tols will be bearing high moral standard as against the erosion of such standards in the present generations.
- v. The testing method for ascertaining the scholarship of a pandit to teach at a certain level needs to be evolved. It again can be on the lines of traditional methods of testing. However, there should be some objective set of rules and procedures for such testing. This will bring transparency in the system
- vi. Many keep voicing the malpractices with which the present Tol system is badly ridden with. This happens largely due to lack of set of rules to administer the Tols. Hence, rules which will not suffocate the life of Tol system, at the same time, will arrest the so called and probable malpractices, must be created.

Urdu

The Vice Chairman, Urdu Academy, mentioned about the activities of the Academy. He is satisfied with the recommendations of the Madrasah Board regarding education in various madrasahs. He also requested to bring all non-affiliated madrasahs under the Madrasah Board.

The meeting ended with thanks from the Chair.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members
on 15.01.15

Venue: Atma Ram Committee Room, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Vivek Kumar
3. Fr. Felix Raj
4. Abu Taleb Khan
5. Swami Shubhakarananda
6. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
7. Supti Pandey
8. P.K. Das

Others Present:

1. Arnab Ray – Secretary, School Education, Government of West Bengal
2. Debashis Bandyopadhyay – Principal Scientist
3. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman congratulating every member for having a very successful meeting with the Hon'ble Chief Minister. The members agreed that there was a positive vibe among the top government dignitaries and ministers to majorly improve the education system of the State and the Commission's report would be a great start towards it.

The members decided that for the second term, the Commission will convert the vision document into an implementation road map document with respective financial implications and timeframe to achieve those implementations. Also a task force team of 5 members comprising of voluntary individuals would be responsible to work with the

government and ensure that the implementations are carried forward and monitored over a period of time. This way, by the end of the second term, the Commission would ensure that a serious of implementations have taken place.

Agenda no.1: Report of the meeting with the hon'ble Chief Minister on 12/12/2014.

The draft final report was summarised into 26 points and presented to the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Most of the suggested recommendations were accepted and appreciated by the Chief Minister and some of them had also been processed by the Hon'ble MIC Education for implementation. All the points were further discussed with the members and the inputs of the Chief Minister were incorporated. A minutes of the meeting was sent to Hon'ble MIC Education for his perusal.

Agenda no. 2: Finalisation of the content of the annexure to the final report

A list of annexure inclusions have been circulated for approval. Once confirmed, the annexure would be finalised and appended with the Final Report. It was decided by the Commission that a separate document named "supplementary annexure" would be maintained consisting of all the minutes of meetings held with members and other stakeholders. It would be a detailed document with extensive data points and may act as a back-up document of the Final Report.

Agenda 3: Framing of strategy for implementation of the road map

The Commission discussed and agreed that during its present phase, it would act as a liaison between the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal and various other industry bodies like CII, BCCI and Tata sky. The Commission would engage in meetings with them and come up with proposals and implementation roadmap documents with financial implications. These plan documents would be presented to the Government of West Bengal for its early approvals and immediate implementations.

Agenda 4: Alternate financial models for implementation of the road map

The Commission has received a set of action plans with the respective financial models from CII. A meeting in this regard has been set up with CII for further discussion so that the Task Force may implement them at the earliest. A private public partnership model for all the suggested action plans has been suggested. The Commission also requested for a list of all MLAs and MPs data district wise based on which a financial plan would be drawn where every MLA and MP would be requested to adopt a certain school or college based on their current location. The MLA and MP LAD fund would be used for this purpose.

Agenda 5: Any other item with the permission of the Chairman

- i. The Commission decided that there may be a meeting set up between the Task Force team and representatives from the newly created private universities. This would help the upcoming new universities understand the present challenges of the State's education sector and plan and implement some of the suggestions of the Education Commission.
- ii. The Department of Higher Education confirmed and committed that most of the suggestions of the Education Commission that were discussed with the Hon'ble Chief Minister would be implemented in the next six months.
- iii. The Commission discussed with Mr. Arnab Ray, Secretary, School Education Department, Government of West Bengal that it was important to implement active English classes in all government and government aided schools across the state. This would be possible by approaching Tata sky or other satellite television companies for airing elementary English education channels.

- iv. The Commission agreed to extend the services of KPMG for another year due to the extension that the Commission received from the Government of West Bengal. It was decided that the terms and conditions would remain the same as per the existing terms and conditions.
- v. A field study was planned during 15th – 18th March, 2015 where the Commission would meet GTA representatives and consider their views and suggestions to improve the education institutions located around the hill region of West Bengal. The Commission would also meet the DM of Jalpaiguri and visit the proposed site for the suggested University Township.

The meeting ended with the Chairman thanking all the members and other participants present during the meeting of the West Bengal Education Commission for their valuable inputs.

Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC)
Members with the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) on 08.05.2015

Venue: Louis Jubilee Complex, Darjeeling

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Ashokendu Sengupta
3. Prabir K. Das – Member Secretary, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education

Others Present:

1. Mr. Roshan Giri, General Secretary, GJM
2. Mr. T. Yogi
3. Mr. Mrinal Ghosh, District Child Protection Officer
4. Mr. Kumar Dutta, President, D.S.B. (P.Edu)
5. Ms. Anjana Thapar, DIT, Darjeeling
6. Representatives of various schools and colleges of GTA
7. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The members of the West Bengal Education Commission visited some schools and colleges in Darjeeling district within the jurisdiction of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, and interacted with the teachers, students, and representatives of local administration (7-8 May 2015). On 8 May 2015, the Commission had a meeting with Officials of GTA, some heads of educational institutions under GTA and other stake holders in Louis Jubilee Complex, Darjeeling.

The meeting started with the welcome address by the GJM General Secretary Mr. Roshan Giri, following which the Chairman explained briefly the mission and objectives of the Commission.

The following points were discussed in the meeting:

- I. The members of the GTA demanded the creation of a separate School Service Commission (SSC) and a College Service Commission for the GTA region. A tripartite agreement signed between the Government of West Bengal, Government of Indian and GTA mentions that a separate School Service Commission and College Service Commission should be constituted which would be overlooking dealing with matters related to recruitment of teachers for the schools and colleges in the GTA region. They mentioned that this would be required for improving the present status of the schools and colleges in and around the district. The Commission recommends the creation of a SSC for hill schools and opines that the matter of College Service Commission for hill colleges may be solved by way of creating a separate chapter for hill colleges in the existing West Bengal College Service Commission.
- II. The Commission recommends the establishment of a Central University in Darjeeling for which land has already been allocated. All existing and future colleges within the GTA may be affiliated to the new university.
- III. As games and sports is highly appreciated among the local people and the Commission recommends establishment of a sports oriented college here. This college should emphasise on the most popular games and sports and may function like the Sports Authority of India.
- IV. The GTA members and other participants stressed upon regularisation of the qualified part-time teachers. The Commission recommends this for careful consideration.
- V. Resolved that an academic staff college should be set up for the school teachers. This would immensely help in improving the quality of education being imparted in the hill region.
- VI. The GTA representatives mentioned about a serious problem concerning school books. Most of the schools under GTA do not receive the books on time which makes it difficult for the schools to complete the syllabus before the year end examinations. The schools usually reopen in February after the winter break but the books don't arrive before May, causing a serious concern for the teachers to keep pace. The Commission appeals to the administration to urgently look into this matter and ensure that necessary steps are taken to deliver the books on time.

- VII. The Commission agrees that it is important to enable wi-fi services in the institute campuses and ensure that all students are given access to the internet. It is observed that some institutions curbed their students from using the internet, while others gave the students limited access. It is strongly recommended that all students should be allowed access to internet and the responsibility of the upkeep of the computers should be given to the senior students. The library facilities should be improved too.
- VIII. The members of the Commission visited Dowhill School and Victoria Boys' School in the Kurseong subdivision and also visited St. Joseph's College in Darjeeling. The Commission recommends that these two schools should be converted into Model Schools and upgraded to higher secondary level. The infrastructure of both these schools is far better than most of the government schools in the state. Special attention should be paid to these schools and mid-day meals should be introduced.
- IX. The Commission is highly impressed with the infrastructure and upkeep of the St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling and recommends all the other higher education institutions under GTA to draw references from this institution. St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling should be set as a Model College in the hill.
- X. The participants suggest that a conveyance discount should be introduced for students commuting in the hills. It has been observed that many private vehicles operate as a shuttle commuting school and college children to various destinations around the hills. These vehicles are often dangerously filled with children more than their permissible capacity. Therefore plying dedicated vehicles during the school and college hours for the ease of commuting such children at a discounted rate can be a good option.
- XI. The GTA representatives inform that the local children are more comfortable in English and Nepali. After discussions, the Commission suggests that the Rabindra Open School be requested to incorporate Nepali also as the medium of studies.
- XII. Discussed that all the schools and colleges in the hills should initiate respective alumni association and actively track the old students graduated from their respective institutions through the help of Facebook as these schools have produced over the decades several outstanding students who are highly placed in the society. These alumni can result in a major source of funding for infrastructure development and other upkeep expenses. The alumni association may maintain a database and periodic updates regarding their respective institutions may be

shared via emails. The Commission mentions that it is good to follow the St. Xavier's College, Kolkata Alumni Association model, through which the institution has majorly benefitted.

- XIII. The representatives from the GTA and some of the heads of the institutions have reported that there are more than 500 volunteer teachers and around 1000 adhoc teachers in primary schools of the GTA. Discussed that necessary actions should be taken in order to regularise the qualified teachers and the education department should ensure that all the vacant posts are immediately filled up.

The meeting ended with the GJM Secretary thanking all the members and other participants present during the meeting of the West Bengal Education Commission for their valuable inputs.

Prof. S.K. Brahmachari,
Chairman, West Bengal Education Commission

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC) Members
on 16.07.15

Venue: Atma Ram Committee Room, CGCRI, Jadavpur

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Supti Pandey
3. Sushmita Bhattacharya (Chatterjee)
4. Swami Subhakarananda
5. Swami Suvirananda
6. Kalyan Rudra
7. Ashokendu Sengupta
8. Fr. John Felix Raj
9. Sanghamitra Banerjee
10. Prabir K. Das

Others Present:

1. Amit Sanyal – Special Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, Govt. of WB.
2. Kamal Dasgupta – Director, CGCRI
3. Debashis Bandyopadhyay - Principal Scientist, CGCRI
4. Arup Dutta - KPMG
5. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman along with a vote of thanks to all members for their relentless support, guidance and willingness to complete the task of the final report beyond their comfort zones! **Agenda no.1: Submission of the Final Report to the Hon'ble Chief Minister.**

The Commission has submitted a copy of the final report to the Chief Secretary and has requested for an appointment from the Hon'ble Chief Minister to submit and discuss the final report. A meeting during the first or second week of August has been tentatively planned which would be confirmed depending on Hon'ble Chief Minister's availability. The Commission has also converted some of the recommendations of the final report into implementable proposals and submitted 15 such proposals to the Hon'ble MIC Education. It was decided by the Commission that post the handover of the final report, the Commission would convert more recommendations into proposals and submit them.

Agenda no. 2: Framing of the State's Education Policy in view of the 'National Policy on Education', MHRD, Govt. Of India

The Commission discussed the framework of the National Education Policy document and unanimously agreed that the present report, which the Commission has prepared, majorly covered all the stakeholders' recommendations of the education sectors of the state. However, the Commission decided to form smaller teams among the members to address the questions which have been stated in the MHRD document for the schools and colleges of the state. Mr. Ashokendu Sengupta and Mrs. Supti Pandey have been requested to address the questions for the schools at a state level from the National Education Policy document. They were requested to inform the Commission about any major issues which might have been missed out in the final report. Similarly, Dr. P.K. Das and Dr. Amit Sanyal have been requested to address the questions for the colleges / higher education and confirm to the Commission in case of any missing issues.

The Commission requested Swami Suvirananda Maharaj and Swami Shubhakarananda Maharaj to assist in gathering some data from various Ramakrishna Mission schools which are geographically distributed across the state and which would help the Commission in answering the questions. The Commission asked KPMG to create a spreadsheet mentioning the list of all schools block wise for every district. This data would be used as a supplement to address the school questions.

Agenda no. 3: Any other point with the permission of the Chairman

The Commission decided to reconvene during the first or the second week of August, 2015, post the finalisation of the meeting with the Hon'ble Chief Minister for handing over of the final report.

Proceedings of the Meeting of West Bengal Education Commission (WBEC)
Members on 17.08.15

Venue: State Council of Higher Education

Members Present:

1. Samir K. Brahmachari, Chairman
2. Supti Pandey
3. Swami Subhakarananda
4. Swami Suvirananda
5. Prabir K. Das
6. Abu.T. Khan
7. The Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education (Represented by Amit Sanyal)

Others Present:

1. Rajarshi Dasgupta- KPMG

The meeting started with the welcome address by the Chairman along with discussions on some modifications in the final report.

Agenda no.1: Confirmation of the proceedings of the last meeting.

The Commission discussed all the points of the final report which were raised by Shri. A. Sengupta for modification. These points were suitably amended/modified with the consent of the Commission members present. The following are the list of points amended in the final report:

Shri. A. Sengupta points	Modifications in the report
COMPARABLE ECONOMY: I DO NOT AGREE THAT VIETNAM, INDIA & GERMANY HAVE COMPARABLE ECONOMY; more importantly the state characters are different altogether. P 24	Modified in Pg. 24
Immediate filling up ... Direct filling up of vacant posts is not possible; the practice was abandoned earlier for many defects	Modified in Pg. 24-25

Re-engagement of retired teachers.... - IT training may be desirable but it should not be made a pre-requisite	Modified in Pg. 26
Value Education: The NSS should be introduced at all levels	Modified in Pg 26
Mobile Laboratories	Modified in Pg. 32
Creation of New Model Schools and Model Colleges ... The Gol is committed to do that and it should take the responsibility. We must note that the state government has its own financial constraints and it cannot offer significant tax reliefs to attract 'wealthy businessman'. However, the COMMISSION may suggest that the state government may consider opening of two model schools and one model college in each district every year	Modified in Pg. 33
New Vocational Courses.... There is no basis to believe that students of non-affiliated Madrasahs constitute 80% of drop outs	Modified in Pg. 34
In Education field p-p-p model turns out to be a burden for the government ultimately – so, it is not at all advisable to encourage p-p-p model. Private players may be allowed to invest independently in the field observing government-made rules and regulations	Modified in Pg. 34
The COMMISSION may suggest that the universities encourage students to pursue vocational courses following National Skills Qualification Framework	Modified in pg 34
Students' Union... The recommendation made is absurd and is equivalent to throwing the baby with the bath-tub. The Commission may accept the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Higher Education constituted by the government of West Bengal	Modified in Pg. 37
Mapping of College Fees 50% of proceeds of colleges less than 10 years old need not be waived straightaway; rather colleges having poor financial health should be given special financial assistance.	Modified in Pg. 54
College Libraries..... use of AADHAR CARD for any purpose cannot be made compulsory. Voter card may be considered for the purpose. Library system deserves a new look and for that matter a separate committee may be constituted by the government: p-39	Modified in Pg. 39; Constituting a committee was not recommended
LANGUAGE POLICY: The English language teaching need not be overemphasized and that may widen rural-urban gap. Learners must learn at least one language properly – this should be the motto.	No special mention
The role of Business Groups (e.g. Google, Khan Academy)/ Private Institutions (e.g. KISS, St Xaviers College) : It is also overemphasized. It may give wrong signal to society. Some may cash it for unholy purpose, some may feel embarrassed	Modified in Pg 45

Meta University.... : it is confusing, better we may use the word University in lieu of 'Meta University'. The purpose of this university is to give all government college students and teachers more space to design their own curriculum and roadmap(for both Pass & Honours Courses) and to allow them to get rid of the 'convoy system'	Modified in Pg. 48
Five Day Week.... : switching over to five day week system and abolition of off day is recommended with the condition that all teachers will be given earned leave and they will be allowed to enjoy study leave as and when it will be required for the specific purpose	Modified in Pg. 52
Student –Teacher Ratio : It must not exceed 10:1 in lab-based subject (with at least 5 teachers in an honours subject) and 15: 1 in a non-lab based subject (with at least 4 teachers in an honours subject). P- 54	Modified in Pg. 54
Sanskrit University: Sanskrit College may be elevated to the status of University and its wings including publications need to be strengthened. P-64	Modified in Pg. 64

Agenda no. 2: Submission of the final report to the Hon'ble Chief Minister 18.7.2015

Originally as per instruction from CM's office 18th August was earmarked for submission of final report to the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Due to the unavailability of the Hon'ble Chief Minister on 18th August for certain emergencies, it was decided by the Commission to present the report to the Government and subsequently to be uploaded in the website.

Agenda no. 3: Review of activities of the State's Education Policy

An additional responsibility was given to the Education Commission to compile the state's view for the national education policy based on the West Bengal Education Commission's report 2020:2030. Towards this, 13 themes for the school education and 20 themes for the college and higher education given by the Government of India, MHRD were discussed. The Commission felt that since this exercise has already been done, the members could help Dr. P.K. Das in compilation of the theme wise document of the state of West Bengal. Accordingly members were given the responsibility for compiling various themes and were asked to communicate to Dr. Das by 5th September 2015.

Agenda no. 4: Any other point with the permission of the Chairman

This being the last meeting of the West Bengal Education Commission **for preparation of the roadmap and vision document 2020:2030**, the Chairman sincerely expressed his gratitude and thanked all the members. He mentioned that the subsequent meetings would be held only to discuss the state's view based on the WBEC report for the

National Education Policy document. The Chairman hopes that much of these recommendations would not only be implemented in West Bengal but also suitably adopted throughout the country. The next meeting of the Commission would be held on 24th September to discuss the state's view on the National Education Policy document.

The meeting concluded with thanks to the Chair by the members present who complimented the Chairman for his dedicated effort, commitment and vision shared in the preparation of the document.

WBEC