

# **Remodelling of School Education Boards**

**Report of the Task Force  
on the Role & Status of  
Boards of Secondary Education**

(Appointed by the Department of Education,  
Ministry of Human Resource Development,  
Government of India)



**Government of India  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
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- f) Various officials and others connected with different Boards in the country. Though only some of the Board headquarters could be visited owing to my having fallen ill at a critical juncture, wherever we went (Gandhinagar, Lucknow,

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- g). Our Editor, Suhasini Ramaswamy, worked under considerable pressure of time but responded to the call of duty with a sense of commitment.

I am obliged to each one of these persons. But for their help and assistance it would have been impossible to complete the job.

16 February, 1997

AMRIK SINGH  
Chairman

## **ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AICSE</b>	<b>All India Council for Secondary Education</b>
<b>AICTE</b>	<b>All India Council for Technical Education</b>
<b>AIU</b>	<b>Association of Indian Universities</b>
<b>BOARD</b>	<b>Boards of Secondary/Higher Secondary Council or Boards of School Education</b>
<b>CABE</b>	<b>Central Advisory Board of Education</b>
<b>CBSE</b>	<b>Central Board of Secondary Education</b>
<b>C&amp;CE</b>	<b>Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation</b>
<b>CISCE</b>	<b>Council for Indian School Certificate Examination</b>
<b>COBSE</b>	<b>Council for Boards of School Education in India</b>
<b>DIET</b>	<b>District Institute of Education and Training</b>
<b>DPEP</b>	<b>District Primary Education Project</b>
<b>DPI</b>	<b>Director/Directorate of Public Instruction</b>
<b>IGNOU</b>	<b>Indira Gandhi National Open University</b>
<b>INSA</b>	<b>Indian National Science Academy</b>
<b>KVS</b>	<b>Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan</b>
<b>NCERT</b>	<b>National Council of Educational Research and Training</b>
<b>NCTE</b>	<b>National Council for Teacher Education</b>
<b>NIEPA</b>	<b>National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration</b>
<b>NOS</b>	<b>National Open School</b>
<b>NVS</b>	<b>Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti</b>
<b>SCERT</b>	<b>State Council of Educational Research and Training</b>
<b>UGC</b>	<b>University Grants Commission</b>



## **LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

Room No., 240, CIET  
Chacha Nehru Bhavan  
NCERT NIE Campus  
Sri Aurobindo Marg  
New Delhi 110016

February 18, 1997

Dear Shri Bommai,

On completion of the work of our Task Force, we herewith submit our report on the Remodeling of School Education Boards. Details in regard to the appointment of the Task Force and related matters are given at Appendix A of the report and do not have to be recalled here.

According to the recommendations of the 1992 revision of the NPE, this report should have been finalised by March 1993. But, unfortunately, even the appointment of this Task Force got delayed by about two years. There was a further delay owing to my having to undergo surgery while the work of the Task Force was still in progress. The report is however now ready in all respects and is submitted to you for favour of consideration.

2. While doing so, we wish to call special attention to the following:

- (a) While the process of consideration will take some time, and will perhaps involve consultation with colleagues in various states in regard to the recommendations made here, our suggestion is that some kind of a timetable for implementation be drawn up by the Department of Education.
- (b) Setting the date of implementation is important. At the same time, we recognise that there can be no terminal date in respect of implementation. This process will necessarily go on for quite some time. It is important however that different phases of implementation are worked out. We have referred to the need for doing so but have refrained from being more specific for the simple reason that implementation is the

responsibility of the Department of Education. We therefore did not wish to say anything which would bind the Department of Education to any schedule. As to the urgency of the matter, however, we have no doubt. Hence the repeated references to this matter.

- (c) In terms of field operations, the overwhelming part of the job has to be done at the state level. It is for your ministry and the Central Advisory Board of Education to work out these details and adhere to them as far as possible.
- (d) The role of the Centre in helping the states with funding is so obvious that it does not require any elaboration. It may be recalled in this connection that in the fifties and the seventies when the duration of schooling was extended by one year each, the Centre had promised as well as actually given financial aid to the states. If, at the same time, the School Education Boards had been reorganised in the wake of those reforms, there would have been no problem. Now there is a problem. This problem was noted both in 1986 and 1992. The recognition to appoint a Task Force arose from the recognition that the job not having been done in good time needed to be attended to now. The states, particularly those in the South and the Northeast, would have to be helped more than others to restructure their Boards. A certain amount of Central help to these Boards which are in need of restructuring will be imperative in our opinion.
- (e) Central aid in respect of quite a few other things is also called for. Without repeating all that has been said in the body of the report, we wish to invite your specific attention to the need for the retraining of secondary school teachers on a sustained and systematic basis. Indeed no other input is more crucial than the retraining of teachers at this level. This is perhaps the most neglected sector of secondary education after the need to restructure the Boards. In fact we would go so far as to say that, without these two crucial inputs, secondary education will continue to be in the unhappy state it is in.
- (f) Last of all we wish to invite your special attention to the disconcerting discovery we made in the course of this analysis. Something like one-third of the students who pass out at the



plus two level join college. This is a serious distortion which needs to be corrected within the next decade or so. These students join college partly for the reason that the employment situation is difficult and partly for the reason that the tuition fees at this level are, exceptions apart, what they were half a century ago. Above all, both the academic and skill levels at the higher secondary stage are far from satisfactory. This is in respect of the higher level of secondary education which is expected to be terminal in character, as indeed it ought to be.

(g) Once a decision to bring down the transition rate from the higher secondary to college level is taken, it is bound to take a few years to actually do so. The difficulties which flow from the unhelpful social attitudes have been referred to in the body of the report. This distortion, once corrected, should relieve pressure at the college level and improve the level of performance at the secondary level and save money from the exchequer of the States. It costs much less to train a student at the higher secondary than at the college level. Since the bulk of the expenditure in any case is met by the States, they will, in course of time, save at the college level and make secondary education more meaningful and more productive.

3. Normally, an executive summary of the Report is provided. Since our last chapter (Towards Quality) performs the same function, we have decided not to repeat ourselves. A chapter-wise summary is, however, given at the end of the report.

4. In the hope that the report would be found useful as well as pragmatic,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Amrik Singh)

Shri S.R. Bommai  
Minister for Human Resource Development  
Shastri Bhavan  
New Delhi 110001



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## THE PLACE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Attention to Secondary Education

**I**n a developed country, literacy is almost universal and children stay at school till the ages of 16, 17, 18—as the case may be and discontinue after completing their secondary education. In most cases, secondary education is the terminal stage of education. Till some decades ago, only a small percentage, even less than 10 per cent of the relevant student population, elected to go to college. Of late however, the situation has been changing. In countries that can afford mass higher education, this percentage has gone up to 20, 30, even 40 per cent in certain cases.

1.02 Underdeveloped countries are in a different position. Most of them face a difficult situation in several respects, particularly in the field of social services. The resources available for education are generally meagre though the percentage varies from country to country. This is the broad picture. Currently, India spends around 3.5 per cent of her national income on education. It is proposed to raise this percentage gradually to 6 per cent by the end of the Ninth Plan. Hopefully, this will be achieved. But it would not be surprising, if there is a shortfall at the end of the Ninth Plan period. Even so, it will be an impressive achievement, more particularly when one looks at some of the neighbouring countries and quite a few other underdeveloped countries.

1.03 When funding is meagre and resources are scarce, the issue of allocation to different sectors of education becomes important, indeed crucial. While detailed data will be given later, it can be affirmed here without much qualification that secondary education in India, generally speaking, has received a poor deal.

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The reasons too will be gone into later. In terms of the argument under discussion, it will, however, be in order to mention two factors.

1.04 One was the decision of the Constitution makers to make education compulsory up to the age of 14. That the decision has not been properly implemented is another issue. The commitment is there and has become a point of reference for all subsequent discussions on the problem. The second was the pre-eminence which higher education has enjoyed ever since the establishment of the universities in India in 1857. The fruits of that pre-eminence were amongst other things reflected in the decisive role played by a score or so of the principal architects of the Constitution. Most of them were lawyers and believed in parliamentary democracy. Notwithstanding their background and training, almost each one of them recognised the importance of universal education. That is how Article 45 of the Constitution came to be inserted.

1.05 Secondary education was nowhere in the picture in this landscape of the future India. Further, those at the helm of affairs did not recommend compulsory education beyond the age of 14. This was not regarded as feasible or advisable at that stage of the country's development. What has happened since then need not be discussed here. All said and done, elementary education was perceived as an essential objective and everything else, including secondary education, was perceived as desirable. In the case of higher education, no special attention was either called for or given. It was the gateway to a prosperous career and all those who managed to cross the earlier hurdles were keen to opt for higher education.

1.06 In consequence, secondary education did not receive the requisite attention. This had unhappy consequences for the future of secondary education and it will be difficult to say whether those adverse consequences have been taken care of adequately and properly even till today. And yet, if India has to progress in a meaningful sense, secondary education will have to be given its due. The situation today has not remained frozen at the point when India became independent half a century ago. It has been evolving and will continue to do so. Since the earlier situation has been dealt with by various committees, including

the 1992 revision of the 1986 Policy, here it is proposed to focus on recent developments.

### **Changing Perspective**

1.07 According to the provisional statistics released by the NCERT in respect of the Sixth All India Educational Survey, the growth of schools from 1986 to 1993 was as follows:

**Table 1.1: Increase in Types of Schools**

<i>Type of Schools</i>	<i>% Increase</i>
Primary	8.78
Upper Primary	15.75
Secondary	25.84
Higher Secondary	52.11

1.08 It is clear that both secondary and higher secondary levels of education are growing at an unusually fast pace. The relatively massive growth of education at the lower levels during the preceding decades had made it more or less inevitable. In contrast, the figures given in Table 1.1 suggest that primary education has not been growing at an equally fast rate. Presumably the base in respect of primary education has become somewhat large and therefore the rate of growth, when seen in terms of percentages, does not appear to be all that notable. Whatever be the explanation, the fact remains that there has been a spurt in the growth of secondary and higher secondary schools during recent years. In terms of the percentage increase of teachers, another item of data, confirms the above calculation. The exact figures are as follows:

**Table 1.2: Increase in Teachers by Types of Schools**

<i>Type of schools</i>	<i>% Increase</i>
Primary	11.27
Upper Primary	10.35
Secondary	15.92
Higher Secondary	40.12

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1.09 One more relevant piece of evidence may be seen from the details of the newly established schools during this period in respect of that much neglected area of social analysis, the rural urban divide:

**Table 1.3: Increase in Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools in Rural and Urban Areas**

<i>Secondary Schools</i>	<i>% Increase</i>
Rural	24.19
Urban	30.51
Total	25.84
<b>Higher Secondary Schools</b>	
Rural	63.14
Urban	42.66
Total	52.11

1.10 In this situation it is necessary to

- (a) recognise the importance of secondary education,
- (b) re-examine the curriculum of the relevant classes, and
- (c) streamline the working of School Education Boards.

We propose to dilate on (a) and (c) and look at how secondary education has been handled both by the Centre and the States in the half century since 1947. The second item does not concern us directly.

#### **Historical Developments**

1.11 While the first Commission after 1947 to be appointed in respect of education was the University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a couple of states took the initiative to go into certain issues concerned with school education. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) also recognised its importance. In actual practice, however, priority came to be given to higher education.

1.12 In 1952, a Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Mudaliar was appointed to survey, analyse and provide guidelines for the problems of secondary education. It presented its report in 1953. After the report was

submitted, a good deal of follow-up action was taken. For instance, an All India Council for Secondary Education (AICSE) was set up in 1955. It functioned for a few years. The four Regional Colleges of Education eventually taken over by the NCERT were established during this period. And so were a number of demonstration schools.

1.13 A good deal of its attention was however given to matters concerning examinations, etc. In that phase of development, indeed even till today, most of these Boards continue to look upon the conduct of examinations as their principal charge. Nonetheless, other matters too were taken up in successive meetings of the AICSE. A few years later however, certain other structures came to be set up and they continued to implement some of the recommendations made by the Mudaliar Commission. The NCERT established in the early sixties became an umbrella organisation for the entire gamut of education before the university stage and secondary education also came under its purview.

1.14 Without going into the details of what the NCERT has been able to accomplish in respect of secondary education, one valuable initiative taken by it deserves to be acknowledged as having been put through with a certain degree of thoroughness. This refers to the remodeling of question papers set in different examinations. The intention was both to influence the process of teaching and testing. In view of the repeated critical observations of committees and commissions about the subordination of the teaching system to the examination system, it was felt that immediate attention had to be given to the conduct of examinations. This initiative bore some fruit as described later.

1.15 The Kothari Commission which reported in 1966 had given considerable attention to school education. Its recommendations however did not get implemented to the extent that they should have. But that is for reasons which do not have to be considered here. Two of those reasons, however, may be identified, for they have continued to influence the career and growth of the school system. One was the extraordinary growth of population in the first quarter century after Independence. The crucial decade in this respect was the decade of the fifties. The death rate came down by about 10 per cent during that decade with the result

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that the population began to boom and has not since stopped increasing. Coupled with it was a marked deterioration in the temper and tone of political decision making. The three-year holiday from planning during the years 1966-1969 was an expression of these unhappy conditions on the economic plane. Though the initiative was somewhat recovered with the launching of the Fourth Plan, the two factors described above continued to operate relentlessly and this affected secondary education in a manner which brought out its deficiencies and infirmities further.

1.16 For reasons not so difficult to understand, higher education has always occupied centre stage. As stated already, the first Commission in respect of education to be appointed after 1947—the University Education Commission—dealt with universities. As some figures given a little later will show, higher and professional education received extraordinary attention during those early decades. Gradually however, the claims of elementary education which had remained neglected for a long time came to be recognised. In consequence, secondary education remained somewhat off-focus and the claims of these two other sectors of education proved to be overpowering.

### **Allocation of Funds**

1.17 At this point it may be in order to look at some data regarding allocation of funds for different sectors of education.

1.18 Two trends are obvious from the figures quoted in Table 1.4. One is the sharp decline in the outlay on elementary education during the first three Plans and the steep increase in the outlay on higher and professional education in the same period. The second is the outlay on secondary education which was maintained at a more or less steady rate except for the first Plan period. To what extent the two phenomenon are interrelated is a matter that need not be discussed here.

1.19 This much should be clear however that there is a certain degree of interrelationship amongst the allocations to various sectors of education. Depending upon the resources available, the outlay on education has been rising or falling. As stated earlier, two sectors of education (elementary education and higher

**Table 1.4 : Plan Expenditure on Different Sectors of Education**

(Percentage)

Sector	1st Plan 1951-56	2nd Plan 1956-61	3rd Plan 1961-66	Plan Holiday 1966-69	4th Plan 1969-74	5th Plan 1974-79	6th Plan 1980-85	7th Plan 1985-90	Annual Plans 1990-92	8th Plan Outlay 1992-97
Elementary education	56 (850)	35 (950)	34 (2010)	24 (750)	30 (2390)	35 (3170)	33 (8360)	37 (28490)	37 (17290)	47 (92010)
Secondary education	13 (200)	19 (510)	18 (1030)	16 (530)	18 (1400)	17 (1560)	21 (5300)	24 (18320)	22 (10530)	18 (34980)
Adult	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 (2240)	6 (4700)	9 (4160)	9 (18480)
Higher education	9 (140)	18 (480)	15 (870)	24 (770)	25 (1950)	22 (2050)	22 (5590)	16 (12010)	12 (5880)	8 (15160)
Other	9 (140)	10 (300)	12 (730)	11 (370)	14 (1060)	14 (1060)	4 (1080)	3 (1980)	2 (1180)	4 (7510)
Technical education	13 (200)	18 (490)	21 (1250)	25 (810)	13 (1060)	12 (1070)	11 (2730)	14 (10830)	17 (8230)	14 (27860)
Total	100 (1530)	100 (2730)	100 (5890)	100 (3230)	100 (7860)	100 (9120)	100 (25300)	100 (76330)	100 (47270)	100 (196000)

Note: Figures in parenthesis in millions of rupees.

Source: *Education for All: The Indian Scene* (Department of Education, 1993)

and professional education) were given increased importance in response to social pressures. Therefore the order of priority kept fluctuating. On the other hand, secondary education was never looked upon as an independent or self-contained sector of education. Expenditure on secondary education had to be incurred largely because there was pressure from below. The figures given in Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 point to the new developments that are taking place. Increasing number of students are electing to opt for higher secondary education. In the existing circumstances, this means that more students will, in course of time, opt for entry into colleges. Currently, the percentage of those who join college (regional variations apart) is in the neighbourhood of one-third. It is difficult to say whether those concerned with policy making are clear-sighted enough to deal with this kind of pressure from below.

1.20 While the allocation for secondary education is somewhat, though not entirely, adequate in terms of the total resources available and perhaps one cannot say that there has been much serious underfunding on this front, the ground situation has been changing fast during the last decade or so. Are the affiliating universities around the country aware of the problem? How they are dealing with this pressure is for the State governments and the UGC to explain. The pressure cannot be overlooked and, as far as one can judge, it is not likely to abate during the next two decades. If anything, it can gather further momentum.

### **Implications**

1.21 Three implications of this unusually high rate of growth at the secondary level need to be recognised:

- (a) The pressure will inevitably get reflected in increased enrolment in respect of affiliating colleges. This will be greater in the case of rural colleges than in those situated in towns and cities.
- (b) If the problem is to be solved by establishing more and more substandard colleges, as has been the practice all these years, it is a sure recipe for further dilution of standards. Here a distinction must be drawn between mainstream colleges and professional colleges: the latter by and large manage to



maintain some semblance of adherence to certain norms of performance. One minor explanation is the rate of recovery (in financial terms) of what is spent on those enrolled in professional colleges.

- (c) The former, whether managed by the government or by private agencies, still charge tuition fees at rates determined almost half a century ago. In the case of professional colleges, largely because it costs so much more to run them and because a certain category of students were willing to pay, fees have been raised. Poor funding had been an important factor, though several other factors too contributed to the decline of standards. This combination of factors therefore led to an overall upscaling of tuition fees even in the government-run professional colleges. Even though some of the professional colleges are poor in quality and service, it is the functioning of the mainstream colleges which is chiefly responsible for the dilution of standards. They churn out large numbers of substandard graduates. This adds to the number of the unemployed who in any case are, for the most part, unemployable. Is this situation to be perpetuated? Improved and diversified secondary education has a role to play in this context.

1.22 Thus, policy makers are confronted with two options and they have to make a choice.

- (a) One is that substandard colleges of the mainstream variety continue to be established, at least for some more time. At some stage, a breakdown of the system will occur. Some people are of the view that a breakdown has already occurred and we are not prepared to recognise this fact.
- (b) Whether this has already happened or not, it is clear that more pressure on colleges will in the long run mean greater compulsion to reorganise the relationship between secondary education and college education and remodel the former so as to make it more rational and more in tune with social demand and the availability of resources. It follows, therefore, that the existing rate of entry into the college system which is running at around 30-35 per cent per year has to be brought down gradually and systematically. The need for this

line of action has been recognised for some time. Both the Kothari Commission and the 1986 Policy recognised the desirability of such cutting down of college entrants. In actual practice, however, the rate of entry has not come down. Any problem which remains unattended for decades together gets aggravated with the passage of time. This is precisely what has happened in this case.

1.23 To put it sharply, unless the rate of entry into college is brought down significantly in the next decade or so, it will lead to a complete breakdown of the college system and complicate the matters further. The problem can be solved only by so reorganising the system that college education is not perceived as the natural destination of those who pass out at the plus-two stage but is genuinely perceived as the terminal stage of education by the vast majority of students.

1.24 Even in East Asian countries and in China, which have registered striking economic growth in recent decades, educational underpinning is provided by a strong, flexible and diversified system of secondary education. Admission to the college and university sector is strictly controlled. While this kind of control may not be exactly possible in India, the capabilities of the secondary school system can be improved in such a way that the objective outlined above can be realised at least partially, if not completely. In other words, a viable alternative has to be made available to the thousands of students who knock at the doors of underequipped and ill-staffed colleges year after year. Instead of more substandard colleges, more high quality secondary schools (quite a few of them well equipped and well staffed in the vocational sector) should be established or enabled to grow into the kind of institutions envisaged above. To shift the focus away from college education is a colossal job. It also amounts to going against the current, so to speak. But does the country have any choice in the matter? One hardly needs to add that the existing mode of doing things would come in the way of economic growth and social modernisation.

1.25 It can be no one's contention that each student who passes out of school would like to go on to college. Given the absence of alternative avenues of employment, when students choose to enter a college, generally speaking, it is mainly the fact of

unemployment which is deferred; postponing the evil day, as it is called. In plain words, instead of joining the employment market at the stage of sixteen plus, they now do so a few years later. Whether they eventually get a job or not is another question.

### **Basic Problem**

1.26 The basic problem is the inability of the country to provide adequate employment in the organised sector of the economy. While in the fifties and the sixties the rate of growth of higher education was 13-14 per cent per year, since the early seventies it has hovered around 5 per cent. In contrast, the rate of economic growth for about four decades was in the neighbourhood of 3 per cent per year and has picked up somewhat only recently. The mismatch is obvious. Earlier however, the problem was at the college level. Now it is moving downwards as the data given above suggest.

1.27 It would be a safe statement to make that, were there to be adequate openings in the job market, not even half of those who now join college would do so. In consequence, we are witness to, even a party to, the phenomenon of what has been described as baby sitting. The current trends show that the numbers are increasing at the higher secondary stage. In the case of the abler students, the goal is more or less predetermined. Those who aspire for a professional career do everything they can to get into one of the colleges. Of the rest, only some are genuinely interested in college or university education. A certain number of them can afford to join college and in most cases are not under an obligation to earn a living as soon as they come of age in the physical as well as the intellectual sense. Their number however is not all that large.

1.28 In other words, the basic issue of aligning the rate of growth in the field of education with the rate of growth of the economy has yet to be solved. The argument advanced here is that the only way, and the word only needs to be underlined, to deal with the problem is to improve, diversify and streamline secondary education, make it terminal in character so that the pressure at the tertiary level is slowly and systematically relieved.

### **Priorities in Education**

1.29 At this point, our priorities in respect of various sectors

of education in the last half century need to be contrasted with the situation in the erstwhile USSR. The Soviet model of planning influenced our planning to quite an extent. Unfortunately, while that model became influential in respect of its accent on industry and the lack of emphasis on agriculture, its priority in respect of various sectors of education was not given due attention in India.

1.30 As is generally known, in the beginning, the highest priority in the USSR was given to spreading elementary education; literacy + electricity = socialism, as Lenin put it. By the time the first Plan was started at the end of the twenties, the bulk of the people had been made literate. In the course of the next two Plans, and before that country got involved in the Second World War, the accent was on secondary education, more particularly on its polytechnic aspect. It was after the end of the Second World War that greater attention came to be given to higher education and research.

1.31 In India we did not follow a clearly defined or logical pattern. Rather we kept swaying with the wind. In any case, higher and professional education came to receive extraordinary attention during the first couple of decades and neither elementary nor secondary education received the attention that was due to each. Of late, elementary education has come in for special attention as indeed it deserves to. Secondary education however still remains an item of low priority and this is a challenge which has to be met within a decade or two.

### **University Dominance**

1.32 Right from the beginning or virtually so, when the formal system of education was first introduced in India in the middle of the nineteenth century, secondary education has suffered from the control exercised by the universities. Almost throughout the country, examinations at the school level were organised by the universities and not by any agency connected with secondary education. Indeed such agencies did not exist at that time. There were only two educational agencies at work at the beginning of the twentieth century. One was the universities and the other the Department of Education. The latter was primarily concerned with schools at the primary level. The number of middle and

high schools was not very large at that stage and they were looked after by the DPI. Even the few government colleges that existed were looked after by the DPI. It was only during the sixties and the seventies that most states appointed separate DPis for colleges, secondary education and primary education respectively. This differentiation of functioning does not obtain in every state. In other words, ad hoc arrangements have been made from time to time and there has been no clear or consistent pattern of organisation for the country as a whole.

1.33 Some of the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966) provide evidence of changing perceptions concerning administrative reorganisation at the school level. For instance, it was recommended that each state should have a Board of School Education. Till then, while some of the states did have such Boards, others did not. The somewhat incomplete data given at Appendix B illustrates the point.

1.34 When it came to the appointment of the Chairman of State Boards, the Kothari Commission offered two alternatives. One was that the Chairman should be a full time nonofficial person with the status of a Vice Chancellor and should be appointed in accordance with the same procedure. The example of one state where this model had been adopted was quoted with approval. The other model was that the Chairman of the Board should be the DPI in his ex-officio capacity. In case he did not have enough time at his disposal, it was suggested that one senior officer of the department with the status of a Joint or a Deputy Director be appointed as Chairman. The Kothari Commission went to the extent of saying that obviously "there is room for experimentation here." While a majority of the Boards have by now separately appointed Chairmen, there are still some states which have DPis or somebody of equivalent rank as Chairmen of the Boards.

1.35 The point in referring to some of the details provided above is that, while under the pressure of numbers, universities withdrew from the job of the management and control of the matriculation examination and separate and autonomous Boards of Secondary Education came up in most of the states, there is still no clarity as to what the appropriate mode of organisation should be. How the State Boards are organised determines to a

large extent how they function. In any case, it is a matter of central importance that neither instruction in the schools nor their interaction with the controlling authority is at odds with the other. As indicated later, we are in favour of Boards of School Education. In other words, it would be preferable to have these Boards look after the entire spectrum of school education rather than secondary education alone.

### **International Experience**

1.36 International experience shows that unless the secondary stage of education is made terminal in character, the level of competence at the middle level in various jobs, particularly at the vocational level, remains unsatisfactory. This is precisely the problem in India. If standards of performance at that level have to be improved, there is no choice except to improve the standards of performance at the higher secondary level. Once that happens, those who pass out will have acquired the necessary competence to handle things on their own to quite an extent. In other words, if the pressure on colleges has to be relieved to some extent, the knowledge and skill quotient of those completing the secondary and/or the higher secondary level must improve. Only then will education at this level come into its own. Clearly the objective at the secondary level should be to make it terminal in character and not treat it as a preparation for entry into college which has been customary so far.

1.37 If this objective is to be realised, certain steps will have to be taken. Two of them may be referred to at this stage. One is to reorganise these Boards in such a way that they become independent units of operation, working of course in coordination with the universities and the Departments of Education. The second would be to make everything connected with higher secondary education so self-sufficient and self-propelling that their dependence on other sectors of education is confined only to the need for coordination and not any other aspect of functioning.

1.38 To recapitulate, there are certain preconditions which must be fulfilled if secondary education is to have the status that it ought to have and the role it ought to be able to play:

- (a) Secondary education has to be treated as terminal in character except for those who either aspire for higher education or wish to join any one of the professions which through customary usage belong to the university sector. Of the rest, quite a high proportion must be so trained that they can competently handle the numerous middle level jobs that they would eventually come to handle. To be specific, a bank clerk does not have to be a college graduate. If our schools were performing at the level at which they ought to perform, a school graduate would be equally competent.
- (b) It is the neglect of the norms of good performance at the middle level which are coming in the way of a higher degree of performance, whether it be in industry, transport, commerce, agriculture or any other sector. Whatever be the area of work, a school graduate should have been trained intensively enough so as to distinguish between quality performance and average performance. In most cases, the average level of performance is so low and so unsatisfactory that whether it is production of goods and services or the general level of performance, there is considerable room for improvement.
- (c) In all those countries which are already industrialised or are in the process of becoming so, the pattern of manpower planning has got almost distinctly defined. Everyone, or almost everyone, is enabled to study up to the secondary stage. The norms of competence aimed at and actually achieved at this level are so high that unless a student wishes to opt for either higher or professional education, it is not necessary for him to continue his education after the secondary stage. Provision for part time education is generally available. Wherever it does not exist, steps are taken to make it available. The idea is not to discourage anyone from educating himself to the best of his ability. Nor is it intended to shut the door on late developers or those who change their mind and wish to shift from one job to another. Therefore it is always ensured that the standards of performance at the secondary level make the young people both competent in terms of skills and self reliant in terms of their capability. There is no reason to believe that the mode of manpower planning in India can or indeed can be different.

## **16 • Remodelling of School Education Boards**

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- (d) The assumption that it is only college education which is to be treated as preparation for entry into the world of work has been around for almost a hundred years in India. It would take at least a couple of decades before this assumption can be put to rest. In order to be able to do so, the standards of instruction and performance at the secondary level would have to be stepped up considerably. The quality of education, in other words, is not a secondary matter. It is of fundamental importance.

1.39 Having discussed the context in which secondary education has evolved over the years, it is time to turn to a discussion of the structure and working processes of the School Boards and how those might be remodelled so as to ensure that secondary education is reorganised in such a way that these objectives can be achieved. At the present moment, the State Boards are so ill organised that they simply cannot cope with the task that they would be required to handle. Virtually the only things that most of them can handle, and that too fairly competently, is to conduct examinations. Education at this level is however much more than conducting examinations.

1.40 Clearly, the Boards must be enabled to remodel themselves in a manner so as to provide leadership on the academic plane and, at the same time, do all those multifarious jobs which they have to perform. It is these issues which will receive detailed attention in this report.



# 2

## **BOARDS: STATUS AND POWERS**

### **Independent Status**

**S**chool education has not yet attained its full stature despite a few experiments made during the last century and a half to work out an appropriate mode of organisation. The most notable of these experiments (barring U.P.) was the attempt to add one and, then subsequently, two years to the duration of schooling. A recommendation to this effect was first made by the Sadler Commission in 1917. In its wake, a number of intermediate colleges were established in Bengal, U.P. and some other provinces. The school system has gone through a couple of vicissitudes since then and its current version is the higher secondary school.

2.02 Whether the duration of the schooling was 10, 11 or 12 years, the dependence of the school system on universities remained unchanged. While government schools were looked after by the DPI, non-government schools received financial help through the grant-in-aid code operated by his office. A small proportion of schools were purely private in character and relied on their own resources to sustain them. In this way, to quite an extent, the Department of Education primarily looked after the non-academic part of management (inspections etc. were also a part of that management) and the academic part was overseen in a manner that was ultimately in accordance with the requirements of the universities. Even though the bulk of students do not join a college, it is taken for granted that what is good for entry into college is also good for entry into the world of work.

2.03 The curriculum is therefore geared to the needs of college education. This has prevented the school system from standing

on its own feet and functioning in terms of its own requirements and preferences. The establishment of the AICSE and later of the NCERT did help the schools to function independently to some extent. But the requirements that have to be satisfied in respect of entry into college still determine, to a substantial extent, what is taught at the school stage. The persistent and prolonged neglect of vocational education at that level is a standing testimony to the existing determinants of school level education. Basically, it is the requirements of college education — largely non-vocational in character—which is the decisive factor. Unfortunately, this bias percolates down to the lower school level also.

2.04 To say no more on this subject, it is important to ensure that the school system becomes autonomous in character and learns to operate on its own. Coordination with universities would always have to be there as it would be equally necessary to coordinate with industry, commerce, transport and similar sectors of activity. But schools should be seen as an independent system of education which responds to the needs of the society. If this objective is recognised as valid, it follows that the structural arrangements, viz. School Education Boards, are viable as well as academically progressive bodies which not only perform as they are expected to but also give evidence both of leadership and a certain degree of vision.

2.05 The school system, as is generally acknowledged, is divisible into two parts. One is instruction up to the post-primary or the elementary level. According to the Constitution, this much quantum of schooling has to be provided to every single child free of charge upto the age of 14 years. It is at the age of 14 that students have the option to decide whether to go on to the secondary/higher secondary level of education or not. One of the essential requirements at this level of education is to equip students with those skills which would make them productive citizens. A certain kind of vocational orientation has to be imparted to the students even before they cross the stage of elementary education. But the real thrust of vocationalisation comes only at the secondary and then the higher secondary level.

2.06 It should not be necessary to go into further details except to underline one fact. Secondary education would come into its own and become a distinct system only when those manning the

system function on their own and do not look up to any one else for guidance. Coordination is in order but not guidance, it may be emphasised here. This is said with specific reference to the dominating role played by the universities. Whether it is at the policy making level or at the time of laying down the curriculum or appointing paper setters and examiners, until recently, it is those with a university background who called the shots. Of late, the pattern has started changing. Those with a background of secondary education have started taking decisions and asserting themselves. It is only when those who belong to the school sector also take all relevant decisions that the school system may be said to have come into its own.

**2.07** This state of affairs does not obtain today. Either the official channels of control—DPI and his officers—call the tune or it is men and women working in universities, looking at things from their perspective, who more or less determine what schools ought to be doing. In order to ensure that there is appropriate weaning of the schools from both these influences, three things would have to be ensured.

**2.08** The first one is an autonomous organisational structure. School Education Boards do exist in almost all the states. But they are not autonomous in the same way as, for instance, universities are. Secondly, the powers vested in them need to be defined precisely as well as comprehensively so that, they can function freely within the parameters laid down for them. Thirdly, their functions should be diversified and expanded as well as redefined so that, given the size of the student body and the geographical territory that they control, these Boards not only function autonomously, as they should, but also cover all those areas which legitimately fall within their jurisdiction. That a good deal of what is being suggested might fail to materialise because talent of the requisite order and magnitude is not available at that level is a real handicap which would be gone into separately.

### **Statutory Status**

**2.09** To be specific, what is most important is to ensure that the Boards are set up as statutory bodies. Even a cursory look at the somewhat incomplete data supplied by the Boards at Appendices B and C shows that the situation is uneven. In most

states, Boards have been set up by statute as in the case of universities and several other statutory bodies. The Kothari Commission also expressed itself in favour of such a step. But, as data collected by us show, three decades down the line, different patterns of organisation still exist. While some Boards function as registered societies, others function on the basis of a government resolution and so on. It is important to work out a broadly consistent pattern and there can be no more suitable pattern of organisation than the establishment of School Boards on the basis of a statute adopted by the State legislature.

2.10 In the case of universities, the situation was helped by the constitutional provision that a university could be set up either by the Centre or the States. Therefore, establishment through a statutory provision became mandatory. This requirement is not applicable in the case of State Boards of Education. It is for examination if, under the powers that accrue to it today in terms of the 42nd Amendment, the Union government would like to make a constitutional provision for similar action in respect of School Education Boards.

2.11 The philosophy behind the establishment of a School Board under a statute is that while the powers and functions of the Board would be defined by an Act of Parliament or that of a State legislature, once defined, modifications can be made only by a subsequent reference to the same body which established it in the first instance. Such a step gives the necessary weight and stability to an agency which performs such a vital function as the education of hundreds of thousands of students—an enterprise in which virtually the whole community is involved.

2.12 Most universities function through the instrumentality of statutes, ordinances, and regulations. These are different modes of sub-legislation and, generally speaking, the Act provides for the manner in which such differentiated legislation is to be considered and passed. Experience spread over almost a century and a half has made most University Acts fairly comprehensive in their coverage of such matters. What is needed is something similar in respect of School Education Boards also. This is not to imply that universities are doing very well. Far from that. This reference to universities is for the limited purpose of choosing a model in respect of such sub-legislation. Should the Union

government eventually decide to legislate on this matter, it would be helpful to have the various heads enumerated in such a way that nothing important gets left out and every important requirement is included.

2.13 Another way of describing what has been stated above would be that there has been hardly any systematic analysis of how Boards are to be established and structured, nor a serious attempt been made to define their powers and functions. What is required now is to systematise all of these.

2.14 Every Act setting up a School Education Board must provide for a clear outline of the powers of the Chairman, the authorities of the Board and everything else connected with their functioning. While doing so, it must be ensured that, *to the extent relevant*, the model followed in respect of University Acts is kept in view. This is suggested mainly because most states have had quite some experience of legislating about the universities and that experience can be taken advantage of.

2.15 Since the Chairman of the Board would be the principal administrative and academic officer, certain things would have to be ensured in respect of his appointment. The terms of a Chairman's appointment should be clearly specified. This refers to his tenure, emoluments and entitlements of various kinds and so on. Instances of various Chairmen having been suspended, removed or made to leave before the end of their tenure, etc. have come to our notice. These go to show that the Chairmen of the Boards are appointed or removed as it suits the convenience of those in power. Clearly, with this kind of uncertainty of tenure, it would not be possible to procure the services of men and women of the required calibre. To be sure, universities too have been victims of this kind of erratic and politically-motivated behaviour of those in power. Learning from that experience, it is all the more necessary to build statutory safeguards.

2.16 One caveat may be entered here. If a Board is established on a statutory basis, it does not follow that this would mean the end of political interference. Some of the Boards which are performing well today are not even statutory in character. In other words, having a statutory status is not a panacea for all ills. Only it is a mode of organisation, and perhaps the most

suitable in our circumstances. In any case, most of the Boards in existence today are already statutory in character. So as to dispel any false hopes that may be raised on this account, it also requires to be added that being statutory would not automatically ensure that the Board is also autonomous in its working. That would depend upon several other factors, only one of which is discussed below.

### **Politicisation**

2.17 One way of drawing attention to the uncommon degree of politicisation of the School Boards is to mention the fact that, in a few states, either it is a Minister of State who is the Chairman of the Board or the person who functions as the Chairman is given that rank. In one state, the chairmanship of the State Board has not been filled up for long stretches of time on more than one occasion. During the interval, the DPI is asked to look after the job. There are also instances when the charge is handed over either to the Deputy Commissioner or the Commissioner of the concerned Division. If it is the off season in respect of examinations, this does not create too many hassles. The DPI, a serving government official, is more likely to act as instructed than a non-official who, once appointed, can afford to take a somewhat independent line of approach. The political bosses therefore prefer this arrangement. These facts and several more point to the extraordinary degree of politicisation, even of school education. The fact of the matter is that politicisation in these matters leads to questionable decision making. The more effectively the School Boards can be insulated against this kind of political interference, the better they are likely to perform.

2.18 It would be misleading to suggest that this is happening in each state. But as many as half a dozen instances of political high-handedness and arbitrary action have come to our notice. Before this disease spreads any further, it is important to build certain checks and balances into the system of the appointment of the chief executive which do not allow such a situation to arise. To take one instance, in a particular state, the Chairman of the Board was suspended for purely political reasons. He was accused of following certain practices which went against the interests of a particular political party then in power. When the said person was able to demonstrate before a court of law that

whatever he had done was in line with what had been suggested by the NCERT, he had to be reinstated. But meanwhile a good deal of damage to the system had been done. It is imperative to guard against such malpractices.

### **Other Impediments**

2.19 The rules should specify precisely in respect of which matters the appointing authority (i.e. the Union government or the State government) can give directions to the Board and in what respects the Boards are autonomous in their functioning. It goes without saying that in matters of high policy the government should be in a position to give written directives as and when necessary and it should be obligatory upon the Boards to follow them. But such directives should neither be oral nor related to issues other than matters of high policy. Administrative decisions taken by the Boards should be regarded as outside the purview of those in authority, whether political or bureaucratic. The whole rationale of having a statutory body is that that body is authorised to take day-to-day decisions and there is no interference of any kind in regard to them. Eventually, the chief executive (the Chairman of the Board) is answerable to those who appoint him. Therefore, it is all the more incumbent that his area of duties is clearly specified and, once specified, there should be no instance of interference.

2.20 Appointments at various levels and management of funds are two issues that can give rise to contention or argument. Rules of appointment should be clearly laid down. All kinds of difficult-to-defend, even meaningless, instances of interference came to our notice. In some of the Boards, for instance, the strength of the staff is severely controlled whereas, in certain other cases, there is overstaffing. Both extremes should be avoided. In respect of overstaffing, it came to our notice that there had been political interference through oral orders, though the order not to appoint additional staff had been a written one.

2.21 As regards the management of funds, it is customary for the Boards to incur expenditure according to the normal rules of prudent expenditure. In any case, these are subject to audit and control. The guiding principle in all such cases has to be that the Boards are given the freedom to function within the

limits prescribed. Some of the Boards have Finance Committees whereas certain others do not have. It stands to reason that the Finance Committee of each Board should be carefully constituted with two representatives of the government (preferably the Education Secretary and the Finance Secretary) on it so that all expenditure is incurred in line with the general approach adopted by the State/Central governments and followed in related organisations such as universities. Further such representatives will not have the right to veto any decision taken by the Board. The UGC provides the right kind of model for this purpose. Both the Education Secretary and the Finance Secretary of the Union government are powerful members of the Commission. But once a decision is taken by the Commission, neither of them seeks to upset it nor is it intended that either of them should act in such a manner.

2.22 That the Chairman's job is vulnerable to political interference, and worse, is clear from some of the provisions encountered in the constitutions of the various Boards. In the case of one state, it is stated unambiguously that the Chairman and the Vice Chairman will hold office at the pleasure of the State government. In another case, while it is provided that the Chairman would be nominated by the State government, it is also provided that he can be removed for (a) not carrying out the provisions of the Act, (b) abuse of power, and (c) if his conduct is considered detrimental to the interests of the Board. Nothing is said about what would constitute as being detrimental to the interests of the Board, who would determine what constitutes the interests of the Board, what procedure would be followed and would the Chairman be given an opportunity to explain his point of view. In yet another case, there is a provision for the Chairman to be removed if he refuses to act or is unable to act in a manner considered as prejudicial by the government. These provisions are open to objection for the same reasons as were applicable to the first case.

### **Supersession of Boards**

2.23 In one case the rules provide that the governing body of the Board can be superseded if it is unable to perform its duties. It is difficult to defend this decision. To say that the chief executive can be removed is bad enough but to say that the governing



body of the Board can also be superseded is extremely high-handed.

### ***Powers of the Chairman***

2.24 The following points regarding the powers of the Chairman need to be emphasised:

- (a) The Chairman of the Board who is the chief executive must be a full time and salaried person who is appointed for a fixed tenure.
- (b) Normally speaking, he should not be a political person. Indeed if he was politically active at one time, care should be **taken to ensure that he has ceased to be politically active**. In plain words, his appointment as Chairman should not be a temporary interlude in the course of a political career.
- (c) He may be suspended or removed only through due process of law.
- (d) Both his duties and powers should be specified in such a manner that he is accountable to the Central/State government which appoints him in terms of the procedure laid down in advance and his terms of appointment are not varied to his disadvantage once he has been appointed.
- (e) It is only in matters of high policy that he may be asked to carry out the orders of the government which must be conveyed to him in a formal manner through a written communication. It must be assured that before such an order is issued, there was a certain amount of discussion in respect of that issue, arguments both for and against are stated and recorded and, finally, the matter is cleared either by the chief minister or the cabinet, as advisable. For the rest, he is expected to function in consultation with the various committees charged with specific functions.
- (f) We expect the Chairman to be an eminent person. He may be eminent in the field of education or administration. Generally speaking, a choice has to be made between the two. The ideal combination would be that he is a good academic with a flair for administration. This combination however is not always easy to locate. In consequence, most decision makers have

to content themselves with selecting the best possible person for the job.

- (g) As already stated, if he comes from the administrative background, one would look for a person who has handled educational administration for some time and has been involved in this area of work. Some officials have given evidence of this kind of involvement and commitment. It would be wrong in principle and indeed narrow minded to exclude them because they do not belong to the field of education *per se*.
- (h) When it comes to education, the choice would normally be made from principals of leading schools, teachers in University departments of education, and even teachers from other departments and organisations such as NCERT, NCTE and NIEPA provided they have shown evidence of some inclination towards and interest in the theory and practice of education. It is difficult to be more specific than this. The only thing that has to be guarded against is that it should not be a rank outsider who is thrust upon a School Board because of political considerations and/or compulsions.
- (i) Regarding tenure, the generally accepted pattern is to have someone appointed for three years with a provision for another appointment of the same duration. In our opinion, a non-renewable term of five years would be preferable. Two reasons may be cited in support of this preference. Not many politicians survive in office that long. From that point of view, it would become obligatory for the new political boss to co-exist with an appointee of the earlier regime. Secondly, this would oblige the appointing authority to make a more careful choice than it might otherwise make, more so, if the person chosen to head the School Board is to be in office for five years. A non-renewable term of five years thus reinforces this line of thinking.
- (j) As to the mode of selection, the current practice is that the Chairman is appointed by the State government at its discretion. We are of the view, however, that this discretion should not be unfettered. Therefore the Act should provide for a statutory selection committee, composed of four persons.

The first one should be a nominee of the Board elected for the purpose. Such a person however cannot be the outgoing Chairman himself but someone else; and obviously not connected with the government. The second member should be the Chief Justice of the state or his nominee. A third member should be the Chief Secretary of the State. This will ensure the involvement of the State government in office in selecting a suitable person for the job. We are also in favour of a fourth member who may be the current Chairman of COBSE. In case he is unable to attend, he should be free to nominate the next senior most person in his place. This committee of four persons should propose a panel of three names (in alphabetical order) and it should be left to the government to choose one out of them. Some such system alone will eliminate the elements of caprice or political patronage from decision making.

- (k) Regarding his security of tenure, he should have the same protection against harrassment or termination of tenure as any Vice Chancellor has. In other words, in every controversial situation, the Chairman should be asked to explain his conduct and be given an opportunity to defend himself. In case an enquiry has to be instituted, it should be presided over by a judge of a high court and most emphatically not an official of the Central or State Government. We wish to lay special emphasis on the need for the security of his tenure for the simple reason that, in a few odd cases, high-handed methods have been used to remove the Chairman and replace him by someone more pliable and more convenient. That some of the chairmen have been political appointees need not be disputed. That some of them were not equal to the job is also something that cannot be argued against. This happens because most State governments have unfettered powers to appoint anyone they wish. Once this discretion is regulated things will start changing.
- (l) In terms of status, emoluments and other facilities, he should be treated as equivalent to any Vice Chancellor in the state. The fact that there would be several Vice Chancellors in the state and only one Chairman of the School Board would, with the passage of time, give him a status in public life which would be regarded as enviable even by other Vice Chancellors.

(in) Except for three All India Boards, all others belong to the states. That is why it was necessary to talk in terms of the State government. In the case of Central Boards, the issue would be taken up independently.

2.25 It should not be necessary to provide further details of what we have in mind. Some further details are provided in Chapter 6. There are two issues however which may be referred to at this stage.

### **One State One Board**

2.26 Each state should have only one School Board. Currently this is not so. The reason for saying this in so many words is that in certain states there are separate Boards for secondary and higher secondary education. In our opinion, this creates confusion and leads to avoidable duplication of work. Even if such binary functioning has the sanction of historic usage, it is time to close that chapter, inaugurate a new one and fall in line with what is happening elsewhere in the country. The financial aspects of this duplication of work would be referred to in the chapter on Financing.

2.27 It may be noted in this connection that, as of today, the School Boards can be classified into four broad categories, namely:

- (i) Boards dealing with the entire range of school education which includes education of children from primary classes to higher secondary level, i.e. all the four stages of school education—primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary;
- (ii) Boards dealing with secondary education only;
- (iii) Boards dealing with the senior/higher secondary or junior college education only;
- (iv) Boards dealing with both the secondary and senior/higher secondary education.

Oddly enough, in one state, its Board runs three full fledged schools. In addition, it imparts education through the distance

mode which of course is perfectly in order. The plain truth is that all these years the Boards have been improvising in response to certain felt needs or transitory pressures as and when those were exerted.

2.28 Does all this represent confused thinking or does it indicate a mindless continuation of what has been happening in the past? Our answer is the latter. Over the years, for reasons that were relevant at that time, certain decisions were taken. The impact of those decisions is still being felt. No one has thought it necessary to question why a particular administrative decision taken in one set of circumstances should continue to be operative several decades later when circumstances have changed, sometimes even totally. In fact, this is an instance of intellectual indolence. We are content to live with what we inherited. This is the mark of a stagnant society. To some extent, we do answer this description. At the same time, there are stirrings of new thinking as well. To give a fresh look to the state of secondary education, even though somewhat belatedly, is an indication of this far-from-quiet state of mind. In brief, we recommend that:

- (a) The Board of School Education in each state should deal with school education from the primary to the higher secondary level more or less as the NCERT does though, to be sure, it must be added that the focus of the latter to quite an extent is on research and not operational programmes except when the situation so demands.
- (b) In practice, however, both primary and post-primary stages will be looked after by other agencies (panchayats for instance) but, in respect of curriculum making and other academic matters, it is the School Boards that will provide the intellectual inputs as well administrative guidance. The operational aspect however cannot be with the Boards.
- (c) If this proposal is found acceptable, it will be necessary to appoint separate committees for handling jobs at different levels.
- (d) In conclusion, we must also explain why we have formulated this proposal in this manner. As we visualise, in course of

time, School Boards would become fairly high-powered bodies with a certain amount of professional competence of their staff with access to talent from outside. These two factors will enable the Boards to stand on their own feet in the same way as universities do.

- (e) While there are four distinct stages of school education—nursery, primary, upper-primary and secondary—the distinctions are not as sharp as they tend to be in other areas. Therefore, it would be financially, economically and intellectually viable to club them together under the auspices of the School Education Board.

### ***Advantages of One Board***

2.29 There is no basic difference between what is done at the secondary level or at the higher secondary level. Both stages take two years each. In one case there is a public examination at the matriculation stage after 10 years of schooling. In the other case, there is a higher secondary examination after two years of further schooling. Entry into college is contingent on the student having passed the higher secondary examination. Should a student however choose to leave after his matriculation and take up something else, more particularly in the area of vocational work, there can be no problem. Instruction at the plus two level and the passing of examination at the end of that period are requirements for entry into professional courses of a college. Vocational courses however prescribe no such requirement.

2.30 This situation has one additional disadvantage which needs to be underscored. By dividing the secondary stage into two fragments, the cause of school education is hurt. When the entire spectrum of secondary education is controlled by one body, that body is looked upon as representing the secondary school system. By fragmenting it into two rival bodies, the impact is blunted, if not lost.

2.31 If the two Boards (one of them is sometimes described as a Council) are merged there will be no harm except that some individuals might become redundant. That however is a short range view of things. Later it will become abundantly clear that,

instead of anybody becoming redundant, additional staff will have to be appointed. We are therefore emphatically of the view that persistence with the status quo needs to be abandoned and the pattern of organisation should be one School Education Board for each state.

### **Regional Offices**

2.32 Even though some states are larger in size than others, they have not found it necessary to establish more than one Board. Instead, what they have done is, to create a number of regional offices. While policy matters are decided at the headquarters and question papers too are set by the headquarters, the regional offices are mainly given the job of issuing roll numbers and having the answer scripts evaluated. In certain cases, results are declared by the headquarters and in others they are declared by the regional offices. Our preference is for the second alternative. This would ensure a sense of healthy rivalry amongst the various regional offices. This would also ultimately lead to better performance by all concerned.

### **Role of the DPI**

2.33 The second issue which in our opinion is in the nature of a policy issue is: the role of the DPI and his officers in the reorganised set up, as proposed. For reasons already explained, in addition to universities which to a substantial extent continue to determine the curriculum at the higher secondary stage, so far almost every other problem relating to schools has been looked after by the DPI. When School Boards came to be established, DPis took charge of things in many cases. With the passage of time, the role of the DPis began to decline. In about half the cases, it is independent persons—not connected with the DPI's office—who have been put incharge of the Boards. In the case of the rest, it is the DPis who directly or indirectly still control the Boards.

2.34 In the proposed set up the DPis will continue to look after the appointment, promotion and other service matters of government-run schools and administer release of grants-in-aid and such other matters, while the rest of the job can be conveniently turned over to the School Boards. This mode of functioning is supported on two considerations:

- (a) Chairmen of the School Boards come from different backgrounds. Some come from the school sector while others come from the college or the university sector. In certain cases, even officials belonging to the IAS have been appointed as Chairmen. In the latter cases, generally speaking, they have a track record of interest in and experience of education. We are in favour of this flexible approach. The important thing is to locate a good person who has both understanding and administrative ability. In certain cases, even the DPI can be made the Chairman. But then that should not be on a part time basis. Instead it should be on a full time basis, largely because the individual concerned is eminently suitable for the job.
- (b) In respect of the jobs assigned to the DPIs, it cannot be said with any degree of confidence that the job is adequately performed in each case. Sometimes the person appointed as the DPI is not equal to the job. In such cases, the DPI can be accused of underperformance. But more often, the range of the job is so multifarious that even a competent DPI is overstretched in terms of his commitments. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen both the office of the DPI and the office of the Chairman of the School Board. Apart from choosing the right individuals for these two jobs, it is equally important that the jobs are delinked from each other. This will enable both of them to concentrate upon their respective mandates and perform better than they do at the moment.



# 3

## RESTRUCTURING THE BOARDS

### Handicaps

**S**econdary education suffers from two handicaps. One is its fragmentation into two parts — secondary and higher secondary education. The second is its failure to evolve some autonomous space for itself. As emphasised more than once, on the one hand universities virtually determine the teaching curriculum at this level and, on the other hand, a viable system of academic direction and control has so far not been evolved.

3.02 Largely for historical reasons, the Department of Education has cast its shadow on the way things have been administered at this level. In certain states, control by the DPI was direct while in certain other states it was indirect and even diffused to some extent. In yet another set of states, however, the School Education Boards came to be set up as statutory bodies and were vested with substantial powers of control and management. This liberation from the control of the DPI, if one may put it this way, has been a step in the right direction. A case for doing so has already been made to some extent. What remains to be discussed are the mechanics of doing it. In this chapter, further details as to how it can be done in an innovative and pragmatic manner will be given. Before doing so however, one peculiar feature of the situation, though referred to already, may be dilated upon again.

### *University Shadow on Boards*

3.03 From the middle of the 19th century till the beginning of the 20th century, admission to college was after 10 or 11 years of schooling. In order to regulate the system of admission, universities laid down the requirement that a student must have passed his matriculation. Since no such agency as the School Education Board existed at that time, the matriculation examination was conducted by the concerned university. In a

few cases, examinations at even lower levels such as VIII class level tests etc. were also conducted by the universities at that point of time.

3.04 The whole argument revolved around the proposition as to who conducted the examination. To start with, as described above, it was the universities that did so. Gradually however, this job was taken over by the Boards as and when they came to be established. The few that existed before 1947 (the precise number being 2) took over the job of conducting the matriculation examination. Beginning with the twenties when Intermediate Boards were set up in several provinces, intermediate (and also matriculation) examinations came to be handled by them. What needs to be understood as also underscored is the fact that most of these Boards were examining Boards and hardly performed any other function, particularly of an academic character. Their main job was to conduct the examinations. Working backwards from that premise, curricula also came to be laid down by these Boards. Until a few years ago, this job had been done mainly under the patronage and guidance of the universities. Following that practice, for quite some time, it continued to be done in the same manner, i.e., the role of the university was decisive, indeed much more decisive than it would have but for the historical legacy of the universities having handled the examination job in the beginning.

3.05 As a matter of fact, this pattern of university dominance over secondary schools continued to operate till the sixties, after which it began to get diluted. The number of students was increasing at a phenomenal rate and the School Boards were beginning to look more and more consequential because of the masses of students that they were handling. With the emergence and growth of NCERT, the pattern of academic management underwent further modifications. Today, university teachers still play a role in the determination of courses, and a fairly dominant one at that, but this is largely for the sociological reason that higher secondary education is not yet looked upon as the terminal stage of education. Ironically, this is happening when a large number of students do not join colleges and join the workforce instead.

3.06 The fact is that the overall ambience of higher education still overshadows the functioning of the Boards. A stage will come one day when higher secondary education will be regarded as good enough, except for those who want to pursue higher or professional education. It is only when this state is reached that secondary education will be described as having attained that level of maturity which it ought to attain so as to justify the label it carries. The first stage (getting delinked from the overall superintendence of the DPI's office) has been accomplished in a number of states. The second stage (secondary education being terminal in character and becoming autonomous in outlook and functioning) is yet to be reached. An unerring indicator of this having come about would be when secondary education becomes vocational also, i.e., equips students for entry into the world of work. While it is presumptuous to set any deadline, it is feasible to bring about this reorientation of outlook in about two decades.

### **Restructuring**

3.07 A strong thrust in favour of this reorientation can be, and indeed requires to be, made by restructuring the working of the School Education Boards. Most of their functioning is still geared to the holding of examinations and declaration of results and related jobs. This annual cycle of examinations and results means about three months of intensive work. After this rush of work is over, the pace becomes somewhat relaxed.

3.09 Two other jobs that take some doing are recognition of schools and prescription and publication of textbooks. The first of these is done by almost each Board but the second is handled by only a few. The manner in which these jobs are conducted goes to suggest on the whole that these are not regarded as integral to their mandate. In their eyes, their principal job is to conduct the examinations efficiently and on time. Once those are conducted on time and without much hassle, there is a feeling of all round satisfaction. Everything else is regarded as either extra in nature or an imposition. In plain words, if things have to improve, the mission and the mandate of School Education Boards need to be reconceptualised.

3.9 The mission of School Education Board should be to ensure that the right kind of secondary education is imparted. In concrete terms, this will mean equipping students at the secondary level with the requisite amount of knowledge and skills

competently and adequately at work or, alternatively, to enable them to become self-employed. Since educational activity is multidimensional, the activities of the Board also ought to be multidimensional.

3.10 Conducting examinations is only one of the jobs that they are required to undertake and not their basic mission. Their mission, to reaffirm, is to ensure that education in all its various dimensions is imparted to students in the best possible way.

3.11 In other words, everything connected with school education, students, teachers, curriculum, academic management, physical health, sports and cultural activities should fall within the purview of the Boards. Nothing concerned with students or teachers is outside their purview. In the case of government-run schools, some of the jobs are generally performed by the Department of Education. In the case of privately-run schools, whether aided or unaided, the job is generally done by their managements. But the monitoring and coordination will have to be done by the School Boards. No other agency can undertake this function or indeed has any business to do so. Even if another agency were to be established at any stage in future, it will amount to creating two agencies to do the same job and such a move would be both redundant and wasteful.

3.12 The School Education Board in each state is and should be the central agency for carrying out the educational agenda of the community and ensure that the agenda is not only fully and adequately discharged, it is also discharged in a progressive and creative manner.

3.13 Seen in this perspective, the Boards must remodel themselves in such a way that they have different Divisions looking after every relevant sector of activity. Some of the more obvious units that can be visualised today are listed below:

- a. Academic Division
- b. Inservice Training Division
- c. Research Division
- d. Examination Division
- e. Recognition Division
- f. Vocational Education Division
- g. Administration-cum-Finance Division
- h. Sports and Co-curricular Activities Division

- i. Library and Documentation Cell
- j. Computer and Information Unit
- k. Grievance Redressal Cell
- l. Legal Cell.

Nothing has been said here about the prescription or sale of textbooks. This is an issue that will be dealt with separately and need not necessarily be made an integral part of the working of the Boards.

3. 14 Before proceeding to discuss some of the details, it may be helpful to re-present the details given above in tabular form:

**Board**

Academic Orbit	Examinations	Administration
Academic Division	Examination Division	Administration-cum-Finance Division
Inservice Training Division	Research Division	Recognition Division
Research Division	Recognition Division	Grievances Redressal Cell
Recognition Division	Computer and Information Unit	Legal Cell
Vocational Education Division	Grievances Redressal Cell	
Sports & Co-curricular Activities Division		
Library & Documentation Cell		
Computer & Information Unit		

3.15 As should be evident, the Academic orbit includes much more than only the Academic division. Furthermore, some of the functions which fall under this orbit also figure under other heads. For instance, at one level the Recognition division is an academic job, at another level it is an administrative job and at yet another level there is something about it in which the Examination division too would have some interest and some stake. That is why some divisions have been mentioned under more than one

head. The same logic applies to the Computer and Information Unit. Computers are required for academic purposes as also for examination work as indeed various other jobs. To give yet another example, some research will be a spin-off of examination work and some would have to be conducted on its own steam and in relation to curriculum making, pedagogic processes and so on. This interrelatedness of functions must be clearly recognised as well as provided for.

### **Academic Division**

3.16 The Academic division must be headed by a competent professional, preferably in the rank of a university professor with a deep understanding of various problems and issues in curriculum making, teaching-learning methodology, contemporary advances in cognitive learning and all such related matters. This division should be assisted by a couple of committees which have a strong academic orientation as also experts in the fields of industry, trade, commerce, etc. It will also be useful to have a person or two with understanding and experience of teaching-learning materials.

3.17 While participation of some people with a university background is desirable in the committees, they should not be allowed to dominate decision making at the school level. As emphasised earlier, for one section of students this is the terminal stage of their education. Further, a certain proportion of students opt, as indeed they should, for vocational training. Their number is likely to grow with the passage of time. Therefore, this sector of activity has also to be given separate attention.

3.18 In a large number of cases, there is acute scarcity of competent individuals who can participate in the redesigning of the curriculum meaningfully. This has something to do with the inability of the secondary level of education to attract talent. The proliferation of English medium schools all around the country has to some extent drained the other schools, both government-run and privately-run, of the talent available at this level. These schools generally charge higher fees than others do. Therefore, they can afford better facilities and, in certain cases, better amenities, if not also better emoluments.

3.19 To overcome this deficiency, two steps will have to be taken.

One is to attract more talent into secondary school teaching and the other would be to give them ample opportunities for professional growth so that whatever talent is available is developed further and made more productive in terms of pedagogical skills. It must be acknowledged that teaching at this level has to be made financially more remunerative than it is today. Clearly the objective has to be to attract as well as to retain talent.

3.20 The basic job of this division is to keep its finger on the pulse of the school community, partly on its own, partly through interaction with NCERT and the local SCERT and partly by breaking new ground, as and when necessary. Under no circumstances should there be any lack of alignment between the local situation and the national imperatives. Above all, it should be the basic responsibility of this division that the curriculum is modified from time to time and kept abreast of contemporary developments. Close contact with training colleges and University departments of education will help in performing this role.

3.21 To what extent this division can also act as a policy making unit is difficult to say. Ideally speaking, that should be its most important function. But given the scarcity of talent at this level and the various other limitations that would take time to overcome (this issue will be taken up again a little later), it would be in order to keep this objective in mind.

### ***Inservice Training***

3.22 If higher secondary education is to be made terminal in character, as should be the objective, the kind of competence which students look forward to acquiring when they join a college should be provided at the higher secondary level. This can be done only by reorienting and retraining the teachers already in position, i.e., by providing systematic and sustained inservice training to those already in the profession or those who will join it in course of time. In case better talent can be attracted to the profession, it would certainly facilitate things. In case this cannot be done, the existing stock of talent would have to be improved. The decision to engage Postgraduate teachers for the plus two stage was to make it qualitatively different from the secondary stage. It was both a preparation for entry into college and, in a way, an introduction to that level of education. Hence, the need for re-training teachers at this level cannot be over emphasised.

3.23 In order to facilitate upgrading of teaching skills, it will be necessary to set up a separate division of Inservice Training which interacts closely with the Academic division. In addition, the techniques of distance learning education will have to be utilised extensively as well as purposefully. The numbers involved are so large that the country will not have resources enough to send hundreds and thousands of teachers from their place of work to another designated place of training.

3.24 Furthermore, the system, as being followed today, can deal with only a fraction of the teachers in position. What we need to do is to retrain all teachers in a systematic and intensive way. It may be noted in this connection that the first crucial step in this regard was taken in the mid-seventies when the duration of school was extended by one year and make the higher secondary course a two-year programme. Some of the southern states had moved in this direction even before this decision was made at the all India level. The term used in those states was junior colleges. The use of the word college led to some confusion in respect of salary scales. Most State governments took a determined stand in this regard and successfully resisted the move to give UGC scales to teachers in these colleges.

3.25 The fact that these teachers had a Master's degree in the relevant subject made it possible to provide a reasonably good base in academic terms for a somewhat higher level of instruction at the higher secondary levels. However, in professional terms, there are serious gaps which need to be bridged through systematic inservice training. This form of training should not be looked upon as an afterthought but an attempt to fulfil the original design.

3.26 At the moment this is a job which is expected to be performed by SCERTs in different states. In most cases, their performance is uneven as well as unsatisfactory. Most of them do not understand either the magnitude or the complexity of the problem and keep on functioning as if it was one of the numerous problems that required attention. It is in fact the key problem at the secondary level and has to be tackled as such. Of late, DIETs for which the SCERTs are responsible, have been set up in about 100 districts. According to most estimates, about 100-200 of them are functioning. In any case, it needs to be recognised that



their role is at the primary education level, and not at the secondary level. At that level SCERTs are more relevant and should have a larger role to play than they are playing at present.

3.27 At this stage, it might be asked whose responsibility it should be to provide and arrange inservice training. Should it be that of the School Boards or the SCERT or even the Department of Education? The answer in our view is the School Boards. It is the only agency which is primarily concerned with secondary education. The Department too is concerned but not in that exclusive or direct way. Amongst other things, it has several other responsibilities too. In any event, its principal arm for undertaking this job, as and when undertaken, would be the SCERT. If the latter gets involved, as it should, the Department can be said to be involved. Even then, some one has to take the initiative and shoulder the responsibility. The Board would be the appropriate agency for doing so. For one thing, its responsibility is both obvious, indeed inescapable. For another, the Boards have the necessary intellectual resources, which, when combined with those of the SCERT, will help them to arrange and organise inservice training, as it should be organised. An equally helpful role can be played by training colleges and departments of education in the universities as and when they are drawn into this network of inservice training.

3.28 The Boards as constituted today hardly do anything in this regard. If secondary education is to be improved, there is no choice except to significantly upgrade the skills of those already in position. In other words, the key to improvement lies in inservice training being undertaken in a systematic and intensive manner.

### **Role of Boards in Retraining**

3.29 There are two principal reasons why we favour the Boards undertaking this task. The Department of Education being a part of the bureaucratic set up, suffers from certain handicaps. Secondly, the job requires to be done not as it is being done today but by using the new technologies that are now becoming available.

3.30 While some of the Boards do have an Academic division, hardly any one of them has what may be called an Inservice

Training division. The two, however, are closely linked to each other as should be apparent. And that is why they are being mentioned in this sequence. A strong and well staffed Academic division would be a source of strength to the Inservice Training division. The professional training imparted by this division would, in the long run, help to strengthen the academic functioning of the Board. The nature of the linkage between these two divisions needs to be recognised and indeed fostered. Although, all the professionals in the Board need to be well qualified, this is especially pertinent to these two divisions. Persons appointed to different jobs in these divisions have to be sound academics with a positive outlook. Above all, they have to have a commitment to high standards of performance.

3.31 In a situation where even universities suffer from lack of commitment, to ask for it in respect of schools would be a difficult ideal to live up to. A good deal would depend upon the kind of teachers who are being trained by training colleges and University departments of education. Today's products do not measure up to the responsibilities that they are expected to discharge, more particularly in the restructured Boards as we visualise them. To that extent, the catchment area for these divisions is somewhat circumscribed. Despite this handicap, once established they would have to perform well, otherwise the justification for having these two divisions would come to be questioned.

### **Safeguards**

3.32 Certain safeguards are absolutely essential. One of them, for example, is not to follow the system of promotions through seniority. Nothing is more inimical to good performance than automatic promotions. This would have to be guarded against and accountability would have to be insisted upon. Another thing to be ensured would be that at least one or two persons in this division are well grounded in the distance education technology. Maybe it becomes necessary to establish close linkages with the local open university, if it exists, or with a Central outfit like IGNOU. A third requirement would be that there is active interaction between classroom teachers and those working for the Boards. Those working only in an office are likely to become stale after some time. It would then be necessary for these individuals to recharge their batteries. The best way of doing so is to undergo another spell of inservice training.

### **Research Division**

3.33 Hardly any School Board has a Research division as of today. This is something which the Boards have never thought to be important enough to set up. In a sense, this is a confirmation of the fact that the Boards still continue to think in terms of conducting examinations as their most important job. Examinations are important no doubt but to regard them as the sole justification for the existence of the Boards is a sure recipe for stagnation in the long run. Examinations in the very nature of things are repetitive in character. Year after year, the same job is done and, if there are no serious lapses, it is seen to be an occasion for self congratulation. But this is taking an extremely limited and self-limiting view of their mandate.

3.34 Properly speaking, every Board should keep on raising issues in regard to all kinds of things, academic and others, and find answers even to questions some of which have not been asked earlier. In fact to ask questions is the job of the researchers and there is an intimate connection between classroom teaching, conduct of examinations and how those are being handled and with what results. The latter activity can be legitimately described as research. This is sorely neglected as of today.

3.35 Another matter for consideration is whether the Examination division should do this job or let the Research division go into issues like a review of how question papers are set or how answer scripts are evaluated and the entire range of issues dealing with the integrity or reliability of the examinations being held. Either of the two divisions can do this job. Apart from issues relating to examinations, there are a number of other aspects connected with curriculum, techniques of teaching, ways of handling students, problems regarding the recruitment and promotions of teachers. Each one of them has to be raised and discussed. In course of time, a body of new knowledge would begin to emerge which then would be scrutinised against the existing stock of knowledge and appropriate changes made.

3.36 The kind of talent which should be involved in research is an issue which has also to be raised. Those who undertake research have to be both good classroom teachers and men and women of the thinking and the questioning kind. Unless their feet are planted firmly on the ground which is classroom teaching,

they can ask the wrong type of questions or even return wrong answers. At the same time, unless they are men and women of the kind who like to question received wisdom, they would not raise the right kind of questions and they would end up being both repetitive and sterile. Given the existing scarcity of talent, it would not be easy to find the right kind of staff for the Research division.

3.37 But a little bit of planning, some remodeling of training methods in the existing teaching institutions, more emphasis on publication work (journals etc.) and a few other connected steps can bring about a healthy change in about a decade. To put it another way, it would be some years before adequately staffed Research divisions are established. Generally speaking, they would centre around a few innovative and enterprising individuals. The important thing to ensure is that the objective to set up an adequately staffed Research division is not lost sight of. It may take some years to set them up. But the objective should be kept unwaveringly alive. Interaction with NCERT, NCTE, SCERTs, departments of education in universities and several hundred training colleges would have to be ensured.

3.38 Two jobs in particular are awaiting urgent attention. One of them (to analyse the masses of examination data generated annually by each School Board) needs to be handled by the Examination division. But the second job (analysis of pupil performance in each paper) has to be done primarily by the Research division. The purpose of these analyses is to help improve the level of achievement of students as also the level of proficiency of teachers who instruct them. Some of the Boards have occasionally turned their attention to doing this job but it has been done neither adequately nor systematically. The Research division should be required to attend to this job on a priority basis. In course of time, the Research divisions of different Boards would begin to interact with one another. In the long run, this would ensure both better teaching and better student performance.

3.39 One minor suggestion might be made here. In addition to what the staff of the Research division might be able to do on their own, it should be equally feasible for the division to sponsor some research work, farm out projects to others and, in general,

create an atmosphere of enquiry and serious investigation. Research work in the field of school education has been so consistently neglected and for such a long time that considerable attention needs to be given to it.

### **Contrast with Universities**

3.40 Over the years, most School Boards have acquired a certain kind of expertise in dealing with examination work. While quite a few universities have been fumbling in conducting examinations and declaring results, School Boards have without exception managed to keep themselves on schedule. Results are declared on time. Most often, Boards take something like 40-45 days to value the scripts and do all the detailed documentation work which has to be done before results can be declared. This is in sharp contrast to universities in several states whose academic calendar has remained disturbed for the last few decades. Certain states are more guilty in this respect than others. Even in case of these guilty states, their School Boards have managed to perform while the universities have failed to do so. This has happened despite all the handicaps from which almost all Boards suffer. The most obvious of them is the pressure of numbers. Uttar Pradesh for instance has one-sixth of India's population and the number of students that the Board handles is close to 3 million. Nonetheless, the Board has not failed to deliver the goods even once.

3.41 This has been possible because of the mechanism of having regional offices and delegated responsibility for a number of crucial jobs. This form of delegation has taken place in most of the major states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. About a quarter century ago, one after another, the Boards started computerisation of results and gradually extended it to other connected operations. While it cannot be claimed that every single operation has been fully and comprehensively computerised, it seems safe to say that today there is not a single Board which is not making use of computers. Step by step, more and more computerisation is being introduced. It is this fact, more than any other, which has enabled the School Boards to meet the challenge of numbers.

3.42 In one respect, however, most of the Boards have not performed as well as they could have. This refers to the training of the concerned staff in the use of computers. While a number of them have taken specific steps to train their staff, as a general proposition, only half the job has been done and the other half remains to be done. That is why it has been suggested that there should be a Computer and Information Unit in each School Board. This will enable the staff in position to perform even better than they are doing at present.

3.43 Why this contrast with how the universities perform in respect of examinations has been brought up here is easy to explain. For one thing, School Boards do not have to be defensive in respect, of everything as they generally are. In at least one area of operations, the Boards are doing well. For another, it was important to provide a kind of curtain raiser to the detailed discussion of one of the more crucial jobs that the Boards perform, namely, the conduct of examinations.

# 4

## THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

### **The System of External Examinations**

**T**he most dominant and the most visible of all activities of the Boards is that of conducting examinations. Everything connected with examinations—the issue of roll numbers, setting of question papers, evaluation of answer books, tabulation of results and the declaration of results—have been done year after year and for decades together with a fair degree of competence.

4.02 As long as the existing system of public examinations is followed in the country, the drill which is now being followed will continue to be adhered to. In any case, as already described, there is a wealth of experience available with the Boards which ensures mainly two things. One is that even though the number of candidates runs into approximately three million in the case of one Board, through a judicious mix of delegation of certain precisely defined jobs to regional offices and the use of computers, the whole process is completed in about six weeks. This is creditable, it must be acknowledged.

4.03 The second aspect is the integrity and reliability of the examinations conducted. Notwithstanding occasional cases of leakage of question papers and mass copying by students, a phenomenon which varies from state to state and year to year, there is a certain degree of credibility which these examinations enjoy; this fact too must be acknowledged. What are the issues then which may be dealt with here? These may be identified as follows:

### **The Issue of Roll Numbers**

4.04 According to the practice being followed in most places,

roll numbers are issued by the Boards. Names and other details are forwarded by schools. These are scrutinised by the Board office with the help of their regional offices (wherever they exist) and then roll numbers are issued. Can this system be changed? The issue is worth exploring.

4.05 For example, can the job of issuing roll numbers be delegated to schools? The apprehension against such a proposal would be that the schools cannot be entrusted with the responsibility of doing so. They are likely to make mistakes, and sometimes deliberately so. The simple answer to this apprehension is that if the Boards work out a foolproof system coupled with appropriate (and graded) punishment meted out to the offending schools, in a few years, the new system could be enforced without any fear of manipulation or misuse. Certain safeguards would have to be provided however. The more obvious ones are:

- (a) At the university level, every student is given what is called a University Registration Number. A couple of School Boards are also doing the same. In our opinion, this system should be adopted by every single Board. This will simplify the whole procedure of the issue of roll numbers which would not be issued by the schools as generally understood but Permanent Registration Number would be issued instead. The issue of roll numbers in that case would become a routine matter.
- (b) For every mistake made by a school office, there should be an automatic fine of Rs.1000. The amount of fine may be revised from time to time as and when necessary.
- (c) If more than five mistakes are detected in a particular year in the case of a school, the issue of roll numbers may be taken over instantly by the Board for that year and the school fined heavily to the extent of may be Rs.50,000. The fine imposed should be the same, whether it is a private school or a government school.
- (d) During the first three years, 15-20 per cent random checking may be undertaken by the Board office so as to guard against any mistake or slippage. With the passage of time, this percentage may be reduced and then stabilised at 5 per



cent per year. In other words, 5 per cent of the entries submitted by every school should in any case be scrutinised at random in the office of the Board.

- (e) Both at the school level and the Board level, the individual who makes/checks entries must sign. This will place the onus of responsibility on one person—a well-tested and widely-practised procedure in every such system where confidentiality of operations is a prerequisite. If at any stage, mistakes are found, it will be easy to hold a particular individual responsible.

4.06 The advantage of delegating this job to schools will be two-fold. One, it will relieve the pressure of work on the Boards to quite an extent and, two, it will significantly improve the working of school offices. At the moment, most of these offices are in a ramshackle state. Things are done casually and, if mistakes of the kind that ordinarily occur come to notice, responsibility is not fixed. Once the responsibility of issuing roll numbers is given to the school office and a heavy fine is levied as penalty, nobody will take his job casually. And this would be an enormous gain.

4.07 Before proceeding further, one question must be answered: Can this be done? Can the schools be trusted with this responsibility? More important, can there be a system wherein fines are imposed? Will it not lead to a public outcry? All such fears are legitimate and need to be articulated but to infer that the status quo should be maintained is being much too timid. Caution is in order but not timidity. The existing non-performing system at the school level has to be changed. How soon and at what pace are issues that can be and should be discussed.

4.08 One reason why we have chosen to raise this issue in this manner is that it has a direct bearing on the issue of staff strength in the various Boards and the related question of what is called unionisation of the employees. This is a real problem and efficiency of operations is closely linked with it. The sole reason why most Boards have managed to perform better than the universities is that they opted for computers. A number of universities, but not all, are now using computers to a greater extent than before. But the Boards are significantly ahead in

this respect. In the existing situation, the Boards have to build on that vantage position. Delegating the responsibility of issuing roll numbers to schools will both signify and ensure that.

### **Problems in Testing**

4.09 Cheating in examinations is a menace in most states. Until a quarter century ago, this phenomenon was not encountered at the school level though, to be sure, it was and continues to be somewhat widespread at the college level. With growing criminalisation in society, the incidence of mass copying has been on the rise. That some of the professional colleges felt upset by what was happening at the school level should be evident from the fact that, in most states, separate examinations are held for entry into professional courses. This is a comment upon the extent of confidence that universities/colleges have in the ability of the School Boards to conduct their examinations fairly and with the requisite degree of integrity. This is not to suggest that Board examinations are less reliable than those conducted by universities and other organisations but that there is a problem here and it has to be attended to.

4.10 The practice of screening large masses of students and selecting only a small number—to match the number of seats available—is by now followed in most states. There may be some justification in the case of students coming from other Boards when they apply for admission into professional colleges located in another state. But there is not much justification for such a system when students have appeared for the examination conducted by the local School Board and have performed as well as they could have and in proportion to the reliability and integrity of the examination conducted by the local Board. While growing numbers is a factor and the need to select rather than certify as was the earlier requirement have changed the situation somewhat, there are a number of issues involved here which need to be discussed.

4.11 Often, these State-sponsored tests are allotted to certain universities to conduct on behalf of the state. The revenue earned from these tests stays with the universities. In a few states, where the State governments attempted to include that income in the overall income of the university, the universities united

together and opposed such an arrangement. In one or two cases, they went to the extent of asserting that they were not required to organise such tests as per their charter of work. Some of the universities, otherwise chronically short of funds, wanted this income by way of a bonus rather than have it adjusted against their grant from the State government. Certain universities have crores of rupees in this fund which is at the exclusive disposal of the Vice-Chancellor. Even the Finance Committee has no control or jurisdiction over it. Thus, vested interests perpetuate the existing set up and oppose any kind of change in the situation.

4.12 The unstated implication of this repeat testing at the State level is that the kind of testing done by School Boards is not dependable and the admitting authorities like to do the testing either on their own or rely on the testing done by another agency under the auspices of the State government.

4.13 It would be presumptuous to expect that such discussion can take place at the national level. For one thing, the School Boards are not as well organised at the national level as are the universities. COBSE which represents the various School Boards is a much younger body than the Association of Indian Universities and would have to get organised better than it is today before such an exercise can be undertaken. That apart, it would be much more rewarding to discuss it at the state level rather than at the national level. Also, for the reason that there is no all-India policy in this regard. No one has taken any formal or informal position on behalf of the universities or the School Boards. A number of university teachers sit on various bodies of the Boards. It is somehow taken for granted that what is good for universities is also good for schools. Experience has shown that this is not so. This disillusioning experience, if it may be put that way, needs to be concretised afresh by the Boards in the case of curriculum making and academic planning.

4.14 At the secondary level, the vocational aspect is not given the importance it deserves. If about one-third or more of the students who clear the plus two examination opt for college, the majority need to be educated differently from those preparing for entry into college. It is this reorientation which needs to be brought about. It cannot be brought about through examinations but by redesigning the curriculum which is quite a differ-

ent proposition.

4.15 The 1986 Policy had recommended the establishment of a National Testing Service. The 1992 revision changed the focus somewhat and talked in terms of a National Evaluation Organisation. Without getting into the details of this controversy, one thing is clear. The need to have a national level organisation which deals with this issue on a professional basis was recognised even a decade ago. Why is this issue being kept in cold storage then? This extraordinary delay has created further problems. It is time that some steps were taken to attend to this thorny issue at an early date.

### **The Issue of Integrity**

4.16 Returning to the issue in hand, integrity in the conduct of examinations, some more aspects need to be discussed:

- (a) Not so long ago, the phrase used in respect of cheating in examinations was the 'use of unfair means'. Even now when the situation has undergone a qualitative change, the designation of the committee which deals with such cases is still the 'Unfair Means Committee'. The current popular usage however is 'mass copying'. What is significant to note in this regard is that copying takes place frequently and on a large scale.
- (b) As will be readily recognised, the causes are more political than academic. The police are now-a-days invariably involved in the conduct of examinations especially when large masses of students have to be handled. This becomes unavoidable when students are no longer guilty of copying as individuals. In quite a number of cases, parents also get involved. Therefore, widespread copying becomes a law and order problem.
- (c) It should not be necessary to condemn the role of certain groups and parties which adopt a public posture — generally unhelpful—in regard to mass copying. The truth of the matter is that whatever might be said in defence or criticism of the situation, no one can defend mass copying in principle and indeed no one does, at least publicly. However, words are generally manipulated in such a way that, even while decrying

mass copying, instances of it, when detected, are defended ingeniously and in devious ways. As a result, copying is not curbed. Through planned and systematic inaction, it is even encouraged and promoted.

- (d) What about the role of the Boards in such situations? Much depends upon the Chairman of the Board. There have been instances when chairmen have given evidence of inaction or lack of assertion. In consequence, instead of being curbed, copying receives a fresh fillip. But there have been also instances when chairmen have asserted themselves and copying has been brought under control. It all boils down to who succeeds in intimidating whom.
- (e) If students, backed by their parents and the connivance with those who wield state power, succeed in intimidating the examining authority, copying cannot be brought under control. If, on the other hand, the Board—more precisely, the Chairman of the Board—chooses to assert his authority to conduct a free-from-blemish examination, he can have his way. No one in authority can legitimately refuse to extend support to the Boards in defence of a good cause—integrity in the conduct of examinations. For the last few decades, a certain kind of see-saw battle has been taking place in every state. Earlier it was between the students and the universities. Now the School Boards have also been drawn into this mess. In this battle, neither side has been victorious so far. There are occasions when copying takes place on a large scale. There are also occasions when it has been curbed successfully and effectively. The process of curbing is however generally temporary. Indeed, copying returns again till it is again resisted by those in authority. The crucial factor, to reiterate, is the moral stamina and the willingness to assert by the chief executive, namely, the Chairman of the Board. Indeed, one can go so far as to say that a Chairman of the Board has failed to deliver the goods unless he is able to ensure that examinations are conducted as they ought to be conducted; that is free from any breath of scandal or corruption.
- (f) There is one power which can always be used by the Chairman of the Board as and when he chooses to invoke it. The irony is that it is not used as often as it ought to be. This is

the power of the Chairman to cancel any examination. This power of the Board cannot be questioned by anyone. Once used, there is no appeal against it. It can be cancelled, if necessary, at one or at several centres. Once cancelled, word goes around that copying will not pay and that no attempt to copy will be allowed to succeed. In our opinion, this power should be invoked more frequently, more consistently and more decisively than has been done in most cases.

- (g) Apart from invoking this power, there are several other ways of frustrating attempts to cheat. In a couple of cases, for example, different question papers are set and students, even when seated next to one another, are given different question papers. Similarly, seating is arranged in such a way that the neighbouring student cannot help, even if a student is inclined to do so. Several experiments on similar lines have been made by several Boards. We suggest that these need to be analysed both from academic and administrative angles and appropriate guidelines worked out. While multiple question papers have certainly brought down the incidence of copying markedly, questions continue to be raised regarding the scientific validity of this mode of testing. In our opinion, this issue needs to be explored further. This is a job to which COBSE must pay urgent attention.
- (h) One of the Boards has tried an innovation rather successfully and we commend it to the attention of all Boards. Cases of the use of unfair means are not kept pending for months as genearily happens. Instead, a number of Unfair Means committees are set up and they work simultaneously. Therefore decisions are made within a matter of days, sometimes as promptly as three to four days. Rules of invigilation make it imperative for Superintendents of examination centres to take statements right on the spot. When cases come up for decision, all relevant statements have already been obtained. This speed of decision making also inhibits those charge-sheeted from invoking pressures of different kinds. What needs to be underscored is the fact that when the Board is determined to ensure a high degree of integrity in the conduct of examinations, the news spreads at once. This therefore acts as a deterrent to attempts at copying.

- (i) Cheating in examinations is an issue which must receive detailed attention every year after each examination season. The situation must be reviewed and ways found to combat the problem. To some extent, this is being done in a number of places. What is required is to intervene more effectively, and equally important, to interact with other Boards to share the experience of handling them. One of the jobs that CBSE should undertake is to convene annually an all-India meeting for two or three days where Controllers of Examination come together and exchange experiences of lessons learnt and unlearnt.

### **Examination Centres**

4.17 At this stage, it is important to refer to one issue with which the Boards are confronted every year: Where to locate the examination centres and on what considerations. These are issues which most of them find difficult to grapple with. Some Boards have worked out precise criteria. Others have yet to do so. The criteria that they have already laid down are neither precise nor detailed with the result that unscrupulous people can sometimes manipulate the system. On occasions, politicians, including ministers, intervene. The obvious thing to do in all such cases is that rules should be laid down in advance and down to the last detail.

4.18 Once laid down, even the Chairman should not have the authority to make any exception. All exceptions, if thought advisable for publicly defensible reasons, must be placed before the executive committee of the Board for approval. Such a system will also protect the Chairman from being pressurised by people who are more interested in responding to populist pressures than in upholding the integrity of the examination system.

4.19 The location of examination centres is crucial to the success of the conduct of examinations. Broadly speaking, more than 50 per cent of the success of the system depends upon where the centres are located, whether they are easily accessible to everyone or can entry be controlled rigorously and other similar details. Various Boards have undertaken various experiments. Some rely upon the Principals of the examination centres to manage things with the help of their staff and ensure good

performance. Others ask the students of one school to sit for examination at a centre other than their own school. It is not our intention to support one procedure or decry another. It all depends upon the opinion in a particular state, the extent of political or other interference, the support received from the district authorities and such contributory factors.

4.20 There is no common all-India pattern. When Controllers of Examinations meet under the auspices of COBSE every year for a few days, it is for them to learn from one another. Sometimes it may become necessary to change a particular system if it has been followed too long and where infirmities have been noticed. In respect of all such matters, there can be no substitute for learning from experience. The objective is to ensure fault-free conduct of examinations. While a lot depends upon rules and regulations, the role of those vested with the responsibility of conducting examinations at various levels is no less important.

#### ***Distribution of Question Papers***

4.21 The manner in which question papers are set, printed and distributed is fairly successful, barring occasional leakages which most Boards have learnt to deal with. Some more thought however needs to be given to the system of distributing question papers to various examination centres. Today different procedures are followed. We hesitate to express an opinion in favour or against any procedure. Once again, we would like COBSE to coordinate the thinking of the various Boards, the procedures that they follow and indicate the need for reconsideration or revision.

4.22 Can there also be a system whereby it becomes possible to grade and categorise the Boards in respect of how efficiently and honestly examinations are organised? This is not the same thing as grading the Boards on the basis of their academic performance and related criteria. That would amount to accreditation in a sense and is so far not on the agenda as far as schools are concerned. Accreditation as a system of monitoring is an item under consideration at the university level. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) sponsored by the UGC is the body vested with this function. A



stage will come one day when this system can be extended to schools also. What is being suggested is to determine how honestly, or otherwise, a particular examination was conducted. The point at issue is the degree of integrity with which it was conducted and not whether the papers set were well designed or whether they were evaluated as they should have been and so on.

4.23 Evidently no outside agency, were it to undertake such a job, would be welcomed. The job can only be done on a voluntary basis till such time as something corresponding to NAAC in respect of universities is established. An impartial and reliable set of criteria would have to be evolved meanwhile. Can this be done and would the Boards agree to such an exercise? An answer to this question can only be given by an all-India professional body which, in the existing circumstances, can only mean COBSE. On its own, the COBSE would hesitate to take a clear cut stand on this issue. But if half a dozen Boards come forward and ask to be evaluated in terms of the criteria evolved, it would have an electrifying effect on the school system as a whole and indeed on the university system too.

### ***Re-evaluation and Transparency***

4.24 Most Boards do not permit re-evaluation of answer scripts after results have been declared. In some cases, the matter had been taken to the Consumer Courts and even the High Courts. Consumer Courts, after having entertained some of these pleas in the beginning, have now washed their hands of this matter. Earlier, the position that they took was that the conduct of examinations was in the nature of a service and if students were not satisfied with the service rendered, they could legitimately ask for redress. These courts have since found that the numbers involved were so large that, were this system of appeals to Consumer Courts to continue, they would find it difficult to deal with the countless complaints that come before them. Therefore, they decided not to deal with such cases.

4.25 The courts too have taken a somewhat similar position. They have refused to sit in judgement on how Universities and Boards perform. In one case, an appeal went to the Supreme Court against a decision of the Maharashtra High Court. The

Supreme Court took the view that the principles of natural justice did not apply to this situation since the examining authorities followed a certain, settled procedure. If that procedure had not been violated, there was no reason to interfere. It should not be necessary to provide more details of these two developments except to repeat the point that it is for the examining authorities to set their house in order. The overall situation however remains that barely one or two Boards permit re-evaluation. The question that arises therefore is: What is the right thing to do?

4.26 Before this question can be answered, it is important to raise another question. Why is it that the demand for re-evaluation came to be made in the first instance? The plain answer is, that a large number of people were dissatisfied either with their scores in the examination or the manner in which the Boards were performing. Instead of looking into the poor performance of the Boards, which was the real issue, a way out was found and that was to permit students to ask for re-evaluation on payment of a certain fee. This has no doubt meant a small degree of satisfaction for dissatisfied students but the extent of the problems that this questionable innovation has created has been outweighed by the advantage that accrued to some people.

4.27 Put another way, the basic issue is to ensure two things. One is to improve the internal mechanisms of management and control, the marking of scripts (the procedures of randomisation and sealing in evaluation of answer scripts are somewhat neglected today) and the other related issues that are connected with the working of the Boards; and the second is to ensure the transparent functioning of these Boards so that those who have misgivings of various kinds can see for themselves that what is being done is both efficient and honest. Most Boards falter on these grounds. Some of them, though not all, insist on secrecy as a cover for their unsatisfactory performance. Since this is an issue of considerable importance, a lot more thought (and appropriate follow-up action) would have to be given as to how the Boards can perform better and what they should do about it. The matter is not being pursued further partly because it can be debated at length on the platform of COBSE and partly through the agency of the Grievance Redressal Cell discussed later in some detail.

### **Uses of a Manual**

4.28 While a couple of Boards do have something like a manual of office operations in respect of examination work, the rest rely on precedents or improvisations made on the spot. What needs to be ensured is that COBSE prepares a manual for use by all its members. As has been proposed elsewhere, a two to three day workshop of Controllers of Examinations should be convened every year. One of its tasks should be to review such a manual—assuming that it has been prepared by that time—in respect of how workable it is and whether the experience of different Boards, year after year, calls for any amendment of the rules and regulations laid down. If no amendments are called for, it only goes to show that the manual is well conceived and well designed and is a document meant to guide those working in this area, rather than an essay on what ought to be done. Both the preparation of such a manual and its annual updating should be one of the important assignments that COBSE must take upon itself. It might be useful to involve some retired stalwarts in this area of work so as to draw on their experience and practical wisdom.

4.29 In the drafting and finalisation of this manual transparency of operations must be ensured. At this stage it needs to be affirmed that procedures cannot be made confidential. *All confidentiality should relate to the identity of the individuals and not the procedures.* Indeed the procedures should be public to the extent that anyone who wants to have a copy of the manual should be able to acquire one. While drawing up the manual, due importance must be given to the requirement that the procedures are both efficient and mechanically smooth and at the same time publicly defensible.

4.30 That is one part of the job. The second part is to ensure that procedures are followed implicitly and honestly. After each examination, an internal audit must be carried out by the Controller of Examinations and a report submitted to that effect to the Chairman of the Board. This should not however mean that the Chairman waits for the submission of the report and takes no interest in the day-to-day working of the Examination branch. The formal position must be understood

clearly. The chief executive of the Board is the Chairman. In other words, he is responsible for all that happens. The Controller of Examinations, even though one of the senior officers of the Board, is answerable to the Chairman. In order to lend meaning to the concept of answerability, the Controller will be well advised to keep the Chairman informed of all important developments and the latter too should keep himself posted with day-to-day developments. The intention is not to interfere with the working of the Controllers or the Examination division. On the contrary, the intention is that the Chairman must satisfy himself that the procedures laid down are being followed as they should be.

### **Three-Yearly Review**

4.31 In fact we would go further and suggest that every three years there should be a mandatory review of the working of the Examination branch by a committee appointed by the Board. This report should go into every single detail of the operations. For instance, in several places, tabulators and checkers are subject to a token fine if a mistake is discovered. More mistakes means larger fines. A number of mistakes are discovered but it would not be surprising if some of them remain undiscovered. The fine penalty is however not always levied. This leads to laxity of working and creates various similar problems. It is for this reason that we have proposed, one, that the Chairman should keep himself informed in respect of day-to-day operations and, secondly, there should be a mandatory review after every three years. Most problems that arise can generally be traced to laxity in applying various procedures. Since the members of the public can in principle go into these details, it is imperative that the Boards should have an internal mechanism of a systematic review and the three-yearly review as proposed is meant to achieve that objective.

4.32 This mandatory review does not have to be necessarily included as a part of the annual presentation at the COBSE meeting. The COBSE meeting is more concerned with the streamlining of procedures and laying them down in such a way that they achieve the level of performance for which they are intended. The actual job of ensuring implementation should be with the Boards.

4.33 To sum up:

- (a) We are in favour of laying down and formalising the right procedures. Care should be taken to ensure that both efficiency and transparency are looked upon as the cornerstone of how work in the Examination division is to be organised. It follows that we are not in favour of re-evaluation of answer scripts. The few Boards that follow this practice may reconsider their stand in the light of what has been stated above and also the fact that this system often breeds corruption and, in any case, results are invariably delayed. To repeat, the problem flows from the fact that rules are not well designed nor are they always implemented faithfully and openly. Once that is done, the cause of dissatisfaction would disappear to a large extent. We have also noted the fact that in countries such as the United Kingdom where too a number of examining Boards at the school level handle large masses of students, there is no such provision. If the candidates do not ask for re-evaluation in that country, it is because they have no reason to believe that the Boards are either under-performing or performing dishonestly. It is this level of competence and integrity which needs to be ensured in our country.
- (b) The preparation of a manual as argued above should be given top priority. Whatever checks and balances are built into the system should be adhered to, and these must be built into the procedures in such a way that non-adherence should sound a warning for everyone concerned.
- (c) Since the Chairman of the Board is its chief executive, he must ensure that whatever is laid down is fully and faithfully implemented. This responsibility is non-transferrable to any one else, if it may be added.
- (d) It will be necessary to impart systematic and continuous training to those assigned to responsible and sensitive jobs. Time is not a constraint. The real rush of work is confined to two to three months. During the rest of the year, the work load is relatively less. Therefore, training should be treated as a matter of vital, professional importance and an appropriate calendar of activities worked out in advance, approved

by the executive committee and a report on its implementation made every year.

- (e) As argued elsewhere, the core staff should be relatively small. The more confidential (or important) jobs should be entrusted only to them. All others including those appointed for short durations may be asked to perform those jobs which can be checked and reviewed later on by the core staff.
- (f) A system of rewards and punishment has to be an integral part of the examination division as distinct from other divisions. Payment of over-time wage, if in vogue anywhere, needs to be discontinued. This system breeds evasion of work as per schedule so as to make out a case for extra wages. A system of piece rate work as also one of rewards and punishment is therefore to be preferred. While drawing up the manual, these problems should be analysed and appropriate provisions devised. Indeed these provisions and their scrupulous application would have a direct bearing on staff morale and their willingness to perform as desired.

### ***Moderation of Results***

4.34 Perhaps no activity of School Boards is in need of greater transparency, as well as consistency than the method by which results are moderated. The job is done by a handful of individuals. Rules framed are generally not precise. On the other hand, in most cases a good deal of discretion is allowed to those who are entrusted with this responsibility. Hardly any one sits in judgement on what has been done. In other words, there is no system of internal auditing and what the handful of individuals do decides the fate of a large number of students.

4.35 Generally speaking, most members of the Moderation committee persuade themselves to enhance the pass percentage, if it is on the low side. There is no criterion to indicate what is high and what is low. More often than not, it is a subjective feeling. Once however, the pass percentage has been raised by a certain margin, it is applied uniformly to everyone. Although no individual student is being favoured or penalised, the issue is to what extent the Moderation committee should have the right to take a decision without reference to any precisely laid down criteria. Secondly, should this decision be made in respect of

the overall score or only in respect of individual subjects? Both issues are profoundly significant in terms of their impact and cannot be taken on an ad hoc basis as presumably is the practice in most places today.

4.36 As suggested above, it would be a good idea to grade the level of integrity of the conduct of examinations of different Boards. In case the proposal gets implemented, one of the important inputs should be the extent and the manner in which moderation was done and in respect of which examinations and why. Even if the grading of Boards cannot be ensured, the minimum that ought to be done is that

- (a) Precise guidelines are laid down.
- (b) Moderation is done in individual subjects and under no circumstances in respect of the total score thereby introducing an extraneous element to modify the score achieved by a student.
- (c) The Chairman of the Board approves the proposal of the Moderation committee.
- (d) Full details are reported to the Examination committee, the Academic committee and the Executive committee and their *ex post facto* concurrence obtained. This last step will ensure both transparency and a certain degree of responsibility while moderating the results.

#### **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (C&CE)**

4.37 The 1986 Policy as also the 1992 revision recommended Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (C&CE) of students at the school level. In its wake, a handful of Boards did initiate this form of evaluation though the degree of success achieved so far has been highly uneven and partial. It must be recognised that this is an immense job. Our teachers are not trained to do this kind of work in the manner in which it has been visualised, nor is the social situation in the country all that favourable to its practice. We have no firm data as to how many schools have actually introduced C&CE as a supplement to the plus two examination but it would be safe to say that their number does not exceed a few hundreds. Perhaps not even that. This being so, it

can be argued that C&CE is more of a distant goal than something achievable in the near future.

4.38 This is largely because the Boards have not pushed this innovation as vigorously as they could have and indeed should have. We recognise that, out of 90,000 or so secondary schools that function as of today, not more than 1 or 2 per cent have actually attempted to implement the system of C&CE. But it will be readily recognised that, if pushed with a certain degree of vigour and commitment, the number can be raised to something like 10 per cent of the total within five years. It is difficult to predict what would happen after that. So much would depend upon the social and political changes that are taking place in the country. We do not wish to write off this innovation as something so ideal that one need not even talk about it.

#### ***Philosophy Behind C&CE***

4.39 The philosophy behind the C&CE is simple. C&CE needs to be looked upon as an integral component of the teaching-learning process. A three hour test conducted at the end of the scholastic year (in fact two years) cannot be a fully reliable and valid test of a student's ability. It tells us a good deal about the student but not everything. Coupled with this is the fact that the non-scholastic areas of a student's personality (such as a student's personal and social qualities or his interest in subjects outside the curriculum, etc.) cannot be assessed through the kind of public examination which is conducted at the end of the school career. While scholastic achievement is important, non-scholastic qualities are equally important and need to be identified so as to get a total picture of the student's ability and personality. At the same time it has to be recognised that there are difficulties of all kinds, both financial and human, in practising C&CE. Nonetheless it is time to promote C&CE, convince both parents and teachers of its advantages and so go about things that more and more schools adopt this system.

4.40 In our scheme of things, it is the School Boards which are expected to play the central role in the academic renovation of the school system. In other words, leadership has to come from the Boards. Once the Boards get committed to this vital and supplementary form of evaluation and push it vigorously,



within a few years, this innovation will come to be accepted by more and more schools. No agency other than the Boards can promote C&CE and that is why it is sought to be emphasised that the Boards have to play a pioneering role in this regard. In addition to redesigning and promoting inservice education, this area of work can be given special importance. The Boards can also take up this matter with training colleges and departments of education in different universities so that it is included in the pre-service training of teachers. Indeed, a campaign has to be launched and, no one other than the Boards, can do so with a greater sense of commitment.

4.41 The Boards would be well advised to survey how every single school goes about the job when it undertakes to introduce C&CE. At the same time, it must guide them. To start with, there is bound to be resistance, but with help and guidance from the Boards, within a couple of years, the system can be adopted by all schools.

4.42 One important way of making it an integral part of the schools would be to compare the achievements of students under the C&CE scheme and the external examination conducted by the Board. This is something that has not been done so far. We suggest that it be done on a systematic basis. Further, on the basis of the information provided by the schools, the Board should issue a certificate under its own seal. This will formalise the whole system.

4.43 If it is done consistently over the years, it will gradually generate a fund of information about students which, when analysed by the Examination and Research divisions, will convince the public that this system is not a luxury which is to be introduced only when it is possible or convenient to do so, but an academic necessity and indeed an integral part of education at that level.

4.44 At the university level, there has been a good deal of talk of what has been loosely described as the system of internal assessment. The system is working mainly in technical and agricultural universities and a few other institutions where admissions are selective and the student-teacher ratio is favourable. As recognised widely, not many teachers in mainstream

universities and colleges have felt committed to the system. One can even say that, in certain cases, organised groups of academicians have even opposed it. This is not to suggest that school teachers would be more enthusiastic than their counterparts in the colleges. But, going by past precedent, school teachers are more likely to fall in line with the C&CE scheme system than college teachers. For instance, redesigning of question papers has worked at the school level but not in the universities. On the whole, therefore, we are inclined to think that C&CE can be successfully promoted, at least to some extent despite some of the misgivings that a number of people have.

4.45 The biggest impediment is likely to be lack of a similar system at the time of admission to colleges. Subsequent developments too would have to play a role and, to that extent, would determine how far the system of C&CE would generally get accepted. But before that stage is reached, there must be some understanding between the Boards and the Universities—more precisely the colleges—so as to ensure that the assessment done at the Board level is given due weightage. Unless some such thing is done, schools will not feel strongly motivated to institute the system.

#### ***Remodelling Question Papers***

4.46 Nothing has been said so far about the mode and mechanics of setting question papers for different examinations. In this respect, School Boards have performed much better than the universities. In the late fifties, after the visit of Prof. Bloom of the University of Chicago, the NCERT and the Boards undertook an intensive programme of training paper setters to remodel the question papers in order to achieve certain objectives, namely (i) minimise subjectivity, (ii) de-emphasise rote memorisation, (iii) discourage selective study, and (iv) thereby improve the teaching-learning process.

For a decade or so, workshops were held all over the country to retrain a large number of paper setters, evaluators, and moderators. The NCERT played a stellar role in this campaign and so did some of the School Boards. On the whole, it can be safely said that the objective of remodeling question papers was achieved to a substantial extent. After a few years when it was recognised

that by and large the new style of setting question papers had been internalised by the school system, it was no longer found necessary to go on with these training programmes. Even a cursory look at the question papers set in most School Boards makes it clear that both teachers and students—this sequencing is not without a deeper meaning—have accepted the new system and it is here to stay.

4.47 One can go to the extent of saying that if there is one examination reform which, relatively speaking, has succeeded during recent decades, it was the attempt to redesign question papers at the secondary level so as to make them more balanced, more valid and more reliable. The Ramamurty Committee which reported in 1990-91 went into this question in some detail and gave data regarding the status of implementation of examination reforms at the school level. These data are reproduced at Appendix D so as to facilitate ready reference. It is for the public and the academic community to sit in judgement on whether the claims made are entirely correct or partially correct. For our part, we have carried out no such exercise. However, we are inclined to think that the data assembled by this Committee though somewhat partial and even dated by now were substantially correct though this is not to suggest that further improvements are not necessary or that wider efforts in involving a larger number of teachers trained in the new system of setting question papers are not called for.

4.48 The Ramamurty Committee report also gives data regarding the status of implementation of examination reforms at the university level. Most of the reforms carried out at this level have been introduced by those universities which are primarily non-affiliating in character. The real problem is in respect of affiliating universities. That is where more than 80 per cent of students are enrolled. Most universities, therefore, continue to suffer from the same maladies which the School Boards, through a systematic campaign of retraining, have succeeded in overcoming to some extent.

4.49 For historical reasons, most School Boards still think that if they conduct the examinations successfully, they have done their job. That is why it was decided to devote one full chapter to the conduct of examinations. Having said this, it must be made

clear that there are many more issues in respect of this area of work that call for discussion. It is not possible to discuss each one of them here. However, we take this opportunity to say that COBSE which represents the School Boards in their corporate totality must play a more vigorous role in regard to coordination amongst the Boards so far as examinations are concerned than it has played so far. Perhaps no other item in the working of the Boards requires as much coordination as examinations do. There is a good deal to learn from one another. In any event, the meetings of Controllers of Examinations a couple of months after the examination season is over should be an annual event. The agenda should be worked out carefully for such meetings. The closer the degree of coordination, the easier it will be to ensure greater efficiency as also greater reliability.

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## OTHER AREAS OF ACTIVITY

**I**n Chapter 3, innovative activities such as academic activities, inservice training and research were taken up. In Chapter 4, the conduct of examinations was discussed. It was not the procedures of examination work etc., that were discussed; rather it was the issue of how to conduct examinations efficiently as well as honestly. In the present chapter, several other areas of activity by School Boards are proposed to be considered.

**5.02** While doing so, it is necessary to restate and underscore our perception of what the full range of activities of School Boards should be. These fall into three broad categories. Some of them are innovative in character as already stated. Others are traditional in character (for instance, the conduct of examinations) but they need to be handled differently. Still others, while traditional in character, need to be carried out innovatively. The issues presented in this chapter fall under the third category.

**5.03** Before doing so, one general observation may be made. Except for examinations which are generally handled efficiently, the functioning of Boards in other areas of activity is distinctly unsatisfactory. It does not even come up to the norms of average performance on the part of an organisation such as a School Board. The manner in which they responded to the repeated requests for information made by this committee made it abundantly clear to us that they are far from efficient. The way in which they must be dealing with students and their parents can only be imagined. To expect all Boards to implement what is being recommended in this report would be to expect too much. There is a further point of difference between Boards in large states and those in small states. The latter are weak in resources and just cannot put into practice what is proposed here. Boards in the North-eastern states are a category by themselves.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that the outline of organisation as presented in this and the preceding two chapters indicate the general direction which the Boards ought to follow. Whether they eventually do so or not would depend upon their willingness and capacity to change and adjust and also upon their size and resources.

### **Recognition Division**

5.04 Recognition of schools is an activity which has been undertaken by Boards right from the day they were established. In a sense, recognition was linked with the issue of who conducted the examination. Since it was the School Board which did so, it was assumed that the Board had agreed to recognise those schools whose students eventually sat for the examination. In course of time, recognition came to be defined somewhat more formally. This however is not true of every single state. In the university context, the word used is affiliation. Even at that level, the situation is suspect. Therefore we have preferred to use the term recognition in the school context.

5.05 In certain states, it was taken for granted that students of government-run schools would automatically sit for the examinations conducted by the Board and there was no question of their not being allowed to do so. There was hardly any distinction between the government and the Boards to start with. In most cases, it was the Director of Education (or one of his officers) who managed the Board or supervised its operations. With the passage of time however, some Boards came to be established as independent and statutory bodies. In such cases, the Chairmen were not necessarily people connected with the Department of Education; rather they were persons eminent in their own right and were asked to manage the affairs of the Boards. Before long, therefore, a certain kind of unstated conflict began to arise between the Boards and the government-run schools. In the case of privately-run schools, there was little doubt or ambiguity about some form of accountability on the part of the schools. Even when they were recognised by the Department of Education and regardless of whether they received grant-in-aid or not, the approval of the Boards had to be sought to allow these students to take their examination and was granted more or less as a matter of course.

5.06 By and large, the privately-run schools were more conscious of their obligations than those run by the government. While hardly anybody questioned them closely, the privately-run schools were aware of the fact that their working and performance could be questioned by the Boards. The government-run schools however were secure in their belief that since they were run by the government, their candidates would be automatically allowed to write their examination. This was so in theory. In practice, problems began to arise. For instance, in government-run schools in particular, several posts of teachers often remained unfilled. Sometimes vacancies had been approved by the government but the actual appointments had not been made. The whole procedure of appointments and postings is generally long-drawn out and complicated in the government. In certain cases, schools were established but an adequate number of teachers was not sanctioned. That physical facilities were poor or inadequate in a number of cases was taken to be a fact of life. In this background, the chairmen of quite a few Boards raised this issue with the government, even publicly in one or two cases. In brief, the right of the government to run understaffed and unsuitable schools came to be questioned.

5.07 The Boards took the position, and rightly so, that the fact that the schools had been established by the government did not confer any automatic immunity regarding fulfilment of certain basic conditions. Privately-run schools also suffered from some of the disabilities that government-run schools did. But as soon as problems were pointed out to the management of these schools, they generally put their house in order. The Department of Education however could not move till the Finance Department sanctioned certain heads of expenditure. In other words, the political masters (i.e. the ministers) had to feel committed to certain decisions being taken by the Department. Unless that happened, progress became difficult. In a couple of cases, when the Board chairmen took a stiff stand, the government-run schools also fell in line. Throughout the country, as a system, privately-run schools have been responding much more readily to the directions of the Boards than the government-run schools.

#### **Answer to the Problem**

5.08 What is to be done in this situation? The answer is

obvious. In about half the cases, Boards have laid down certain (but not always detailed) rules and regulations for recognition. These are applicable to privately-run schools as much as to government-run schools. In actual practice however, not all government-run schools fulfil these requirements. A more acceptable way of describing the situation would be that the government-run schools are not likely to be black-listed as the privately-run schools sometimes are. This situation must change. Conditions laid down by School Boards for recognition must be the same in both cases and need to be more precisely defined than obtain today. Our analysis shows that the conditions laid down by different Boards are only in a handful of cases.

5.09 We suggest that COBSE should convene a workshop where all these different issues are discussed in detail and a common approach evolved. There is no justification whatsoever for any bias in favour of government-run schools. That indeed is one reason why we want the School Boards to be autonomous in character and free from government control. Also, there is a lot of grey area regarding what constitutes provisional or permanent recognition, the duration for which a school may be recognised on a provisional basis and so on. All these doubts and ambiguities must be removed. That is why we have suggested a key role for COBSE. Being an all India body, it should be possible to pool information from all over the country and, evolve a set of rules which would be more or less uniformly applicable. The text of one such exercise undertaken jointly by NCERT and COBSE is appended at Appendix E)

5.10 Three other points that need to be made are:

- (a) Every year, by a given date, every single school must return a detailed proforma worked out in advance and embodying the relevant rules and regulations. The concerned division, after interacting with other divisions, as and when necessary, must respond within a couple of weeks in case any deficiency comes to notice, and inform the concerned school/s about it. While doing so, a deadline for repairing the deficiency, if any, must also be laid down. This procedure should be a part of the rules of recognition already worked out in advance and notified to all concerned.
- (b) It would be difficult for the Boards to derecognise the offending



schools. Schools generally cater to the needs of a certain concentration of population. If any one of them has to be closed down for reasons over which the local community has no control, it is bound to give rise to public distress and create a gulf between the community and the Boards. In view of this situation, what we propose is likely to have a salutary effect provided details have been worked out in advance.

- (c) Fines should be levied automatically for different kinds and types of lapses committed by schools. Whether it is a private management or government management is not important. If it is a private management, corrective steps will be taken promptly. If they are government-run schools, the Department will have to explain to the auditors why timely steps were not taken and why the school/s incurred certain penalties. Since there would be no budget provision for such penalties, the government-run schools will be obliged to comply with the rules and regulations in the spirit in which they have to be complied with. This system of automatic fines has not been tried anywhere so far. We have reason to believe that once a few schools are fined, the writ of the Board will be obeyed implicitly.

5.11 Two objections can be, and perhaps, would be raised to these suggestions. One, sooner or later, this whole drill of getting a detailed proforma from schools will degenerate into a ritual. Such a misgiving can be overcome by posing a counter question: do we want the schools to continue to function in the manner that they are doing at present? If the answer is in the affirmative, it was a waste of time and effort to have undertaken the exercise in hand. The whole purpose of this exercise was to seek to remodel the working of the Boards. What is being proposed is not expected to be done rightaway. It may take several years. Whenever it is done and in whatever manner, it is to this ideal that the schools would have to approximate. In other words, the target should be clearly spelt out. As long as it is not an unrealistic target, there is nothing wrong about suggesting a system of automatic fines. The second related objection can be to the liability of schools to fines levied upon them. If an alternative mode of making the schools conform to the requirements of the Boards can be thought of, it should be equally acceptable.

### **Vocational Education Division**

5.12 One of the chief handicaps from which secondary education suffers is that higher secondary examinations are by and large geared for entry into colleges, professional or the conventional type. Properly speaking, it should be the other way round.

5.13 The phrase 'the world of work' may be defined somewhat more precisely. Students are going to do all kinds of things when they enter life. While some would be self employed, others might opt for jobs mainly in the unorganised sector of the economy. A few would (or should) opt for work in the agricultural sector; after all three-fourths of the Indian people live in villages and cultivation of land is their principal means of livelihood. However, a small percentage would work as artisans and engage in jobs which are not always manual in character but are based on some input of manual work and a certain degree of skilled work. There are hundreds of skills which can be learnt and depending upon the location of the school and the social background and attitudes, different schools would have to arrange for imparting different vocational skills. It is when boys and girls acquire one or more of these skills that they can add value to what they do or produce. In other words, the key to their economic well being in life lies in the acquisition of both relevant knowledge and appropriate skills.

5.14 This is precisely what is meant by vocational education. While students learn whatever is regarded as the core curriculum at that level, they also acquire certain definable skills which are primarily vocational in character. For professional skills, they would have to go to a professional college. If they wish to acquire further vocational skills, they may join a vocational polytechnic, an ITI for instance. But the whole idea of vocational education at the secondary level is that while students are learning other subjects, they are also learning how to put available current technology at the middle level to productive use to enable them to add value to what they do.

5.15 In the U.K. there is a distinct stage of education called Further Education. It is post-secondary in character and highly flexible in its operation and mode of functioning. Countries such

as France and Germany follow a somewhat different model. The point that needs to be emphasised is that while any country is free to experiment with the system that it develops, it is imperative that vocational skills are acquired as a part of the schooling and educational growth of young people. What has crippled secondary education in our country for over a century is the anaemic and inadequate development of the vocational sector. As early as 1882, that is more than a century ago, the first Commission on Education appointed by the British government made out a strong case for making school education less bookish and more practical. However this has not happened.

5.16 There will hardly be much disagreement with what has been stated above. Every committee or commission on school education appointed since 1882 has underlined the need for doing so. The 1986 policy also reiterated this point of view and proposed that the percentage of students opting for vocational skills should be raised to 25 per cent at the higher secondary level within a decade. The target has not been met and indeed could not have been met till some basic changes are made both in our thinking and mode of operations at the school level. The target has now been scaled down. However, the objective of making secondary education vocational in character stands.

5.17 While an advisory committee in respect of vocational education has been set up at the Central level, and an Institute of Vocational Studies has also been established at Bhopal, not much has been done at the state level by way of a corresponding set up so that different agencies can coordinate their thinking and planning. It must however be acknowledged that some work has been done at the level of the Directorates of Education. A few have created separate cells to deal with the problem. Sooner or later this would have to be done. In our opinion, instead of having a separate set up, it would be advisable to make vocational education a constituent part of the School Education Board in each state. The current status of vocationalisation is disappointing. Since the objective has been consistently recognised as highly desirable, it stands to reason that the Boards should be ready to take on this task. A strong and well staffed division of vocational education could become both the starting point of the new initiative and the controlling authority of this area of activity as far as the state is concerned. This arrangement may have to be

modified after time, particularly if vocationalisation picks up momentum. Till such time as that happens, it would be both economical and expeditious to set up such a system.

#### **Administrative-cum-Finance Division**

5.18 It is not necessary to make out a case for a division that deals with administrative-cum-financial matters. In certain Boards, these functions are combined under one heading. In certain others, they have been delinked. It does not matter either way. What matters is convenience and efficiency. The two determining factors are the stage of development of the Board and scale of operations of each Board. Perhaps there can be two divisions in the bigger Boards whereas the smaller Boards can manage with one division. However, each Board has to have a separate division to deal with these two important functions. Indeed this is what obtains in each Board today.

5.19 In this connection, we would like to suggest that because of the history of a strong linkage with the DPI's office for decades together, the mode of working even in the Boards is oriented to, if not also conditioned by, what happens in the government. This link which has been weakened to some extent needs to be snapped further, as repeatedly argued. However, if the rules and regulations applicable in the government continue to be applicable to the working of the Boards, the shadow of the former would continue to be cast on the latter. Steps have therefore to be taken to change this situation. This can be done through COBSE initiating the drawing up of one manual in respect of administrative rules and procedures and another manual in respect of financial rules. School Boards handle a very large number of students and a fairly large number of employees and operate substantial budgets. It is highly desirable therefore if appropriate rules are framed for this purpose and are codified in these two manuals.

5.20 If universities have not been fully successful in delinking themselves from the functioning of the government to a desirable extent, COBSE in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities should work out a set of rules parallel to those that obtain in the government. Rules in Universities and Boards have to be a little more flexible than those in the government. Basal-

cally the format laid down by the government could be followed, but in respect of certain items of activity (hours of work for instance) their functioning can be differently arranged. These could be more relaxed and less precedent-bound, indeed more in tune with the working of these educational institutions. This is a somewhat long term objective but if it is achieved, it will liberate the working of these educational institutions from government influence to a considerable extent.

5.21 Universities follow a system of sub-legislation under the rubric of statutes, ordinances and regulations. This is not true of School Boards. It is time that such a practice was adopted. Let it not be forgotten that it is the educational sector, more particularly the schools, which provide employment to the largest number of persons in the economy. Further, in the years to come, education is going to grow both in scale and coverage. With about half the population literate at present, it is likely to double its present size in the near future. Therefore, there is every justification for educational institutions to adopt a separate pattern of sub-legislation, particularly in respect of financial procedures.

### **Sports and Co-curricular Activities Division**

5.22 There is something inexplicably odd about School Boards not organising sports and co-curricular activities for students enrolled in schools. If there is one activity which interests the students, even to the exclusion of studies, it is games and sports. These activities are taking place all the time and everywhere in an unorganised and spontaneous way. It is time for School Boards to take over these functions (which should also include music, dance, drama, debates, etc.), organise them in a professional manner and also promote them in a systematic way.

5.23 A couple of models are available for doing this and in any case there is a large body of fragmented data which needs to be brought under one head and organised in an orderly way preparatory to the setting up of such an organisation at different levels. In fact this is to some extent already done though under different heads. Nonetheless it is important to give different activities a somewhat professional orientation. Two cautions however are called for.

- (a) At the moment, there is a body called the School Games Federation. This was partly promoted by the Ministry of Education at one time and was partly the outcome of the enterprise of a few individuals. In the wake of the proposed initiative by COBSE, the Federation would have to be reorganised and revamped with the entry of the School Boards organised under the auspices of COBSE into the area of sports and co-curricular activities. That is one dimension of the problem.
- (b) The second dimension is even more pertinent to the situation in hand. School children cannot be made to travel long distances either for participation or coaching. Both would have to be organised locally. Therefore, different kinds of activities would have to be organised at the village level, the taluka level, the district level and the divisional level. Students at the secondary stage can perhaps take part in activities at the divisional and the State levels. The younger students would be much too young to do anything other than to perform locally; that is why it is necessary to repeat that, at the lower levels, things would have to be arranged locally. At the divisional and State levels, however, it may be possible to get students to leave home for a few days (of course under supervision) and take part in the tournaments that may be organised for them.

5.24 It may also be emphasised that coordination with the National Institute of Sports and the state level bodies dealing with sports should also be ensured, particularly for students at the secondary level. Below the secondary level, what is necessary is widespread, indeed universal, participation. At the secondary level and above, what is called for is both participation and professional guidance. This is where the contribution of coaches engaged by these professional bodies would be found both relevant and useful.

5.25 In the organisational structure discussed in section 3.14 we have included sports and co-curricular activities under the heading of the Academic Orbit. This is proof of the degree of importance that we attach to them and to the need to make these activities an integral part of the core functioning of the Boards. It was necessary to do so because quite some people,

influenced by the low priority accorded to these extra curricular activities, fail to see that if India has to develop in the years to come, priorities would have to be rearranged and corresponding necessary adjustments made.

### **Library and Documentation Cell**

5.26 If there are more than a dozen senior officials working in each Board and some of the divisions such as the Academic division and the Research division have a strong core of professionally qualified persons, it will be necessary to establish a Library and Documentation Cell. A quicker tempo of inservice training, as proposed above, will lead to two consequences. One, multiple copies of certain books will have to be provided. Secondly, it will be equally necessary to provide audio visual material too. In particular, the use of video tape facility both for purposes of instruction and practical training will be found invaluable. It is somewhat odd that it should have been necessary to make out a case for a well-stocked and well-serviced library for an institution like a School Board. As we visualise, the Boards will not be merely an office set up. While a good deal of office work, particularly in the Examination division, will have to be done, within the next few years, the atmosphere must change. Apart from everything else, the Boards must acquire an academic flavour. Provision of a library (along with arrangements for appropriate documentation) will contribute towards that end.

### **Computer and Information Unit**

5.27 While computerisation is a positive development as far as the working of School Boards goes, it has not been extended to jobs other than examination work. Having inherited the work culture of the government in a large measure, more or less every other operation in the Boards remains tradition-bound. Issuing of result cards and other such routine work have certainly improved because of computerisation but not the other operations and few attempts have been made by most Boards to improve computer literacy.

5.28 As stated elsewhere, examination work is seasonal. Once the examination season is over, most of the staff do not have all that much to do. In plain words, they are underemployed for long stretches of time. This way of describing things would not

be easily accepted by everyone. In some cases where engagement of additional staff has been forbidden by the government, the situation is somewhat tense during the examination season. This is the point which we are seeking to stress. Work is concentrated during certain months of the year followed by a long, lean season.

5.29 There is also another dimension to the problem. The mode of organisation is such that those who belong to the Examination division view the prospect of working in any other division as an imposition upon them. Strictly speaking, this division should be so organised that there is a small core staff, mainly to deal with the setting of question papers and other confidential work. For the rest, there should be no identification of personnel, as belonging to this or that division. Where employees of the Board are located would then be a matter of administrative convenience. Such a policy, if followed, will lead to two results. One, the deployment of staff will become more rational and more economical than it is at present. Wherever there is pressure of work, more people may be deployed. Wherever there is less pressure, certain individuals may be moved elsewhere and so on. Secondly, since flexibility of postings are generally regarded as one of the fundamental modes of organisation in any administrative set up the School Boards should also be a part of this type of functioning.

5.30 Computer literacy should be given impetus at least for some time by giving some extra allowance to those who acquire it. Since there are different levels of computer literacy and some persons would be more literate than others, a differential mode of remuneration can also be devised.

5.31 One other point needs to be made here. Information technology is an expanding field. Every few months, there are new developments. Indeed it is difficult to visualise today what the state of the art will be in half a decade or a decade from today. It is a matter of great importance therefore that the Boards are not caught out in this game of diversification and development. Such a unit should be set up in each Board on a priority basis.

### **Legal Cell**

5.32 The number of legal cases in which school Boards are



involved varies. But the overall impression is that most Boards have to deal with a large number of such cases. These cases are of various kinds. It should not be necessary to go into details except that this is a real problem and most Boards feel harassed as well as overstretched in terms of trained manpower.

5.33 Faced with this situation, while some of them have set up legal cells, others are planning to do so. Generally, the job is handled by the Administration division. Even when such a cell is established, it has to be a part of that division. This is in order. There are two things however that we would like to say.

5.34 One, the person who deals with legal matters should have a law degree as an essential qualification. In addition, he must have some experience of administration, and should have handled some legal cases. The extent of assistance which can be extended to the legal cell obviously cannot be anticipated here. It will also depend upon the number of cases and the kinds of issues which arise from time to time. As there is an increasing trend of students as also of the public to go to courts of law for redressal of their grievances, larger and larger numbers of complaints are being filed against the Boards. Universities too are faced with the same problem and quite a few have also set up similar legal cells.

5.35 Since it is not possible to generalise, we suggest that COBSE should take the initiative to convene a meeting of the various Boards. Only such people should be nominated to attend as have had some experience of handling legal matters or are seeking to specialise in these. At this meeting, COBSE should also secure the assistance of one or two trained and experienced persons who understand these issues and can advise the Boards appropriately. While a large number of cases are repetitive in character, there are also cases which are peculiar to certain Boards. The second category of suits perhaps cannot be discussed at such a meeting but cases of the repetitive kind generally common to most Boards can be dealt without much difficulty.

5.36 Since these court cases take a heavy toll in terms of effort and expenditure, the objective should be that every year, when the issues are reviewed, an analysis should be made as to whether cases are coming down or not. If a tally is maintained for three to

four years and close vigilance is exercised, there is no reason why the number of cases cannot come down. The establishment of a Grievance Redressal Cell (both under Administration and Examinations) is likely to help.

### **Grievances Redressal Cell**

5.37 The need for such a cell is self evident. What needs to be said here is that grievances are of two kinds. First, there are the grievances of employees in respect of certain problems that they might encounter. These are relatively simple to solve and so much depends upon the size of the Board, and the manner in which the system of redressal of grievances is organised. It needs to be emphasised here that there should always be a mechanism for appeals against decisions made by the employing authority in case the employees find them biased or unacceptable in any way.

5.38 This mechanism can be split into two parts, internal and external. The first appeal of discontented employees should be handled by the internal agency, if possible. Some individuals known for their scrupulous functioning and sense of fairness can be put on the internal appeal committee for a period of two years in the first instance. It would be advisable to repeat at least one of the individuals when this appeal committee is reconstituted with the addition of one or two fresh names. In the case of the external mechanism, the involvement of somebody with a judicial background must be invariably ensured. The 1992 Policy had made some specific recommendations in this behalf. These need to be followed in letter and spirit.

5.39 The second set of grievances would be those of students who are not satisfied with their examination score or have related problems. Since we have not favoured the system of re-evaluation, it imposes a further, inescapable obligation upon the Boards to have an internal mechanism for redressal of such grievances. While we are strongly in favour of transparency of operations and have also made some suggestions towards this end, no one should be led into believing that this is the end of the matter. A mechanism will have to be devised to ensure that every grievance is attended to. In the absence of some such machinery, there is harassment, public distress and appeals to courts. It is astonishing that despite a considerable measure of discontent,

hardly any Board has moved in the matter as decisively as they should have.

5.40 While the earlier part of the proposal is evidently administrative in character, the second part will have to be handled by the Examination division. One omnibus system will not do.

### **Staff Strength**

5.41 The issue of the retraining of staff may be touched upon here. To some extent, this issue was referred to while talking of the professional training of those working in the computer division. The fact is that even the examination staff is not as intensively trained as it ought to be. To talk of training the rest of the staff may seem an unattainable goal. And yet, if the performance of the School Boards is to improve, this is a vital requirement which needs to be attended to and organised on a systematic and regular basis. One reason why the armed forces generally perform better than most other wings of the government is the standard practice of making everyone go through repeated spells of training according to a well established system. In addition, some of the best staff is asked to handle it. Whatever be the nature of the job, a certain amount of further professional training is regarded as a part of every job. There is no reason why a somewhat similar approach cannot be adopted in service-oriented organisations such as the School Boards. Were such an approach to be adopted, it would lead to a marked improvement of performance in every sector of activity. At the same time, it would be possible to manage with a relatively smaller strength of staff than is customary today. NIEPA can be asked to play a useful and constructive role in this direction.

5.42 In regard to the strength of the staff, we encountered two completely contradictory situations. In certain states, School Boards have been forbidden to recruit more than the approved strength of the staff. This strength was frozen by the government at a certain level some years ago. Since then, there has been no further revision of the staff strength. If extra hands are needed, and that becomes unavoidable during the examination season, some people are appointed on daily wages. Once the job has been completed, they have no further claim for continued employment. In contrast, we also found in a certain number of

states (something like one-third of the total) where, as in the case of State Electricity Boards and such other statutory bodies, the School Boards are used by politicians for providing employment to those who cannot be employed in the government because the rules of recruitment there are fairly rigid and therefore difficult to bend or manipulate. In School Boards, this is not difficult.

5.43 In one or two states, we came across a situation where the staff was double of what was required; perhaps even more. These states raked in money from the sale of textbooks. Therefore, in addition to whatever other role they played, the School Boards also became convenient employment bureaus. Excessive staff creates its own problems. The atmosphere in such Boards is that a large number of people owe their appointment to political connections and in most cases it is not even possible to take action against them if they are found guilty of an offence. The overall feeling is one of indifference and cynicism. In such a situation, to talk of the professional growth of the staff and arrange for any form of systematic inservice training appears to be out of place.

5.44 Two lessons flow from what has been described above. One is the obvious one that the School Boards should neither be over-staffed nor under-staffed. Secondly, rules of appointment, promotion and staff management should be laid down precisely by the Boards (subject to concurrence by the State/Central government) so that there is neither corruption nor mismanagement.

### ***Vigilance Angle***

5.45 This reference to corruption raises another issue. A good part of mismanagement is because of the lack of integrity on the part of some people. In the government, the Vigilance department deals with such matters, though not always successfully or effectively. Hardly any School Board has a similar set up. Instances of corruption are numerous enough to justify the setting up of a vigilance wing. The general experience is that even when certain individuals have been identified as being guilty of corruption, the legal procedures applicable in most cases are much too involved and cumbersome. Therefore it is advisable for the Boards to evolve their own procedures

5.46 In terms of the law of the land, the only mandatory requirement is that the offender be given an opportunity to defend himself. Other details do not matter. In drawing up their own procedures, the School Boards (yet another job for the COBSE) should therefore ensure two things. One, that the procedure is legally impeccable and, two, the punishment for different offences is determined beforehand in as precise a manner as possible. The element of discretion should be kept to the minimum and once it has been proved that someone is guilty of having committed an offence, punishment should be automatic, indeed mandatory.

5.47 The same approach, it may be added, should be adopted in cases of instances of copying. Here too offences should be clearly classified and categorised and the punishments proposed should be according to the nature and gravity of the offence. Details should be worked out in advance so that when somebody is sought to be punished, all that requires to be determined is that a particular individual is guilty and there should be no pretext or occasion for the punishment to be varied to the advantage or disadvantage of anyone. This issue can be discussed by the Controllers of Examinations when they come together annually for purposes of coordination and review.

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## THE WORKING OF THE BOARDS

**H**aving described in some detail how School Boards should be constituted, we feel that some more elaboration is required regarding their working and working procedures. As details about the office of the Chairman have already been dealt with in Chapter 2, we begin this analysis with a discussion of the office of the Vice-Chairman/Chairman.

### *Vice Chairmen*

6.02 Only a handful of Boards provide for the position of a Vice Chairman. For the rest, as and when there is a situation and the Chairman cannot perform his functions, ad hoc arrangements are made. In our opinion, it is time to give fresh thought to this issue.

6.03 It is advisable to have a Vice Chairman, even more advisable to have two Vice Chairmen in the case of the bigger Boards. One may look after the academic functioning of the Board and the other could be in charge of examinations and/or other administrative functions. It is not intended to suggest any rigid division of powers or duties, also for the reason that whether there is one Vice Chairman, or two Vice Chairmen and whichever duty either of them is assigned (these can be shuffled around as and when necessary), both would report to the Chairman who is the chief executive of the Board. A certain amount of improvisation by the Boards would be required.

6.04 What we wish to emphasise is that there should be one or two people, senior enough in experience and stature, to be able to take over if the Chairman is not available at any time. In any case, there have to be a couple of capable persons to assist the Chairman. They should be senior enough to take responsibility for whatever work is assigned to them. How precisely it is to be done may be left to the Boards, also for the

reason that, in certain situations, one or more than one person may be already in position and cannot be shifted so easily. All that we wish to emphasise is that if the Boards are to cope with increased responsibilities, as suggested, they should have men and women available at the senior level so that, certain innovative or complex jobs can be done even in the absence of the Chairman.

6.05 Their mode of appointment is also an important issue which has to be dealt with. It can happen as indeed it does in certain situations that the political bosses who change every now and then do not feel too happy with the Chairman who was already in position when they took over. To displace him from that position could turn out to be awkward. In order to checkmate the Chairman, therefore, a parallel centre of power is created by appointing a Vice-Chairman. That would be most unfortunate. To safeguard against such a contingency, the procedure of appointment of Vice Chairmen should be laid down in the Act itself.

6.06 So far, the general practice, wherever it exists, has been to vest this power in the government. If the new structure of the Boards, as sketched in this report, is to be put into operation it would be wrong in principle to appoint the two senior most colleagues of the Chairman without consultation with him. We, therefore, suggest that unless some one is already in position (in which case he continues to serve the Board for the tenure for which he was appointed), all new appointments must be made at the Chairman's initiative. The State government can have a role in the appointment but it should be at the stage of concurrence with the decision made by the executive committee rather than when and by whom the proposal is initiated. More precisely, the State government may react rather than act. The proposal should invariably come from the Chairman, be approved by the executive committee and accepted or referred back by the government to the Board. This last option should be a rare occurrence. It needs to be assumed that before the Chairman initiates the proposal, there has been consultation between him and the government. In any case, the formal reaction of the government should be forthcoming within a specified period, say, one or two months. The guiding consideration in this exercise is that the chief executive of the Board is the Chairman. It is his job to run the Board. If he is not good enough to do so, the fault

is that of the government which appointed him in the first instance. It is not possible, nor even advisable, to seek to remedy the situation by undermining his authority and setting up a parallel centre of power.

6.07 The term of appointment in this case should be three years, subject to renewal by another term. This would enable a new Chairman to have some one of his choice as and when the earlier incumbent completes his term.

6.08 Something has already been said about senior officers who would head the various divisions. We expect each one of them to be senior enough to be of a Reader's status in a university in the minimum. Evidently, the Vice Chairman should have the standing either to be a University Professor or a senior administrator.

### **Secretary**

6.09 The Secretary of the Board has to be a responsible functionary working directly under the supervision of the Chairman. He would be in charge of the Administrative division which handles details of everyday functioning. He should be selected by the executive committee of the Board with the Chairman presiding over that meeting of the selection committee. He could be a Principal from any one of the senior secondary schools, a middle level functionary from the Department of Education (on deputation) or with a similar background; SCERT or NCERT for instance. Whatever be his background, he should have a certain amount of administrative experience before he can be considered for the job. The job is mainly administrative. Sometimes he may also have to function as the Finance officer of the Board. A number of variations can be thought of. The only thing that cannot be overlooked is his academic and administrative strength which should be the guiding consideration at the time of his selection. In any case, he has to administer in a manner so as to be both efficient and productive.

6.10 While the other two clusters (Examinations and the Academic Orbit) could be looked after by the two Vice Chairmen, the Secretary who is likely to be junior to them in rank could do the same in respect of the Administrative division under the overall



supervision of the Chairman. It would be in order to add that broadly speaking his status should correspond to the Registrar of a University.

### **Nominations**

6.11 The functioning of the Boards generally depends upon whether they are manned by the right kind of persons. In certain Boards, there is hardly any element of election. In others, representatives are elected from amongst teachers, parents, employees, etc. The picture differs so sharply from one Board to another that it is difficult to generalise. It is, however, clear that a considerable role is played by those appointed to different committees set up by the Boards. We are of the view that the following guidelines should be observed as far as possible.

- (a) A certain number of nominations by the government is perfectly in order.
- (b) Of those who are nominated, some may be government officials who are nominated in their ex-officio capacity. Even though not many of them are likely to attend meetings with any degree of regularity, their association with the Board is both important and useful. Others may be nominated because they belong to certain categories like school teachers, university or college teachers or retired teachers, experienced educationists, public men, members of managing committee of privately-run schools and so on. It is not possible to enumerate each one of these categories here. The point to underline is that a certain balance of forces ought to be established while constituting the Boards.
- (c) We do not propose to take a position either for or against elections. In certain cases, that is the only way to elicit public opinion. In certain other cases, it leads to unnecessary politicisation of the Boards. Ideally speaking, 50 per cent of the members should be nominated and 50 per cent elected. However, experience shows that those elected invariably attend and those nominated do not always attend. In consequence, it is the elected members who dominate decision making. Therefore, we are in favour of a healthy balance amongst those nominated, those elected and those co-opted. Hence we suggest election of one-fourth of the members,

nomination of one-fourth, and co-option of one-fourth by those who belong to the first two categories and cooption of the remaining one-fourth who belong to certain categories of persons whose association would be valuable. Not all those nominated need to belong to the government. Managements of private schools, teacher organisations and other appropriate bodies must be involved in one way or another. In all these matters, however, one has to learn from experience and amend the rules as and when necessary.

- (d) Under no circumstances should the number of persons in the general house exceed 100. Normally a smaller number would do.
- (e) Teachers who have spent a whole life time in the cause of education ought to be involved in a meaningful way. They can bring their extensive experience to bear on discussion of problems. In any case, at least some of them need to be recognised for their knowledge and expertise.
- (f) One way to identify and nurture talent among teachers is to involve them in policy making to a substantial extent. Unfortunately, the ethos of work in most schools is that orders are given from above and these are carried out by those below. This might have suited the hierarchical mode of working which prevailed in the feudal-cum-colonial set up that obtained before 1947. Should it have continued even after Independence? Amongst other things, it has not allowed teaching to emerge as a distinct and honoured profession. This is not the occasion to dilate upon this theme. One precondition for the growth of professionalism is to vest more and more teachers with powers to take decisions. School Education Boards are the appropriate training ground for this purpose.

### **Decision Making in the Board**

6.12 Being the chief executive, the ultimate responsibility in regard to everything that is done, or happens in the Board, is that of the Chairman. In all educational bodies, however, whoever is vested with supreme power is required to function in conjunction with various other bodies set up by the Board. Each

of these bodies is vested with some authority and is concerned only with whatever responsibility is allocated to it.

6.13 Generally speaking, the chairman of these bodies, or authorities as they are called, is the Chairman of the Board. While he has powers to act in an emergency, for the rest, decision making is vested in these various authorities of the Board. What the Chairman does is to interact with the various authorities which are meant either to guide him or authorise him to do certain things. Unless these authorities function in close collaboration with the Chairman, there are bound to be problems. The principle of checks and balances implies that while the ultimate authority is vested in the Chairman, he cannot be autocratic. At the same time, these bodies should not be allowed to so powerful as to thwart the Chairman's functioning.

6.14 The Acts of these bodies assign certain functions to them. These functions are performed as per statutory authorisation and the decisions taken from time to time at the meetings of the various bodies. This sometimes delays decision making. This is the reason why certain emergency powers have to be given to the Chairman so that work does not get impeded. Nominations to various bodies have also to be partly guided by these considerations. While different interests are to be represented, this should not lead to a situation where the Chairman gets stumped. As to elections, the Chairman has no business to influence them, nor indeed he should. Those who are given the power to elect some people would do so as they deem best. When it comes to co-options, the Chairman can play a certain role, more by the weight of his personality and the esteem in which he is held than otherwise.

### ***Emergency Powers***

6.15 The Chairman of the Board has to have the authority to take decisions if the occasion so demands. In other words, if there is an emergency, some one has to react and, in the given situation, it can only be the Chairman of the Board. Once that power has been used, it would be incumbent upon him to report the same to the body which, in the normal course of things, would have taken a decision in that regard and secure its approval. The interval between the making of the decision and its reporting to the concerned body should never be longer than

the gap between one meeting and another. Normally speaking, the use of emergency powers should not include the authority to incur expenditure unless it is unavoidable. Rules of business in regard to the incurring of expenditure should be both precise and flexible. But there may be situations when a decision has to be made on an emergency basis. If such a situation arises, it is for the Chairman to justify the use of his powers.

### **Functioning of Committees**

6.16 This discussion inevitably leads to how committees function. As stated already, committees are assigned certain specified powers. For instance, the Finance Committee, cannot deal with academic issues or vice versa. Within the parameters of the powers vested in them, the committees function so as to take certain decisions and facilitate business. It is for the chairman of a particular committee to ensure that no one steps outside the parameters laid down. Once the business of the committee has been specified, poaching into someone else's territory should not be encouraged. In our opinion, the functioning of the Board can be properly regulated with the help of the following committees.

#### **i) Executive Committee**

This committee consisting of about 15 persons should consist of some government nominees (the Education Secretary or the DPI [Schools] or both), some Principals, some other nominees representing interests like universities and/or professional education, industry, commerce, agriculture, one or two heads of various divisions by rotation, one or two vice chairmen as the case may be, and a few individuals (some of them teachers) coopted by the committee. This committee should exercise all executive powers including those of policy making, final decisions on academic issues, administrative and financial matters and so on. The Chairman of the committee would be the Chairman of the Board. As far as possible, the meeting should be held at least once in two months.

#### **ii) Finance Committee**

While enjoying a separate statutory status, this committee should

function in close coordination with the Executive Committee and must invariably have, as stated earlier, the Finance Secretary and the Education secretary on it. Decisions once taken here should not be reviewed by the government save in exceptional circumstances which are to be recorded in writing. Such interventions, if at all necessary, should be in line with the overall government policy in regard to financial matters. Generally speaking, two or three meetings should be held every year.

### **iii) Planning Committee**

In the case of certain Boards, it may be advisable to have a Planning Committee also, again on a statutory basis. Like the Finance Committee, it would function as an adjunct to the Executive Committee. Some members would be common to both the bodies but something like one-third of its members should be inducted from outside for their expertise and specialised knowledge. Perhaps two meetings a year would suffice.

### **iv) Academic Committee**

All matters regarding the academic functioning of the Board should be put before this committee. As is customary, there would be separate committees for different subjects like Committees of Courses in different subjects, Equivalence, Recognition of Schools (it would be advisable to have a separate committee under this heading) and such other important matters. These committees will work out the details as and when required. However, all such matters would have to be eventually cleared through and approved by the Academic committee. In other words, this committee will lay down the curriculum in the final analysis as also decide on all issues like remodeling of question papers, pass percentage and so on.

It would be advisable to have a number of academic interests represented on this committee. Universities would have to be represented. In addition, it would be desirable to have a couple of professional colleges like those of medicine, engineering, etc. Then there should be representatives of business, commerce, industry, small scale industry, transport, agriculture and so on. At the moment, the educational system suffers from a severe

lack of interaction with the employing agencies. This lack has to be taken care of in a comprehensive manner. Furthermore, the government too must have a couple of representatives on this committee. The SCERT of the state should also be represented on it. Some special representation of University departments of education and training colleges must also be included. Further details can be worked out and may vary from Board to Board. For instance, wherever the tribal population is a reckonable figure, some persons representing their point of view should be included in this committee. How often this committee should meet would depend on the details of the agenda and the urgency behind decision making. Some of the members of this committee might not have the requisite degree of experience, at least to start with. It may be desirable to take such steps as might help to equip its members with greater professional expertise.

#### **v) Other Committees**

Depending upon the nature of the problem and its complexity, the Board may decide to set up any sub-committee/s. In certain cases, these can also be advisory in character. While the four committees listed above may figure in the Act as authorities of the Board, in all other cases, these will be formed, wound up and then re-formed as required. In sum, it needs to be emphasised that the working of the Board should be so arranged that while executive decisions are sometimes taken and immediately implemented by the Chairman, policy decisions are made basically by these committees.

#### **Relations with the Government**

6.17 Our basic position is that every Board has to be set up by the government through an Act of the legislature. The Act should provide for the various authorities of the Boards, their powers and their functions. Within the parameters of the powers given to the Board, it should have unfettered powers to function as it deems best. This should apply both to financial and administrative matters.

6.18 As to academic matters, the government does not have that kind of academic expertise which would entitle it to issue directives. As of today, this expertise is to be found mainly in the NCERT. What this body has to say carries considerable weight

with the Boards as indeed it ought to. Should the State governments wish to go against the thinking of the NCERT, legally speaking, they have the right to do so. However, they would be well advised not to take any hasty decisions but to appoint a committee of experts to consider the matter in greater depth and come up with certain alternative recommendations. Before implementation, however, it would be further advisable to interact with the NCERT once again. The local level SCERTs are not yet competent enough to project a different or parallel set of ideas. Hopefully, one of these days, they would grow into that kind of position to be able to act autonomously. But, as of this moment and even in the foreseeable future, it is mainly the NCERT which would continue to be the source and inspiration of new ideas and new initiatives.

6.19 Most State governments are more interested in matters like appointments, promotions, postings, and such other far-from-edifying details than in matters relating to policy issues. This kind of interference of which there is ample evidence is uncalled for. It is unbecoming of the State governments to first vest the Boards with powers and then seek to nullify them. What is worse, most of these orders are not given in writing. The chief executive is to be appointed for a period of five years which implies that his tenure is not subject to the vagaries of political vicissitudes. In any case, at the time of his appointment, he was found eminently suitable for the job. He must have been a competent person and that was the justification for his appointment. Once appointed, he should therefore receive all the support necessary for his successful functioning from the State government. Seeking to undermine his standing or credibility is in no way going to help him succeed in his job.

6.20 Two problems that are likely to arise are:

- (a) The tendency to interfere with the work of the chief executive which is much too evident today.
- (b) The dominant role of the DPI which has the sanction of historical usage behind it. Both have to be diluted considerably by following new conventions of accommodation and adjustment. More than any one else, it is for the chief minister of the state to exercise a restraining influence upon his

colleague who is in charge of education. Further in the new context, the role of the DPI in secondary education is bound to get curtailed. For decades together, he ran the show. In the rearrangement that we visualise, his role will be powerful but not decisive. In any case, a DPI has enough work to keep him preoccupied: he has to oversee the management of secondary schools which are managed by the government. In addition, there is the whole sector of upper primary education which would be almost under his charge.

6.21 There is one other aspect of the functioning of the Boards which must be specifically referred to. This concerns their financial viability and financial independence. While we will have more to say on the subject in the chapter on Financing, we visualise the Boards to be both autonomous and financially self-sufficient. There have been instances in the past when the Boards (which were essentially examining bodies at that time) were made to deposit surplus funds in the government treasury. The Mudaliar Commission referred to one such instance and there have been several others. But this system cannot continue. Now the Boards have to be seen as integral and independent components of the academic structure of each state. If this formulation is accepted, it follows that the Boards would neither ask for financial support from the state exchequer nor be held answerable (except for the normal requirement of audit and so on) for their normal financial functioning. There should, therefore, be no occasion for the State governments to interfere with the financial management of the Boards.

### **Sub-legislation**

6.22 We have already referred to the need for providing for sub-legislation in the Board Acts when these are drawn up for passage in the concerned legislature. In this connection, reference was made to the established pattern of functioning in Indian universities. Each University Act provides for various types of sub-legislation. Generally speaking, this provision is divided into three parts—statutes, ordinances and regulations. Statutes are based on decisions taken by the executive body in regard to certain major heads which are enumerated in the Act. These decisions are then referred to the Chancellor/Visitor for approval within a specified time frame. The decisions can come into force



only after that approval has been received.

6.23 In the case of School Boards, the approving authority will obviously have to be the State government or the Union government, as the case may be. Ordinances embodying certain less important decisions can be passed by the executive body and enforced rightaway but these are also sent to the Chancellor/Visitor for information and concurrence. In case he has to make any adverse comments, those are made within a month or so in which case decisions already taken are reversed. Such a possibility makes the universities cautious in their decision making. In other words, there is a clear distinction in respect of jurisdiction between the two categories. The third category is that of regulations. These can be adopted or annulled as required and do not have to be referred to anyone else. Some such distinction needs to be observed in the case of sub-legislation in respect of School Boards also. A similar arrangement will entitle the State government to express an opinion or issue directives, if necessary, in regard to certain matters whereas in regard to certain other matters it will not be necessary to do so. The whole process of interaction between State governments and the Board will thus get defined in a legal manner which would not leave any room for ambiguity or controversy.

### ***Autonomous Schools***

6.24 During recent years, a couple of Boards decided to grant autonomy to certain schools. As in the case of autonomous colleges, these autonomous schools could decide their own syllabus and conduct their own examination. Unfortunately, the system did not gain popularity. The role of School Boards as examining bodies is so well recognised that neither the universities nor the public opted to come to terms with this experiment. While nobody took a formal position in the matter, it must be admitted that, as a system, autonomous schools failed to take off. This however need not be true for all times. A day might come when this kind of experiment might get revived. Given the pace of changes in the body politic of the country, such a turn-around need not be ruled out. And, hopefully the initiative may succeed next time. Therefore, we would suggest that suitable provision for autonomous schools must be made in each Board Act. To have a situation where there is no such provision would create problems

and it would be advisable to think of such a contingency beforehand.

6.25 The acceptance of autonomous schools by the public will, to a large extent, depend upon its acceptance of autonomous colleges. Since some problems may be encountered there, these cannot but cast their shadow on the non-acceptance of autonomous schools too. It is not possible for us to go into the details of this argument. What we wish to ensure is that, in statutory terms, the provision for autonomous schools is included in each School Board Act.

### **School Complexes**

6.26 Similarly, another innovative idea which was suggested by the Kothari Commission in the mid sixties has yet to be initiated by the Boards in a meaningful way. This refers to School Complexes. A number of schools in close neighbourhood can decide to interact in such a way that they become a source of support and strength to one another. We are inclined to think that the experiment is worth undertaking and would produce positive results. Any one or more of the Boards might like to initiate this experiment and even involve one or two colleges in the neighbourhood—an idea which has been more than once projected during recent years. We are of the view that, should this concept become a reality, it will be necessary to provide a statutory basis for it. Hence the need to provide for the statutory recognition of such an experiment.

### **A Word of Caution**

6.27 Most Boards perform one function well; that of examining students. As long as that job is done efficiently, as it is in most cases, the Boards do not feel all that bothered about their underperformance in other areas of work. This is not the occasion to express dissatisfaction with the inherent defect of the system of external examinations and what should be done to improve it on scientific lines. Further, although the bigger Boards are in a position to start acting upon these recommendations rightaway, the smaller Boards would have to move in this direction at a speed which does not cause too much dislocation.

### **Towards a Qualitative Leap: Problems**

6.28 Would it be too much to hope that if some of the things listed above can get done, this would lead to a qualitative leap in the status and performance of secondary education? Unfortunately, by itself, these things, even when positively implemented, would not bring about that change in the situation that one would like to see. But if these things are not done, there is no question of any qualitative leap—even notionally speaking. Quite a few other inputs would be required. Amongst them a few may be mentioned here.

6.29 The foremost handicap is the lack of availability of teaching (even administrative) talent at the secondary stage. This matter was referred to earlier also. Inducting more talent at this level is an absolute necessity. Better scales of pay, more congenial conditions of work, a higher status for teaching at the school level involvement in policy making and so on are some of the obvious inputs that would have to be provided.

6.30 Even if all the inputs enumerated above and several others are made available, the entry of new talent at the secondary level is bound to take time. The minimum it would take for the new entrants to make an impact upon the situation will be a decade. Hence the vital necessity of inservice training. In simple words, even when 10-20 per cent new talent is inducted into secondary school teaching—anything more than that does not seem to be feasible—unless those who are already in position are enabled to think and perform differently, the situation at the ground level will not undergo any significant change.

6.31 The biggest bottleneck is the poor quality of teacher training imparted whether in colleges or University departments of education. In sheer numbers, this is an important segment of teaching at the higher education level; something like 7-8 per cent of the total number of teachers belong to this category. For a whole century almost, teacher training has been neglected. It is mainly the rejects from other walks of life, including university and college teaching, who have generally opted to go into teacher training colleges. Without a basic reorientation of what is done at that level, the cadre which the reorganised Boards would require would be in short supply. The bulk of the new cadre

would have to be recruited from the training colleges and University Departments of education. But if there is lack of talent there, it is a serious handicap, indeed so serious that a joint plan of action is required on the part of the universities and the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE). Towards this end we propose:

- (a) Universities should be persuaded, largely through the agency of IGNOU and other open universities already established in the states or yet to be established, to draw up a plan for the reorientation of those working in these departments and colleges. The objective should be to retrain every single teacher working in these institutions. Indeed this should be done on a mandatory basis. Everyone of them should be required to do two (Preliminary and Advanced) courses in 3-4 years time. Once they complete this retraining, they should be given an extra increment. Even those approaching 50 years should be made to undergo this retraining. In their case their promotions and other benefits should be contingent on their having completed this training. To assume that a person is nearing 50 and is therefore beyond redemption is true only upto a point. While the UGC is bound to be involved in such a plan, the basic responsibility should be that of the NCTE to involve the UGC and to provide at least 50 percent, if not more, of the additional funding required.
- (b) An additional responsibility for the NCTE should be that while inservice training of teachers should be the responsibility of the states as also the School Boards (details would be provided later), in respect of those who show some promise and get selected for the numerous new openings in the Boards which may become available if even some of our recommendations are accepted even partially. The NCTE may not necessarily provide funding for this purpose. But it must be involved, particularly in providing professional help and expertise. Expertise in this area is scarce. That is why, the help of the open university system would have to be sought. Unless that form of help is taken on a massive and systematic scale, the job would just not get done. Even then, there would be the need to inject and sustain enthusiasm for such a massive programme of retraining. It stands to reason therefore that it may be more productive than otherwise if there was a

close linkage between the NCTE and the various School Boards. Without such a linkage, the momentum would neither get built up nor be maintained.

6.32 It is likely to take some time before such a plan of action is drawn up and actually launched. What is to happen meanwhile? School Boards cannot sit idle for want of suitable persons to fill up the openings that would become available. We, therefore, suggest a two track approach:

- (a) In Chapter 4 (Restructuring the Boards), we touched upon this issue to some extent. To reiterate, expansion should be gradual and should keep pace with the availability of suitable personnel. That indeed is one reason why we said that it would take some years for the Research and other new divisions to be set up. Suitable individuals are just not available and they have to be trained, groomed and projected. Furthermore we have tried to involve the NCTE in this job of retraining.
- (b) Nonetheless, it would be desirable to prepare a five year Plan and a ten year Plan. In the first Plan, the traditional activities should be strengthened and streamlined. For instance, the system of examinations can be further improved as outlined in the chapter on the Conduct of Examinations. Similarly, the Recognition division which exists more or less in every Board in one form or another needs to be professionalised and given teeth. Then there are some new divisions and cells etc. waiting to be established. All this may get done during the first five years. By the time that Plan is about to come to a close, a beginning would have been made to establish those three divisions (Academic, Inservice and Research) which are basically innovative in character. Hopefully, the plan of retraining and reorientation referred to above would begin to have some impact by then and it would be possible to recruit at least the core staff. The rest of the staff may be appointed in subsequent Plan. In short, it should be possible to revamp the working of the School Boards in about a decade more or less completely. This is on the assumption that the restructuring of the Boards, as envisaged here, is accepted by all those who have a say in the matter.

6.33 There is one missing dimension here. This refers to the support to be given by the political system to education as a whole and to secondary education in particular. Without the requisite political support, most of these activities would fail to take off. Unfortunately the tone of our political life today is not all that helpful. Hopefully it would change in a decade or so. Should that change come about, secondary education can achieve the mission intended for it—the terminal stage of education for most of the students.

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## LINKAGES

**N**o educational institution can exist by itself. This is more particularly true of secondary education. This stage of education tops the almost decade-long span of schooling with which children begin when they enter school. It also provides the gateway for entry into the university stage. The linkage of secondary education with what goes before and after is therefore crucial.

7.02 What goes before secondary education is generally known as upper-primary education. Primary education is a distinct stage by itself. In terms of its management, the current thinking is that this stage of education is best managed by the Panchayati Raj institutions. In the villages they would be panchayats whereas in towns and cities these would be municipalities or corporations. As far as towns are concerned, local self institutions have looked after primary education for over a century. In the case of panchayats, the situation has fluctuated widely both over time and regions.

7.03 It is only recently that the 73rd and the 74th Amendments were adopted by Parliament. Implementation of these Acts is neither uniform nor widespread. In theory, at any rate, there is no disagreement with the need for management by the local bodies. In practice, however, there are problems. But it is to be hoped that, in a few years, the problems would get taken care of and, before long, the Panchayati Raj system would get adopted more or less everywhere.

7.04 Who is to look after and manage upper-primary education is something that has not been clearly defined by any authoritative all India agency or committee. In terms of actual control too, the situation is uncertain as well as fluid. For the most part, government schools are looked after by the DPI whereas private schools are looked after by private managements.

### **Secondary and Higher Secondary**

7.05 We are concerned with education after the upper-primary stage. Generally speaking, Classes IX and X belong to the secondary stage of education whereas Classes XI and XII are known as the higher secondary stage. One mark of distinction between these two classes is that while at the secondary level it is a continuation as also an elaboration and amplification of what was done at the upper-primary stage, the whole exercise is leavened at the higher secondary stage by the input of what is called the vocational or the professional tilt. Another important distinction is that the curriculum till X Class does not admit of any choice. Whatever is prescribed is in the nature of the core curriculum and entails broad-based general education. Therefore, it has to be followed universally.

7.06 As a certain proportion of students drop out after the primary stage and then the upper-primary stage, many more do so after the secondary stage. In terms of physical and mental development, however, these are the years when students are ready, or almost ready, for entry into the world of work. Therefore, their stay at school for about a decade should equip students with a certain amount of ability to do specific jobs. Unless a student has also been equipped with the capability to do certain things in addition to a certain measure of understanding which comes both from study and physical and intellectual maturity, he would be unable to cope with the demands of life.

7.07 In case a student continues study after Class X, he is expected to acquire some minimum capability to cope with the demands made upon him. But he would not be able to do so in all cases. In particular, if he wishes to undertake certain semi-skilled or skilled jobs, these would demand a certain modicum of skills—provided he has learnt them. That is why at the plus two level, he is given the choice to learn certain specific skills. This is in case he opts for the vocational stream of schooling. At the higher secondary level, a student has a choice between learning a particular vocation and doing a course which would eventually prepare him for entry into college.

7.08 A good deal of confusion and overlap is witnessed at the higher secondary level, basically because most students are not



certain as to what they want to do. That about two thirds of them fail to join a college goes to show that one of the following two factors is at work.

- (a) Most students just do not know what they want to do in life. Since quite a number of them are continuing with their school study, the rest also decide to go on to the next class without having taken a decision as to the direction that they want to take in life. In the case of those who have educated parents, they generally know what they want their children to do. Since the proportion of such parents varies from one social setting to another, it seems a safe statement to make that a large number of students drift from one class to another and have no clear idea of what they wish to do in life.
- (b) Most schools do not provide vocational skills of the kind which would have suited the interests and needs of a certain category of students. Either the vocational option does not exist or it exists in name. Facilities are grossly inadequate. The kind and quality of trained teachers who could have instructed the students properly are neither available nor are their services obtained even on a part-time basis from industry even when it is possible to do so. Career counselling is virtually unknown in our system. With avenues of employment shrinking, there are problems to which there is hardly any meaningful or systematic answer. In any case, interaction between education and industry is downright unsatisfactory. No wonder the vocational option is as good as not there.

7.09 What needs to be done is being looked after by the appropriate agencies though not always with the requisite degree of commitment. What we are concerned with here is the interaction between higher secondary schools and the university sector. As of today, the impact of universities upon school education is much more overpowering than is good for the well being of the latter, as argued more than once. Secondary schools as a subsystem of the school system are not as self reliant and autonomous as they ought to be. This is because of a number of reasons which have been referred to at some length already.

7.10 Simultaneously, certain remedial measures have also been proposed. Once put into effect, the secondary school system

would hopefully become a healthy and self reliant link in the school system. While something has been said about how to remodel the working of School Education Boards, it is equally important to say something about the need for coordination amongst the various Boards in different regions of the country as also at the all India level. By implication this leads to a discussion of the Council of Boards of School Education or COBSE as it is generally described. While we would focus on coordination at the all India level, regional coordination is a matter in regard to which COBSE must take the initiative.

### **COBSE**

7.11 It was in 1979 that an attempt was made for the first time to bring the Boards together on an all India basis. Till then, they had operated as isolated units within the confines of their state territory. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) located in the capital was made the nodal agency for this purpose. Through its initiative, occasional meetings were held and a certain amount of business by way of coordination was also transacted. It was in 1989 that COBSE delinked itself from CBSE. Since then, meetings have become more regular and there is a semblance of an all India organisation of schools. What it does however is so partial in range and character and so limited in its impact that the most immediate thing which requires to be done is that the existing body is radically reorganised and revamped. Surely if the School Boards are proposed to be reorganised, the all India body which represents them must also be reorganised. Towards this end, we propose as follows.

7.12 COBSE must have a permanent office in Delhi or its neighbourhood. It must be headed by a wholtime person who has either been Chairman of a School Board or has the calibre to be appointed as one. This is important for the reason that when he interacts with other organisations, an indispensable part of the job, he should be able to speak with authority and not have to refer to some other person or authority for approval and so on. Evidently, his emoluments, tenure, powers and responsibilities would be fixed accordingly.

7.13 More or less corresponding to the various divisions in different Boards, the organisation of work in COBSE must be arranged into as many divisions at the headquarters. Should

that not be possible owing to certain reasons, more particularly in the early years of its reorganisation, one person can look after the work of more than one or two divisions. The whole intention is to make sure that the different activities of the Boards at the state level are coordinated in a vertical way with the functioning of the all India body, as and when required. When this is done, there must be someone at the headquarters who understands the issues and can interact in a meaningful way. More specifically, this would mean a minimum of three or four professionals at the headquarters in addition to the chief executive.

7.14 The bulk of the expenditure on COBSE would have to be met by the Boards. But something like one quarter, mainly for maintenance purposes, should be met by the Department of Education to start with. After a few years it may taper off to one-tenth. In regard to development (projects etc.), grants can be made as and when required. For instance, it might be decided to initiate certain research studies. Details of such projects would have to be drawn up, discussed and approved and the necessary funding provided. We are in general not in favour of any commitment by the Department of Education except in respect of maintenance. The rest of the support should be on a case by case basis. In 1983, it is understood, a grant of Rs.40,000 was made to COBSE for the first time. In addition, an international seminar which focussed on quality in secondary education had been organised by COBSE about that time was also given a grant of three lakhs. In our view, these are precedents which need to be followed up. In addition, to repeat, something like 10 per cent of the maintenance expenditure should be underwritten by the Department of Education on an ongoing basis. Alternatively, a round figure can be sanctioned which may be revised from year to year to keep pace with the changing tempo of activities and rising prices. These details can be worked out. What needs to be underlined is that the Department of Education has a stake in the reorganised working of COBSE more or less on the lines of parallel bodies like AIU or INSA. There is room for activities of a voluntary nature and they require to be supported.

7.15 While it is for the different Boards to work out the details of the annual subscription and a capital fund to enable COBSE to set up its own headquarters, we cannot but recognise that while some of the Boards have considerable revenue, certain

others have a very small budget and would not be able to afford what is demanded of them. Three things therefore need to be acknowledged:

- (a) COBSE, a voluntary association of the School Boards, needs to be strengthened and made much more effective than it has been ever since it was established.
- (b) No one other than the Boards can be responsible for its establishment, upkeep and running expenditure. The bulk of it has to be met by the Boards on whatever basis is regarded as equitable.
- (c) The Department of Education has a stake in the healthy functioning of COBSE. Towards this end therefore, it should play a helpful role in keeping it afloat, helping it grow and diversify and meet the various demands made upon it from time to time.

7.16 While COBSE has some kind of a constitution already in force, it would be necessary to amend it particularly when its functions are being enlarged, diversified and professionalised. This is a task no one other than the Boards can handle. It is for them to draw up a plan of development which may be implemented in two or three phases of development.

7.17 We would like to assume that, in about half a decade, the first phase of development would be completed. That would be the establishment of permanent headquarters, its appropriate staffing, a revised constitution, etc. In this phase, the Department of Education too would establish the right kind of linkages with COBSE both in terms of grants and professional and general support. In the second phase of development, we expect the activities of COBSE to be further enlarged, diversified and strengthened.

7.18 In the course of the report, various crucial tasks has been assigned to COBSE. Since each one of them has to be done on an urgent basis, it follows that convening all India meetings of Controllers of Examinations and other similar functionaries would not be unduly delayed because certain related decisions are yet to be taken. Today, COBSE springs into activity mainly at the time of its annual meeting. Once these numerous activities

are reorganised and pushed through in the manner suggested, that picture would begin to change. Every few weeks, some activity or the other will be initiated by COBSE. This in turn would have an impact upon the working of the School Boards. Today, when asked to support the establishment of the all India organisation named COBSE, most of them do not feel enthusiastic. It is for COBSE to persuade its members that the establishment of this body on a professional and organised basis is not a luxury in which the School Boards may indulge, if found convenient, but a necessity in so far as the Boards cannot function effectively without this all India body. This is the objective and it needs to be reached within a few years.

### **NCERT**

7.19 During the last few decades, NCERT has carved out a distinctive place for itself. In one sense it is the arm of the Union Department of Education as far as secondary education is concerned. In another sense, it is a professional body whose basic focus is on providing guidance and support to various aspects of secondary and elementary education, even nursery education. There is hardly any aspect of school education which is not covered by NCERT. In fact, with the passage of time, certain issues have moved centrestage. While concern with textbooks was a part of the original design of NCERT, half way through its career, this particular sector of activity came to be given much more attention than it had received in the beginning. A brief but detailed look at how the various departments of NCERT have performed would make this amply clear.

7.20 Three jobs done by NCERT over the years require special mention. The first one is the job of curriculum making. As one looks around the country, in almost each state, the curriculum followed at different levels of education is more or less in accordance with NCERT's recommendations. NCERT has never insisted that what it recommends must be followed in its entirety. This was a wise approach to adopt. In a country as vast and diverse as ours is, a different approach would have been self-defeating. Indeed the same approach has been adopted in respect of textbooks which is the second area of interaction between NCERT and the states. It is entirely upto the states to adopt or adapt them in whatever way they find it convenient. In certain

states, textbooks are simply taken over as they are or are translated into the language of the state. In certain others, these textbooks are looked upon as models and used as such. It all depends upon the states. No attempt at coercion is made. In fact such an approach was not even contemplated.

7.21 It is in the third area of activity—examination reform—that a much more thorough going approach was adopted. A beginning was made with the redesigning of question papers in the sixties. This involved intensive training of paper setters. To start with, workshops were conducted at the headquarters. In course of time, NCERT moved into different states and involved different Boards and trained a larger number of paper setters. To some extent this move away from the headquarters was unavoidable. After all, everybody could not be asked to come to Delhi. It would be much more convenient as well as economical for an expert to travel to state headquarters and conduct workshops there in collaboration with the local School Board.

7.22 In addition to paper setters, checkers and evaluators were also sought to be trained and indeed were trained. This part of the job was mainly done by the Boards with NCERT providing help and guidance. While the number of paper setters was not all that large, the number of checkers and evaluators was inevitably larger. Therefore, the job had to be done at the state level. According to the perception of NCERT which is by and large correct, the redesigning of question papers has come to be accepted by almost all the Boards. Even a casual comparison of question papers set by a Board in any subject and one set by a university in the same subject would make this abundantly clear. While a good part of the job has been done in so far as this dimension of examination reform is concerned, the fact remains that a good deal more still remains to be undertaken. That is why in our discussion of examinations as well as inservice training, we have emphasised the importance of much more intensive and sustained training which may be done as a part of their normal functioning.

### **Uncovered Areas**

7.23 There is yet another part of examination work which has received scant attention so far. This refers to an analysis of scripts

valued every year in different subjects by different examiners. A few Boards have undertaken this job but there is so much more that requires to be done that it would be no exaggeration to point out that only 1 or 2 percent of the job has been done so far and the rest remains to be done. As and when done intensively, this is likely to have two important consequences.

7.24 One, the marking of scripts would improve in terms of both validity and reliability. In a few places, detailed work in regard to what is expected in the answers to the questions set has been done. The results of this exercise are then shared amongst the head examiner and other valuers. The job of the head examiner is to ensure that this scheme of marking is faithfully adhered to. To the extent that this is adhered to, marking gets standardised. In practice, there are considerable deviations from what is laid down in theory and what is actually done. The involvement of NCERT in this job as of today cannot be more than marginal. It has to be attended to by each School Board and the head examiners in respect of each subject. That is why, in our opinion, this is a job where NCERT can guide and help but the actual implementation of the job would have to be left to each Board.

7.25 Two, once answer books have been analysed, it is possible to judge what kind of instruction was imparted in the classroom. Today, hardly anything of the kind is being done. Secondly, there is no way of finding out how well prepared or otherwise were teachers when they entered the classroom and, no less important, how they performed. Working backwards, it is possible to get a fair idea of how teachers perform in the classroom. This ideal is however so distant from reality that most School Boards are only talking about it, if even that. In order to do this job effectively, a pool of well trained manpower would be required. Generally speaking, it takes a few months for a competent professional to undertake this exercise in analysis. Since there are a number of subjects, it would require a committed band of people to undertake this exercise each year. It has to be undertaken each year, it goes without saying. Question papers are set each year and different batches of students are examined year after year. To come up with such an analysis a couple of years after the students have cleared the examination, and sometimes even left the school, looks like an academic exercise. Useful though it is,

it essentially remains an academic exercise whereas the purpose is partly academic and partly pragmatic.

7.26 These details also raise a related question. Is this the job of NCERT or COBSE? The former has professional expertise while the latter is in a vantage position to pool the experience of different Boards, influence their thinking and mode of functioning and, equally important, evolve a common if not also a unified, approach to the future range of such activities.

### **Inter Variability of Standards**

7.27 This refers to the issue of inter variability of standards amongst the various Boards. They are bound to differ from one another in respect of their standards of performance. This is nothing to be surprised at. Since the Boards have to interact with one another, the issue of comparability cannot but crop up. Once it does, their relative standards of performance have to be taken note of. In other words, the issue of equivalence gets put on the agenda. While COBSE is the right agency for doing this job, a degree of help from NCERT on the professional plane would be useful as well as welcome.

7.28 On the whole, NCERT has played a positive role in helping the School Boards to improve their functioning, especially in the areas under discussion. But, evidently, NCERT is not directly concerned with the School Boards. That is a function of COBSE. Therefore, in certain areas of activity, there would have to be a closer degree of collaboration between NCERT and COBSE than exists today. Such collaboration is taking place even now in certain respects. What needs to be ensured is that this collaboration is made more frequent, more intensive and more systematic. It is not possible to suggest any guidelines. By and large, it would be a matter of creative interaction between these two bodies.

### **NIEPA**

7.29 National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) concerns itself with those jobs which are primarily related to planning and administration. Over the years a certain pattern of its functioning has got evolved. Something like 80 per cent of its total activity is devoted to schools and school education.



It is difficult to quantify how much of it deals with secondary schools and how much of its activity is devoted to other levels of education. Of late, its involvement with DPEP has grown considerably. Even then, its attention to secondary education is by no means an unimportant part of its activity.

7.30 To be more specific, of late it has been giving a lot of attention even to DIETs which for the most part are concerned with primary education. At the same time, NIEPA has given considerable attention to training District Inspectors of Schools. Thus, a part of its work is at the level of elementary education and a part of it is concerned with secondary schools. As a matter of fact, learning from experience, NIEPA has come to the conclusion that its basic job is to train the trainers mainly in respect of planning. Everyone cannot be made to come to Delhi and given training at the headquarters. Therefore a body like NIEPA has no choice except to concentrate upon those who can come to receive training at NIEPA and they, in turn, impart training to those who come in contact with them. This is the right approach and it is working well.

7.31 The only specific recommendation that we can possibly make in this regard is that once the School Education Boards are reorganised, as suggested in this report, most senior officials would require a small infusion of new ideas and training every two to three years. This is a role which NIEPA is admirably equipped to discharge. We would therefore suggest that, in addition to whatever is being done, a time bound scheme of retraining in respect of those working in the School Boards at the senior levels should also be drawn up.

7.32 We would go further and say that since one of the crucial bottlenecks in strengthening the School Boards, as suggested, would be the relative unavailability of persons who can be asked to handle greater professional responsibilities, some kind of a plan of action needs to be drawn up. Apart from NIEPA, we would like NCTE also to be involved.

### ***The Department of Education***

7.33 The ultimate responsibility of overseeing secondary education is that of the Department of Education at the Centre. In

addition to various other bureaus that it maintains, the Department has also a Bureau of School Education. As in the case of other bureaus, its fortunes have varied from time to time. Regardless of these details, what needs to be emphasised is that secondary education would languish or flourish to the extent that strong and consistent support is forthcoming from this bureau. Something more would be said in this regard later but this much is incontestable that State Boards can be influenced through their respective State governments. The State governments, however, can be influenced mainly by the Union government.

7.34 Following the passage of the 42nd Amendment in 1976, education since then has been a concurrent subject. This includes school education also. The Centre however did not pass any enabling legislation in pursuance of this Amendment, unlike the field of environment which also became a concurrent subject at the same time in terms of the 42nd Amendment. In that instance, a good deal of enabling legislation was adopted but education, for the most part, has remained excluded. When the 1986 Policy on Education was formulated, the position taken then was that, through the instrumentality of Operation Blackboard, the Centre was going to help the states with a good deal of funding. That promise was lived up to and substantial sums of money did flow to the states in pursuance of this commitment. That has done some good also without question. Today elementary education is not as neglected as it was, say, a decade ago.

7.35 When it comes to secondary education, it is difficult to say how the Centre is going to help. At this level, funding is needed no doubt but it is not such an acute bottleneck as in the case of elementary education. If there is one area of activity in the field of secondary education which requires massive support from the government and the industrial sector, it is vocational education. The Central government can help with funds for engaging new teachers, retraining them and acquiring new equipment whereas industry can help with its expertise. We are not directly concerned with this issue and therefore refrain from saying anything more than what has been stated above.

7.36 Nonetheless, the Department of Education has a key role to play in respect of secondary education. For one thing, it was

this Department which set up this Task Force. For another, it is for this Department to ensure that whatever part of this report is accepted by the government, there should be the requisite follow-up action. As widely recognised, most of us in India fail in implementation rather than in formulating plans. Therefore, we suggest as follows.

7.37 At some stage or the other, this document is likely to be put before CABE for discussion and approval. While some of the recommendations would be found acceptable, others would not be given the same degree of consideration. This is how it always happens. The question then would be: What next? Who is to ensure that those recommendations that are accepted are implemented both by the Centre and the States. If past experience is any guide, we would suggest a somewhat different line of approach this time.

#### ***Standing Committee on Secondary Education***

7.38 We would suggest that CABE should set up a Standing Committee to deal with Secondary Education. At every meeting (generally it is expected to meet once a year), this Standing Committee should meet in advance and submit a report to the CABE in regard to the progress being made in respect of implementation. Though CABE is in general terms serviced by the Department of Education, we would make this specific suggestion that the Bureau head in respect of School Education should act as the Secretary of the Standing Committee on Secondary Education on an ex-officio basis.

7.39 While making the above suggestion, we are aware of the fact that Kothari Commission had recommended a National Board of Secondary Education. Such a Board was not set up. Earlier, something similar in the form of the All India Council for Secondary Education was set up and functioned for some time. With the passage of years, the momentum of reform at the secondary level slowed down and the result is there for the whole country to see. We, therefore, do not wish to repeat the suggestion made by the Kothari Commission mainly for two reasons.

7.40 Some part of the job which was to be done by the proposed National Board came to be done by NCERT. Any attempt to revive the proposal for such a Board is therefore likely to invite

the comment, "Why cannot NCERT do this job?" Without attempting an answer to this question, we also wish to take note of certain sensitivities in this regard. Both for historical and other reasons, a number of states feel that secondary education is their exclusive province and the Centre is not expected to intrude into it.

7.41 Without getting into the details of the argument, we have therefore ventured to suggest a Standing Committee in respect of Secondary Education by the Central Advisory Board of Education. This committee should put out, as stated above, an annual report and circulate it to all concerned. If the C.A.B.E. meets annually, as expected, the report would be discussed there. Alternatively, the report can be circulated to all concerned and then discussed at the time of the next meeting as and when it takes place. Of the various proposals that came up for consideration, this one appeared to us to be the most acceptable. Therefore we have ventured to make this suggestion. Let the Standing Committee function at least for five years. Whether it is given a more durable status or not would depend how useful it is found to be.

#### ***National Committee on Education***

7.42 At this stage, we are inclined to enlarge our argument further. Strictly speaking, it does not flow from what is under discussion. And yet there is something logical and compelling about it and we venture to make the proposal.

7.43 As in several other countries, it may be useful to set up a high powered National Committee on Education. Such a committee may be nominated by the Prime Minister for a fixed tenure of three years. The membership should consist partly of ex-politicians who have some commitment to education, a few professionals in the field of education and some individuals drawn from diverse backgrounds like industry, commerce, law, agriculture and business management. Regardless of who is in office as a minister, this committee would meet twice a year. It would be serviced by the Department of Education and its job would be to review the trends of development in respect of the entire spectrum of education in its totality. One of its more important jobs would be to ensure inter-institutional coordination.

7.44 For example, for the past several decades we have followed a certain set of priorities in education which have the sanction of tradition behind it but have led to a very odd situation. Today, something like one third of students who pass out from the plus two stage join college. This transition rate from school to college more or less corresponds to the transition rate in the UK. A couple of decades ago, it was even less than half of this transition rate in that country. It is only of late (the last couple of decades) that it has been increasing. In a sense, this is in line with what has been happening in North America. In Canada it is 30 plus whereas in the US it is 40 plus.

7.45 But those are affluent countries. They can afford it. We can hardly do so and yet, through a policy of sheer drift and inaction, we have allowed things to reach such a stage where, without our knowing it, we have done two things. One is to dilute the quality of higher secondary education and the other is to debase the quality of higher education.

7.46 We in this committee were not even aware of this problem till we were about to complete our labours. When we tried to find out from different sources what was the transition rate from higher secondary to college stage, we found that hardly anybody had any data on this subject. In fact, at our specific request, the process of collection of data was initiated. When exactly this process is completed remains to be seen. Broadly speaking, we have been informed by the Department of Education that about one-third of the students who pass out from the higher secondary stage go on to college. Can a poor country afford it? Its academic consequences have been already described and do not have to be repeated.

7.47 In sociological terms, to bring down this rate of transition from school to college would take some doing. But the country has no choice and, within the next few years, this would have to be done. If it is not done, secondary education would continue to be what it is and higher education would deteriorate even further.

7.48 Had such a body been in existence and functioned without reference to the change of governments or change of ministers and also had a long term perspective, hopefully, this tendency would have been identified earlier and steps taken to introduce appropriate changes.

7.49 We wish to repeat that though it is not exactly within our terms of reference, the idea of setting up such a committee which functions on a long term basis and is concerned with matters of policy and not day-to-day functioning may not be a bad idea. We leave it at that and do not wish to expand on it any further.

7.50 Before moving on to the next issue, we do wish to suggest that, in addition to what has been proposed above, there are three other jobs that can and, in our opinion, ought to be done by the Centre. These are:

- (a) a significant role, particularly in respect of funding, in regard to inservice training,
- (b) establishment and fostering of School (or as some people prefer to put it) Educational Complexes, and
- (c) strengthening of science and environmental education.

The states would have to be prompted, guided and even offered financial inducements, particularly in respect of (a) and (b). The proposal at item (c) is already being dealt with by NCERT. A special push in this direction is the minimum that can be done.

### **SCERTs**

7.51 Following the establishment of NCERT at the Central level, it was felt that corresponding State bodies should also be established. This was done in the form of SCERTs. In every state, they are funded and controlled by the State Department of Education. As to their performance, the situation is on the whole unsatisfactory though it must be added that, of late, a few of them have been activated mainly in the area of retraining primary school teachers. SCERTs are not expected to duplicate what NCERT is doing but they are certainly expected to transmit and disseminate whatever this Central body wants to be transmitted. Therefore, there is a distinct role for them.

7.52 There is no doubt that SCERTs are, potentially speaking, an important agency for the retraining of teachers. Something is being currently done, particularly in respect of elementary school teachers. A number of them have been mobilised in favour of the DPEP scheme and what they are beginning to do is largely gratifying. It has been suggested to us that the job of the re-

training of secondary school teachers may also be entrusted to SCERTs. We have considered the issue and come to the conclusion that this would not work for two reasons.

7.53 The first is that it would take a good deal of effort to reorganise SCERTs. Decades of systematic neglect have taken their toll. In certain cases, they are seriously understaffed. In certain other cases, the calibre of the staff is not upto the mark. We are most emphatically in favour of reorganising them but are also inhibited by this factor that decision making in all these cases would vest with the DPs. We are in no position to suggest anything to them nor are they bound to accept our suggestions. Therefore we are not particularly hopeful about the possibility of SCERTs becoming more functional in a short time and along the desired lines.

7.54 The second factor is that since they are being increasingly involved in the retraining of primary school teachers, and the number of such teachers is very high, perhaps it would be a good division of labour if SCERTs continued to specialise in that area and left the field open for the Inservice Training Division of each Board to take over this function, at least for some time. There is nothing for or against either of the two alternatives. Only SCERTs have evolved in a certain way and their management is vested in the Departments of Education. Therefore it would be more pragmatic to split the responsibilities in the way proposed. At the same time, it must be recognised that there are a few good people in some of the SCERTs. To the extent that they can be involved in the job of retraining of teachers at the secondary level, it would be helpful to do so.

### ***Training Colleges and Departments of Education***

7.55 We have said something on this subject already. Therein we also suggested how NCTE is expected to shoulder the primary responsibility for the retraining of all teachers in training colleges and University departments of education. It is not intended to repeat those things here. What we wish to do is to underline the point that the functioning of these two institutions has an important role to play by way of interaction with the Boards. Today their level of performance leaves a lot to be desired. In case the NCTE together with the help of NIEPA is able to initiate

this programme and bring about a qualitative change in the outlook and functioning of trainers of teachers, things would begin to improve.

### **Other Linkages**

#### **a) Industry**

7.56 Apart from linkages with some of the more obvious bodies functioning in the field of education, linkages with institutions in other sectors also need to be established. The most important of them is interaction with industry. Foreign experts in the field of education, when they visit India, are rudely struck by the uncommonly weak linkage of education with industry. Generally speaking, it is assumed that linkage of higher and professional education with industry is important. In point of fact, such linkages are equally important in the case of secondary education too.

7.57 There is one problem here. Professional colleges are concerned with education and training both of which are relevant to what is called organised industry. In the case of secondary education while some part of the linkage would be with an organised industry, the greater part would be with the unorganised sector of industry. In terms of their contribution to national income, the unorganised sector contributes a substantial share (the term used by the Department of Industry for this sector of industry is small scale industry) and it is easier to establish contact with organised industry than with its unorganised sector. The former have a few representative bodies. Once an arrangement is worked out with them, it is not very difficult to implement whatever is agreed upon. In the case of the unorganised sector, contact would have to be established with individual units which would complicate the problem further.

7.60 At the secondary level interaction with local industry is required. There could be certain units in the unorganised sector which would possibly repond to the initiative taken by some of the secondary schools. The moment this is accepted, the ball is in the court of the secondary school system. This system too is not as organised as it ought to be. One important reason why we are strongly in favour of Educational Complexes is that if these complexes get organised, it would be somewhat easier to



work towards this interaction. Even if these complexes take some time to get established, this is not enough reason for individual schools not to take initiative in the matter and establish the necessary linkages.

7.59 Once these linkages are established, the next question would be how to give them shape. It is difficult to be specific about this issue. The situation would vary from school to school, course to course and one industrial unit to another. The only guiding principle we would like to underline is that in order to ensure real, productive interaction, it would be desirable to involve both the Department of Industry of the state and any group or body of entrepreneurs at that level provided they are willing to get involved. In each case, a Memorandum of Understanding would have to be worked out. If there are any technical colleges which can be brought into the network for advice and guidance that would also be helpful. This is an entirely new area of work with a considerable degree of expertise which, when suitably mobilised, will transform the quality of education at that level. Those schools which can involve industry would be breaking new ground and setting up precedents which would help others to follow the example set by them.

7.60 So far, no mention has been made of the role to be played by the School Boards. These Boards also have to be involved and that is for two reasons. One is the fact that, in the last analysis, this will be an educational activity and the Boards cannot but be involved and, secondly, they in turn would become harbingers of the new scheme of things. According to our perception, we expect the Boards to play an important role in promoting vocational education. We repeat that to set up an All India Institute at Bhopal (Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education) was a step in the right direction. To choose to duplicate this set up in every state would be expensive and perhaps wasteful. It is School Boards which, for the present, can undertake this job on behalf of the Bhopal Institute. In course of time, if the quantum of work increases and it becomes important to set up separate institutes, the matter can be re-examined. At the moment, we wish to stress the fact that the involvement of School Boards should be seen as a move which is essentially logical, economical and realistic.

7.61 One precaution needs to be taken in this context. Eventually the certificate given by the Board would encounter the problem of equivalence of certification. In simple language, each School Board will have to make sure that the norms worked out in conjunction with industry, particularly the unorganised sector, conform to the norms laid down by the Bhopal Institute. Only when that has been ensured, it would become possible to legitimately ask and insist upon equivalence.

7.62 A reference to the role of ITIs and polytechnics would also be in order here. Their focus of functioning is different; it is more practical than theoretical. In the case of secondary schools, the proportions would be reversed to the extent that instruction will be partly theoretical and partly practical. What kind of interaction can be established with these institutes is a matter that deserves to be explored. Most of them have reasonably equipped workshops. Can there be a system wherein workshops are also made use of by students enrolled in secondary schools? Even if they cannot be used at all times and comprehensively, some part of their equipment can be used. It is a question of adjustment and appropriate hours of work, some understanding with those incharge of workshops. The issue is important enough to be discussed with the Department of Industry which controls these Institutions.

### **b) Health**

7.63 The Ministry of Health maintains a Central Bureau of Health Education. This bureau has counterparts in the State as well. Are the schools making any use of the expertise available with the Bureau? The answer is in the negative. Somehow, health education has never been thought to be an important enough component of education at this level. The issue is not whether this component is included in the curriculum or not. There is much more to it. Any one who completes secondary education, whether 10 years or 12 years, must be reasonably knowledgeable in regard to the basics of personal health as well as community health. Unfortunately this situation does not obtain today. How precisely it is to be done is a matter that needs to be explored.

7.64 Some of the issues that have aroused public consciousness during recent years need to be identified here. While drugs have been a problem for some time, of late AIDS has also become

a menace. The problem of population control has always been on the agenda but has not received the attention that it ought to have received. Some of the schools have also been involved in minor programmes of education relating to these issues. What is called for is something more concrete, more systematic and more sustained. This is a matter that also calls for intervention by the Boards.

### **c) Agriculture Related Activities**

7.65 Three-fourths of the population is still dependent on agriculture. Unfortunately, education has generally been perceived as an urban oriented affair. Gradually, however, it has been spreading to the rural areas also. As the figures given in the first chapter indicate, there is considerable educational ferment in the countryside. How is this growing trend to be helped, given direction and enriched? It can only be through interaction with all those bodies which are active in the field of agriculture and related activities.

7.66 These bodies are much too numerous to be enumerated here. They relate to areas like horticulture, sericulture, fish culture, poultry, bee-keeping, animal husbandry, etc. Climate and topographical conditions vary from state to state and even from one part of the state to another. Consequently it is the local situation which has to be taken into account. How to establish contacts with these various bodies is something which depends upon the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the local schools or, more appropriately, educational complexes that we hope would get established in course of time.

7.67 While agriculture is included in the curriculum as one of the optional subjects, not many schools avail of this option. Those located in towns are obviously not interested. Those located in the countryside are sometimes interested and sometimes not interested. The truth of the matter is that those who are engaged to instruct in agriculture do not understand clearly enough what are the potentialities of this sector nor do they have what may be called commitment. This is to some extent a task for training colleges and University departments of education to bring out its potentialities. In doing so, the cooperation of the Department of Agriculture in the state would have to be secured.

7.68 Each state has at least one Agriculture university and sometimes more than one. They have departments of extension which have a fairly strong presence in the rural areas. It should be possible to establish contact with them, convert that contact into local programmes and implement them for the benefit of the community, and sometimes even for members of the student community. Much will depend upon the location of schools and the resourcefulness of those incharge of the programmes. Another point of contact can be Krishi Vigyan Kendras at the district level which are fairly numerous and reasonably active.

#### **d) Social Welfare**

7.69 The Department of Social Welfare too is reasonably active and has a number of programmes quite a few of which are in operation at the district level also. The Department of Women and Child Welfare is equally active. There are also counterparts to these departments in the states. In other words, the infrastructure is fairly strong and the number of people involved in the various activities is not small either. That being so, it stands to reason that it should be possible for schools which show interest in this area of activity to establish contact with them and develop meaningful local programmes. To some extent, certain schools are already involved in programmes like eradication of illiteracy, programmes of immunisation, etc. To that extent, this will not be breaking new ground. Instead it will be an instance of consolidating as well systematising what has been done.

#### **Two Points of Caution**

7.71 There are two points of caution which need to be raised here. One is the role of School Boards. Most schools may not be able to show the kind and magnitude of initiative required. The fact of the matter is that even now students are being involved in some of these activities. Programmes of immunisation are one example and many more can be cited.

7.71 Most often these are organised under instruction from the Department of Education. But there is no framework of activities within which schools can operate. What is required is that the Boards should evolve and establish such a framework

so that the schools, when they are called upon to participate in such activities or when they initiate them on their own, do not get the feeling that they are being directed to do certain things which are extraneous to their normal working. Instead, it should all be a part of the framework and the schools should get the feeling that they are the master of what they are doing and not being subordinated to a design worked out by anyone else.

### ***Teachers as Agents of Change***

7.72 All this will not become possible unless teachers are suitably reoriented to understand the wider implications of their place in the community. Ever since the formal school system was devised, the school teacher, like the patwari, was taken to be the last outpost of administration at the village level. The assumption behind this system was that orders were to be issued from above and carried out by those below. If teachers have to be given status and dignity, and there is no choice in the matter, it is important that this be done through an appropriate framework of educational instruction and inservice training. Unless a change of thinking is brought about both in the minds of teachers and the community at large to the effect that teachers are soldiers in the battle against ignorance and superstitions and, more positively, are the agents of development and change, the overall picture would continue to be one of unredeemed stagnation.

# 8

## ALL INDIA BOARDS

**D**espite the fact that education is a concurrent subject, not much headway has been made at the central level even in higher education except for the establishment of professional bodies such as UGC and AICTE. Hence it would be optimistic to talk of the role of the Centre in secondary education beyond a point. Over the years, State governments have come to look upon secondary education as their exclusive concern.

8.02 Without entering into the issue of what is desirable and what is possible, it is important to recognise the fact that the role of the Centre in secondary education at the operational level is to be seen mainly at three points—Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the National Open School (NOS). These three organisations have been functioning for different durations of time and enjoy a certain degree of pace setting status.

8.03 In our earlier discussion on the subject, we have generally referred to State Boards as being located in the states. That is why the expression State government was used repeatedly with reference to them. It is time now to turn to a discussion of the two Centrally sponsored Boards and one non-governmental Board, a matter which incidentally was specifically included in our terms of reference.

### **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**

8.04 CBSE claims to be the second oldest Board in the country. When it moved to Delhi from Ajmer (where it was originally located) in 1962, the Board had around 300 schools functioning under its auspices. The Delhi School Board which had existed before 1962 was wound up at that point of time. From that number, the total is now in the neighbourhood of 5,000. Amongst those functioning under its jurisdiction are about 1,000 schools

(aided or run by the Delhi government), over 750 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVS), around 300 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVS) and more than 2,000 independent schools and approximately 70 schools in Delhi which have been given provisional recognition; they have so far not fulfilled certain conditions of recognition, particularly of possessing adequate land area. In addition, more than 60 schools in other countries have their students examined by the CBSE. Certain states such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Union Territories, viz., Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh have also got their schools recognised by CBSE.

8.05 During the three decades of its existence in Delhi, CBSE has shown impressive growth both in numbers and standing. While approximate numbers have been given above, something needs to be said in explanation of the standing which the Board has come to acquire. When analysed somewhat closely, schools recognised by the CBSE generally fall into three categories. The first category is of those schools which have been established by the Central government under its various schemes—Sainik Schools, KVS Schools and Navodaya Vidyalayas, etc. The second category is that of schools run either by the Delhi government, other State governments or by private agencies in those states. The third category is of private schools located in Delhi and various Union Territories.

8.06 Most of the private schools (generally called public schools) are schools which use English as the medium of instruction. They charge high fees, are well staffed and attract students from an affluent background. In terms of numbers, they are not very numerous. In terms of influence and prestige, however, they loom large on the public horizon. Coupled with the fact that almost all the Centrally sponsored and controlled schools also use English as their medium of instruction puts them in a class apart. Schools from foreign countries also conform to this description.

8.07 A significant factor in the background is that students in KVS schools are children of parents who are usually in transferrable jobs. Even when there is a choice of a local school, they often prefer to opt for the KVS label. It ensures greater mobility for their children. Students of NVS belong to another select category. They have been admitted after some kind of a

talent search. There is an all India test for talented children from a rural background and they are selected on that basis. In consequence, over the years, CBSE has come to enjoy a degree of standing in the country amongst other Boards.

8.08 In concrete terms, public perception of CBSE in most states is that, because it is managed by the Centre, it is much less susceptible to pulls and pressures, particularly of the political or the local kind. By implication therefore, its functioning is seen to be more academic than that of other Boards. When public schools in different states elect to become a part of CBSE, one reason is the prestige that CBSE has acquired over the years and the second reason is that it insulates the schools against local pressures. As to the curriculum followed by CBSE, it broadly conforms to that laid down by the National Curriculum Framework formulated by NCERT. In the case of textbooks too, CBSE by and large uses NCERT textbooks somewhat more readily than any other Boards do. Therefore its academic standards as well as its performance are seen to be much better than that of most other Boards. Whether this is true or not is not the issue; this is the general perception. Therefore it has helped CBSE to grow and flourish.

8.09 When the Board was reconstituted in 1962, it was revamped to a considerable extent. In terms of its status, it is a registered society. In terms of its management, it is overseen by the Union Secretary of Education. We would have more to say on this subject a little later because the mandate for the Board comes from a government resolution and not a statutory enactment as has been favoured in this report repeatedly.

8.10 There is an element of uncertainty in its set up. Every few years, some people in Delhi start talking of setting up a separate Board for Delhi. Should that come to pass, all schools run by the government and possibly some private schools too would opt out. The better known schools however would in all likelihood continue to be a part of CBSE as well as similar schools in other states. It needs to be added at this stage that whenever any one of these schools chooses to apply for recognition by the CBSE, it has to get a 'no objection' certificate from the concerned State government. In two states even the local Board has to be asked



for such a 'no objection' certificate. The same situation would arise even in Delhi, if a Delhi School Board were to be set up.

8.11 Over the years, CBSE has become a trend setting body. It is difficult to say to what extent the CBSE is actually playing this role and to what extent it gives the impression of doing so. Without going into this issue, there are a few questions to be raised. These are:

- (a) Since there are various types of schools which fall under its purview and their standards of performance vary fairly sharply, what mechanism does the CBSE have to ensure that the norms which have been laid down are complied with and there is a written record of compliance by everyone. This is being said on the assumption that as in the case of other Boards we expect CBSE to be something more than an examining body. In our view, this is a serious problem and needs to be analysed in some detail.
- (b) The situation of government-run schools in Delhi is decidedly unsatisfactory. The fault is not that of the Board but of the State government which administers them. This dimension of the issue has been referred to on more than one occasion in respect of other Boards too. Schools run by the government cannot be allowed to underperform in violation of the regulations laid down just because they are administered by the government. This issue is being posed here again for the reason that, while some of the schools recognised by this Board are outstanding, a substantial number are functioning in a relatively substandard manner. Not only that, availability of resources is not a serious problem in Delhi. Why Government-run schools are not performing better is largely because appropriate attention to issues like management, recruitment and other staff problems, adequate inservice training and such other issues have not been attended to as they should have been.
- (c) The phrase substandard in respect of Delhi schools is used advisedly. It is assumed by Delhi government that any school established by it would be automatically eligible to send its students for the examinations of Class X and XII conducted by the CBSE. It is the same story as in other states. What we

have recommended elsewhere should be equally applicable to Delhi.

- (d) One can go further and also refer to the relationship that exists between the Board and the Department of Education at the state level. At one time, the Director of Education in Delhi was Vice President of CBSE in an ex-officio capacity. This practice has now been discontinued. As of today, therefore, there is hardly any formal contact between the Board and the Department. Some years ago, a committee headed by the present Director of NCERT reviewed the working of government-run schools. The majority of its recommendations have yet to be implemented. One cannot say if the matter has figured at any stage between the Board and the Department. As argued repeatedly, we do not look upon the Board only as an examining body. It is also a body which should guide and determine the academic functioning of secondary schools. Only the administrative functions should be exercised by the Department. Currently, it appears that academic functions are not being exercised, either by the Board or by the Department and this calls for a fresh look at the problem.
- (e) While CBSE has set up a number of regional offices and that has certainly eased the situation, decision making is primarily Delhi-oriented. In order to regulate things more effectively, in particular whether all these schools are complying with norms laid down or not, CBSE has to devise mechanisms of control and management different from the ones that exist today. Hardly any thought has been given to this problem so far. Since the schools outside Delhi account for two-thirds of all schools under CBSE, this is not a marginal problem.
- (f) Because the decision making is concentrated at the headquarters and the members of its governing body also come largely from Delhi, in its actual working, CBSE becomes Delhi-centred. This is somewhat inconsistent with its all India character and needs attention. In particular, the manner in which CBSE should supervise the academic (and even the administrative) functioning of schools situated all over the country with no formal or regular contact between them and the Board is a matter which requires detailed and sustained attention.

8.12 We have argued most emphatically that we want all Boards to function as statutory bodies. CBSE does not conform to this description. It is a registered body which came into existence through a government resolution and the Chairman of the Board reports to the Union Secretary of Education. This system has worked so far but, as indicated above, certain distortions are creeping in. Presumably they would be taken care of. But even when that has been done, the basic problem would still require attention. What is to be its basic mode of organisation is an issue which requires to be answered in terms of its all India character as also the need to give it a role which is independent of its functioning as an examining body. Details in this regard have been spelt out in the body of the report and those are applicable to CBSE as much as to the other Boards.

8.13 A linked issue is that of the status of the Chairman. Currently it does not conform to the all India pattern and this matter needs to be taken care of as and when a decision is taken regarding the organisation of CBSE. In case this is going to take time, the issue may be attended to separately.

8.14 Historically speaking, there has been close interaction between NCERT and CBSE though it also needs to be added that in a few cases their approaches have been sharply divergent. What is required is that some kind of a mechanism is evolved to ensure that the two work in close coordination with each other. This is all the more necessary because of their physical proximity to each other.

8.15 One issue that calls for special notice is that while the Centrally sponsored and controlled schools constitute a large component of its total strength, each one of these organisations is administered and controlled separately. Even when certain academic decisions are taken there, CBSE tends to fall in line with them. In our view, while the Chairman of the CBSE is an important member of those organisations, the relationship between these bodies and CBSE needs to be more precisely defined. The guiding principle is that with regard to all academic matters CBSE should be making the decisions. Administrative matters may be handled by the governing bodies of these organisations.

8.16 While this issue would be taken up somewhat later, a

passing reference may be made to the fact that some of the smaller states find it difficult (in academic terms) to handle the Boards which have already been set up by them. Certain states such as Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh do not have any Board. It is for consideration whether CBSE has a role to play in respect of such situations. The decision has to be made by the concerned states.

8.17 According to the data supplied by CBSE, students from as many as 60 schools located in neighbouring countries take the examination conducted by CBSE. The relationship is more in terms of conducting the examination than in laying down the curriculum. Since the examination is conducted as per the curriculum laid down, therefore the curriculum followed is also the one laid down by CBSE. It should not be surprising if, with the passage of years, strains begin to develop. CBSE would be well advised to discuss this issue in advance and work out a strategy which can endure for some time. The Ministry of External Affairs too might have a view in the matter.

8.18 There can be one positive fallout of this association with the 60 schools referred to above. These schools generally strive to be internationally comparable. This should, therefore, become an incentive for CBSE to scrutinise and evaluate its own curriculum in relation to international standards and upgrade it to the extent desired. It may be however added that the focus should be not only on competence in the use of English which is more or less already ensured but on maintaining comparable standards in other subjects, particularly the sciences.

8.19 As and when CBSE is given a statutory status, indeed even earlier if the matter is going to be delayed, the Union Department of Education should specify the Board which has the right to deal with schools in other countries. At the moment, both CBSE and CISCE deal with a certain number of foreign schools (60 in the case of the former and about a dozen in the case of the latter). In our opinion, only CBSE should have the right to do so. This is for the simple reason that CBSE works under the general supervision and guidance of the Centre. At any future date, problems of dealing with other countries could arise. Should that come to pass, a body which is directly under the purview of the Centre would be the appropriate body for the purpose. It is for examination whether the schools associated with the ISCF at present may continue to do so and a kind of

status quo maintained or intervention should be made even in such cases. The matter requires to be decided by the Central government.

### ***Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE)***

8.20 This Council is in a sense the successor body to the University of Cambridge local Examination Syndicate which even after the transfer of power in 1947 continued to conduct school level examinations in India till 1958. Since that time, it has been functioning as a body which lays down the curriculum and conducts the examination for schools attached to it. Originally the syllabus laid down by Cambridge Syndicate was followed. Over the years, it has been modified to more or less conform to the needs of the changing clientele.

8.21 It must be said to the credit of this Council that, in certain respects, it has played a pioneering role. For instance, it was one of the first in the country to take to the use of computers. Also it started the practice of holding coordination meetings of examiners for evaluation of answer books. In course of time, this practice came to be adopted by several other Boards. Scaling and grading too were innovations that were adopted by it. Some other Boards have also experimented with this innovation but have not met with much success. Two other successful innovations may also be referred to here. One is the introduction of Environmental Studies at the Class X level as a distinct subject of study and the second was the adoption of a system whereby syllabuses were bifurcated between Class IX and Class X. This made for clarity as well precision of syllabus making. While the latter innovation has been widely adopted, the former has not had much success. The Council also awards a Certificate of Vocational Education which is both detailed and somewhat distinctive.

8.22 While CBSE and all other Boards generally follow the curriculum laid down by NCERT, this Council follows a somewhat different pattern of academic organisation. In statistical terms, it is difficult to quantify the degree of deviation between the two. It is not too large nor is it too small. It is for examination whether this situation would be eventually found academically sustainable or would create problems at some stage. In our view,

the right pattern to adopt would be to ensure that the curriculum content and structure as suggested by NCERT is followed by all Boards including this Council, but a certain degree of variation may be permitted. However, variations should be more in the nature of adding something to the curriculum and not subtracting from it. This is a matter which may be looked into by the Department of Education and NCERT, if necessary.

8.21 This conformity to the NCERT model should be as much applicable to the pattern of examinations as to curriculum making. While all Boards, including the Council, follow the system of external examinations, there may be occasions when Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (C&CE) may be conducted differently in different Boards including this Council. There should be no problem about that as long as the score awarded by the schools and the score of the external examination is not added up to form the aggregate score. If such a move is ever made, the guiding principle should be that the score under the two modes of assessment is shown separately and not combined as they are meant to assess different abilities/proficiencies/competencies. Furthermore, the coverage of the non-scholastic aspects of pupil growth through C&CE ought not to be lost sight of.

8.24 Apart from the issues of curriculum and the conduct of examinations, the other important issue is the recognition of schools. We have looked at the rules laid down by the Council and venture to suggest that these need to be worked out in greater specificity and detail, particularly regarding the procedure of recognition, the duration for which professional recognition can be given, the inputs into provisional recognition and permanent recognition and so on. Such issues cannot be decided on the basis of subjective impressions. Instead, there should be a set of objective criteria which are both quantifiable and measurable and can be referred to while taking the relevant decisions.

8.25 According to the data given in the handbook of information, Anglo-Indian schools recognised by this Council number around 150. Whether they are uniformly strong in the academic sense or not has not been ascertained at any stage. We would suggest to the Council to carry out a special academic auditing of these schools so as to ensure that they conform to

the norms prescribed by it. This would set at rest those misgivings which are expressed by some people who choose to be critical.

8.26 This reference to Anglo-Indian Schools raises an allied issue. The principal justification for the schools recognised by the Council was that these schools, and more particularly the Anglo-Indian schools, used English as the medium of instruction. In the years soon after 1947 when this Council was established, the issue of the medium of education was certainly a live issue. With the passage of time, it has ceased to be one. Today, more and more schools all over the country are using English as the medium of instruction. In the case of CBSE, except for the government-run schools in Delhi and a couple of Union Territories and some private schools, almost all other schools are English medium schools. (In order to be more specific however, it might well be added that it is mainly in the field of social sciences that any medium other than English is used. Science subjects are mainly taught in English. This being so, the justification for a separate Council for the Anglo-Indian schools is open to question.

8.27 The obvious answer is that even if English as a medium of instruction is accepted by other schools, the fact that most Anglo-Indian schools are with this Council and one of its progenitors was the Inter-State Board for Anglo-Indian Education gives it the status of a minority Board. As per the Indian Constitution, this is in order. So there can be no discussion on that score. But, at the same time, it needs to be underlined that the greater part of the justification for its existence should be the fact that schools under its auspices are performing better than other schools. That they are using English as the medium of instruction is in order. But this is not enough. Academic excellence should also be an important consideration. The situation is somewhat uneven in this regard as far as one can judge. Some of them are really performing well; others however are not performing as well. The matter, therefore, needs to be analysed in detail by the Council itself.

### **National Open School (NOS)**

8.28 Before an analysis of NOS is taken up, one issue needs to be raised and answered. Is the NOS at par with the other two

Boards? The answer cannot be but in the negative. Yet there are two reasons which make it advisable to discuss NOS along with the two other All India Boards. One is the fact that NOS is a spin off, if not also an extension, of CBSE. Secondly, in the next few years, this sector of education is likely to grow on a phenomenal scale. Open learning at every stage is the trend of tomorrow. This in turn is likely to give rise to a number of issues. It is therefore advisable to do some advance thinking in the matter.

8.29 This organisation was set up in 1989 in response to the growing demand of certain disadvantaged categories of population to have access to school education. This is also in accordance with the national and international trends in favour of open learning.

8.30 From 1992-93 to 1994-95, its enrolment increased from 10,480 to 25,213. A little later, vocational courses were also introduced. There was a social demand for such courses and NOS did right in recognising it. However, it needs to be added that though as many as 17 courses in this area were started, in 1994-95, the total enrolment in these courses was 1335. Making the situation worse is the fact that except in three to four courses, there has been a general decline in enrolment. There are marked regional variations too in this respect. Part of the explanation lies in the facilities available and a part of it is the inability of NOS to generate and maintain momentum in this area of activity.

8.31 As far as enrolment is concerned, the largest contingent of students are from Delhi and other northern states. With the states of Haryana and Rajasthan setting up similar outfits and some other states planning to do so, presumably the regional imbalance would get corrected in course of time. One thing is however clear. This is not to comment on the NOS but on those states which have yet to enter the arena of open learning. Why are these states not setting up such institutions? If education is to spread, every kind of facility must be provided by the state. The need to encourage the establishment of such schools in different states is a part of the mandate of NOS and, to some extent, it has achieved some success in the matter.

8.32 The enrolment in vocational courses is an area which requires attention. Very few students opt for these courses and



the pass percentage is not all that impressive either. As far as it is possible to judge, a good part of the effort is more or less Delhi-based though Andhra Pradesh too has done strikingly well. Given these limitations, the handicaps need to be overcome much more systematically and vigorously than has happened so far. This should take the form of increasing enrolment in these courses, diversifying the courses, arranging for better equipment and closer interaction with industry, particularly the unorganised sector which is going to be the ultimate employer of those who pass out. It is a pity that this particular dimension of activity is not receiving the attention it ought to have received. The data provided in the Annual Report of NOS for 1994-95 bears out the comments made above.

8.33 NOS however has had much better success with the preparation of teaching-learning materials. Some of it is popular even with those who are not formally on its rolls. This seems like a replay of the IGNOU experience whose teaching material is used even by students of the formal system in certain cases. The examinations conducted by NOS need far more attention. NOS does not have an all India set up. Therefore when examinations are conducted away from Delhi, things cannot be regulated in the manner in which they should be. In this connection, we would like to suggest that NOS would be well advised to coordinate with different School Education Boards and depend upon them for assistance required to conduct examinations effectively.

8.34 As already stated, National Open School is largely an extension and outgrowth of CBSE. There is no reason, as already argued, why similar organisations cannot be established in different states. They would have fewer teething problems because NOS has already solved quite a few of them. NOS can provide guidance, consultancy and its teaching-learning materials and several other inputs which are indispensable for setting up Open Schools. The social demand for this facility is immense and is likely to increase in the years to come.

8.35 There are certain problems regarding equivalence of the products of NOS and other similar Boards in terms of the syllabus being followed. Science subjects are compulsory till Class X in each Board. NOS has for understandable reasons made certain deviations. Also, science education is difficult to organise and

NOS does not have resources or the organisation to cope with the demand. Secondly, their progress on this front has been patchy and not all that satisfactory and this is an issue which, in our opinion, should be discussed further at a meeting with COBSE. Chairmen of other Boards would be present and would be in a position to work out a solution to all those problems which have a practical orientation and are not being handled currently or are being dealt with somewhat indifferently. Ultimately, it is quality that matters. NOS is an admirable initiative but it should not compromise with quality. This is a danger to be guarded against.

8.36 We do not wish to say anything much here regarding its structure, status of the Chairman and other details. The general pattern has already been recommended elsewhere and we want it followed in this case also with necessary modifications to meet its special requirements. Sooner or later, more states would come forward to have similar Boards with a focus on open learning at the school level. To that extent the uniqueness of NOS would decline. But NOS has played a pioneering role and it needs to be acknowledged. It can at the same time guide and set up standards of performance which would be a model for others. Ultimately, it can also act as a resource centre for similar Boards in other states. Its experience with different teaching media should pave the way for similar Boards (yet to be established) to learn from it.

### ***The Role of the Centre***

8.37 One peculiarity regarding the all India Boards needs to be noted. While CBSE and NOS are government-sponsored and government run, CISCE is a non government body. We have earlier referred to the imperative need for this Council to function in broad conformity with Boards all over the country. But there is another aspect to which specific attention needs to be drawn. There is no clear provision for either the Department of Education to give any directive or to ensure that it functions according to the rules and regulations framed by it. This matter needs to be clarified. Meanwhile, we propose that

- (a) The Department of Education must have one representative on the Finance Committee of the Council.

- (b) In terms of its existing constitution, the Council has two representatives on its general body to represent the Government of India. There have been occasions when either or both of these representatives have not been present.
- (c) In the case of Central universities, no meeting of a selection committee is valid till the Visitor's nominee is present. Some such mandatory provision needs to be introduced in the case of both of these key committees.

# 9

## TEXTBOOKS

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**T**he issue of textbooks has to be seen in the context of two important considerations. The obvious one is that of quality. The second one is the commercial angle in respect of production, distribution, availability, pricing, etc. It needs to be added that the term textbook also refers to Teachers' Handbooks and Students' Workbooks as and when these are got written by the Boards and are circulated through the same channels of circulation.

9.02 The quality of textbooks is highly uneven. In certain states, the quality of textbooks is not all that satisfactory. It would be difficult to prove this statement if challenged to do so. Comparing textbooks in one Indian language with another Indian language, when one may not know either of them, is a hazardous job. This statement is based more on the quality of inputs that go into the writing of textbooks than actual comparison of textbooks in two different languages.

9.03 The basic inputs when it comes to quality are two. One is the intellectual and pedagogic input of those who write and the second is the kind of editorial back-up which can be provided by the School Boards or an equivalent agency. The choice of potential authors is exceedingly important, indeed crucial to the quality of textbooks. So much would depend upon the calibre and pedagogic skill of those who are asked to do this job. Whether they are selected because of some kind of networking or because of their intellectual calibre and professional integrity are equally important factors. The situation varies from one point of time to another. There have been instances when the choice of authors was carefully made with an unwavering eye on quality. There have also been instances when the less proficient individual was preferred to the better one and for reasons that would not bear too close a scrutiny.

9.04 There is also another dimension to it. Is the potential

author a practising and experienced teacher, a retired teacher or a person with a university background? In a large number of cases, teachers connected with school education are not always picked up to write the textbooks proposed to be prescribed. In several cases, it is someone with a university background who is asked to write the textbook. In that case, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the textbooks are written at a level somewhat higher than would be justifiable. One of the factors invariably affecting communication between the teacher and the taught is whether the former talks above their level of understanding or talks down to them. In the former case, only a small percentage of students (something like 10-15 per cent) benefit—though not always—from teaching in the classroom; the rest feel left out. In the latter case, this set of students feel exasperated and do not generally benefit. This error of approach and methodology is more likely to occur in the case of those who have a university background than in the case of those with a school background.

### **Ideal Textbook Writer**

9.05 The ideal should be that textbooks at the school level are written by school teachers operating at the appropriate level. Others may be invited to do so generally when school teachers of the required expertise are unavailable.

### **Editorial Input**

9.06 If it is assumed that the choice of the author has been impeccable and the best under the circumstances, the next issue is to what extent the quality of editorial input is appropriately attuned to the kind and quality of authorship. The job of the editor is to ensure several things. One is to guard against any factual errors that might creep in. The second is to ensure that the author pitches himself at the right level of understanding. That is to say that the author neither talks down nor goes above the head of the students and the pedagogy used is appropriate as well as potentially creative. This requires knowledge, experience, adherence to the right pedagogic principles and several other qualities of this kind.

### **Live Contact**

9.07 What is more important than several other qualities is

experience. If the author has live contact with the classroom situation and keeps on renewing that contact every few years, that enables him to acquire the right level of understanding. Hardly any State Board has that kind of expertise within its own ranks. Generally speaking, most Boards look for it from amongst those who are still teaching or have retired. There is a good deal to be said in favour of those serving and retired teachers. But then, most of them lack that professional expertise which editors are expected to possess. NCERT is reasonably well staffed in the various areas of instruction. Most of them possess good knowledge of the subject but the expertise of editing is generally outside their range of experience. Nonetheless, the fact that NCERT has a contingent of people dealing with research into the various modes and techniques of teaching gives it an edge over most other outfits such as State Education Boards etc.

9.08 The situation around the country is that textbooks prepared by NCERT are used by some School Boards. In several cases, they are first adapted and then translated, if at all. In the majority of states, this is what has been happening. There are also cases however where the states do not follow this model. At best, the potential authors are asked to look at the NCERT books. After that, they are expected to do it themselves and write their own textbooks.

9.09 It is difficult to say which is the right model to adopt. There are problems with the various models generally encountered. The ultimate test is the quality of the textbook. It is so difficult to judge it unless one knows the language. At the same time, some experienced and knowledgeable people have a lively notion of what the needs of students are. It is rare to come across this combination and that is why it is risky to have an unqualified opinion in regard to the quality of most textbooks.

### ***The Importance of Reviewing***

9.10 Textbooks are central to the whole process of instruction in the classroom. Evidently the issue cannot be treated lightly. In this connection, we venture to make a proposal which has not yet been either mooted or put into practice anywhere in the country. We are of the view that unless something of this kind is

done, the quality of textbooks would not improve significantly nor would it keep improving as it should. In specific terms, we propose as follows.

- (a) Every textbook which is prescribed should be tested for its intellectual content and its pedagogic suitability both before and after its prescription.
- (b) The mode of evaluation would have to be different in both cases. In the process of evaluation before the textbook is prescribed, about a dozen practising teachers may be asked for their views under different headings such as the range and comprehensiveness of treatment, the pedagogical skills brought to bear upon the processes of exposition and analysis, the appropriateness of the level at which it is written, the adequacy or otherwise of graphics and such other details. A suitable proforma may be worked out by COBSE and circulated it to all its members.
- (c) If reports are favourable, only then should the textbook be prescribed. Wherever critical things are pointed out, they should be set right. The author should be given time to do so. It is only when errors and inadequacies have been taken care of satisfactorily that the textbook should be prescribed.
- (d) Once those who take the decision to choose the author know that their decision would be subject to this kind of close and detailed scrutiny, they would be more careful and scrupulous about their decision making than they are at present. This would also strengthen the element of transparency in decision making. In order to make it doubly transparent, the names of those who are asked for review/opinion should be proposed by the person incharge of this operation in consultation with those equally knowledgeable in the field and then finally approved by the Chairman of the Board. The opinions would have to be in black and white and those offering them should be responsible for them in the full sense of the word.
- (e) Once a textbook has been prescribed and circulated, a second round of evaluation after some time (say, one year) should also be undertaken. At this stage too, about a dozen new persons should be involved. Out of the two sets of reviewers,

it should be ensured that mostly practising teachers from different institutions and different regions of each state are involved. They can be identified from amongst those who have won awards or distinguished themselves in some way. Out of the remaining ones, one should be a professional publisher who knows something about get up, production, quality of paper and so on. The remaining few can be retired teachers who have done actual teaching for something like 15-20 years, if not more. Yet others may also be involved provided they are suitably qualified and competent in the relevant area. This list too must be vetted and approved in the manner suggested at (d) above.

- (f) Remuneration to those selected to undertake the assessment should be reasonably adequate. Their names must be kept confidential to start with. That is why it would be in the fitness of things if the names are approved by the Chairman, that is only one person in addition to whoever is vested with the responsibility of proposing the required set of names. The consent of these people may have to be secured in advance or at a later stage, as the case may be. Also, the usual kind of disclaimer that they have no connection with or interest in either the author or any one else connected with the operation would have to be obtained.
- (g) In due course, the reports should be circulated to all schools and the author concerned. In each case, the identity of the reviewers and assessors should be made public. The basic idea is that whoever is asked for an opinion takes complete responsibility for it. This is the pattern in organisations like the Sahitya Akademi which give awards for literary excellence. Names are kept confidential initially when persons are asked to do the assessment. Once that has been done, the names are made public. This step ensures that opinions are expressed with a due sense of responsibility.

### **Secrecy vs. Transparency**

9.11 It goes without saying that once such a large number of persons are involved at various stages and the entire process of choosing the author and the systematic monitoring that would



accompany it is put into operation, one of the oft-mentioned bugbears of the existing system—corruption—would more or less automatically disappear. Secrecy of operations is a pre-requisite for corruption. We are suggesting the total opposite of secrecy, that is, participation and involvement of practising teachers as well as openness of decision-making; transparency in other words.

### **Participation of Teachers**

9.12 As and when the above mode of assessment which needs to be followed in each single case is put into effect, this would involve a substantial number of teachers in the entire operation of review and assessment. Altogether the number would come to several hundreds. This would without question give a large number of teachers a sense of participation in ensuring the quality of textbooks. It would enable them to express opinions regarding their suitability and appropriateness. Above all, they would not be at the receiving end of decisions made elsewhere in a manner which is not always transparent. Indeed it would give them both status and dignity and these are sorely needed in the current dismal situation.

9.13 The only thing that remains to be added is that, unless unavoidable, only a small proportion of the names (say, one-fourth or one-third) may be repeated in the next round. As far as possible, every time it should be a new set of names who are identified, thrown up for consideration, finally selected and involved in the process of assessment. In course of time, a set of gifted teachers and potential authors would get identified and provide that core of names who would be asked to write textbooks. The existing situation in which the right kind of authors for writing textbooks are not available from amongst those working at the school level will begin to change.

9.14 Quite a few of them are capable. But their talent is neither discovered nor projected. It is time to break with the status quo of the almost total disempowerment of teachers. It is both humiliating and debilitating in the long run.

9.15 This system recommended in respect of School Boards in the states can also be made applicable in respect of textbooks prepared by the NCERT.

### **New Ferment**

9.16 Clearly if the writing and prescription of textbooks is to be subjected to this intensive and sustained process of review and assessment, it would create a new ferment amongst the teachers. This would be the time to intervene and involve them in related activities such as seminars and workshops, courses in inservice training, introduction of new techniques of teaching, even some research projects and so on. Above all, it would ensure the writing of good textbooks which is the objective under consideration.

9.17 Another implication of this exercise in reviewing and re-valuation would be that the time taken between the initiation of the writing project to its completion will be determined somewhat more precisely than is the practice at the moment and also adhered to. In any case, it would not be a quick fix affair. The whole procedure would have to be planned and quite some time given to those who are involved at the various stages of completion. Of course, the maximum time would be taken by the author. In any case, it would take longer to write and publish a book than it takes now.

9.18 Nothing less than six months would be required by the author. If necessary, those incharge of the operation might even arrange for the author (if he is a practising teacher) to proceed on leave for some time and devote his entire time to this job. There can be any number of variations in regard to these matters. So much would depend upon the choice of the author, his competence, his availability, his circumstances and other related things. In certain cases, the book might not have to be written *de novo*. It might be a case more of revision than of original writing. Whatever be the details, it is important to ensure quality and in terms of the procedure suggested above.

9.19 Yet another unintended consequence of this revised procedure would be that books once prescribed would remain prescribed for long stretches of time. This would create both negative and positive effects. There is something to be said both for and against prescription on a long term basis. Therefore, we do not wish to take a position in this regard. At the same time,

it must be acknowledged that once decision making in this regard is made both transparent and participative, the procedure now in force would have to be modified in a substantive manner. This is yet another occasion when the Boards will do well to consult one another, pool their experience and gradually evolve a common line of approach. Here, COBSE too will have a role to play. The issue of multiple textbooks can also be considered at an appropriate forum.

9.20 Whether a textbook is to be adopted or written afresh and so on are matters which have to be determined at the appropriate decision making level. We would have to say something on who should decide such matters a little later and do not wish to identify the operating agency at this stage. What however requires to be affirmed is that, in respect of each single subject, there would have to be a Board of Studies whose recommendations would go to the Academic division for approval. This issue was discussed elsewhere and those details need not be repeated. The point of recalling them is that the decision (whether a book is to be written afresh or adopted/adapted) would have to be made at the appropriate level. Once the decision has been taken will come the next stage of choosing the right kind of author. Details in this regard have already been given above and need not be recalled again.

9.21 The system of having a certain number of teachers evaluate the textbooks both before and after prescription would create certain problems in its wake. What if the majority opinion is found to be negative? Clearly such a textbook cannot be prescribed. If there is a conflict between the first and the second evaluation, it stands to reason that the matter would need to be gone into further and a satisfactory solution found. Quality should never be allowed to become a casualty in such a situation. No textbook, if questioned in this manner, should be given the benefit of doubt. In all such cases, the decision should be in favour of a new textbook rather than that the continuation of the existing one.

### **Positive Incentives**

9.22 On the positive side, there should be incentives such as cash awards to the best textbooks in different subjects and the same gifted author(s) being asked to write for different classes

and so on. Such teacher-writers should be honoured by giving awards and other forms of recognition. With so many languages in the country, the number of authors required to handle this job would run into several hundreds. Writing a good textbook is such a rare accomplishment that such individuals should be looked upon as models whom other teachers might like to emulate.

### **Translating from Other Languages**

9.22 Another proposal in this connection may also be explored. Can there be an arrangement whereby a good textbook written in one Indian language gets translated into another Indian language and both the writer and the Board (or any other appropriate body) are paid something by way of royalty and/or compensation for the right to reprint? This does not happen today. In the kind of system which we visualise, this ought to happen. There is no reason why certain individuals who are undoubtedly gifted in this particular area of work should not receive recognition and reward. And for anyone to assume that this kind of gift is the monopoly of one or two languages and is not to be found in other languages is to fly in the face of experience.

9.24 Once the proposal is accepted in principle, other details can be worked out. At some stage, it would be useful to interact with the Sahitya Akademi also. It has considerable expertise in getting books translated from one Indian language to another. If nothing else, names and addresses of those who know different languages can be obtained from it.

### **Boards of Studies**

9.23 To what extent would the State Boards or an equivalent agency be able to duplicate the quantum and quality of resources deployed by the NCERT? The obvious answer is that it would not be so easy to do so. Consequently, the personnel and quality of decision making at the state level have to be given considerable thought. The membership of the Boards of Studies and the Academic division would have to be both strengthened and professionalised. Once the decision to involve several hundred teachers in the procedure of assessment and reassessment of textbooks is set in operation, a large number of them who today

remain uninvolved in such matters, would begin to get involved. This would give them very good training and enable them to function in a more professional way as and when they are involved in decision making.

9.26 The other implication that flows from this redefined mode of functioning is that much greater reliance on NCERT textbooks would to some extent become unavoidable. The situation even today is that these are used fairly widely in one form or another. Whether the states are prepared for this Remodelling of their procedures etc. is for them to decide. It is only in a few states, and that also not too many, that intensive attention is given to the quality of textbook writing. The focus generally is on other aspects of textbooks, mainly the commercial aspects. While something would be said about this issue a little later, it requires to be repeated that involving more and more teachers in this exercise would make the whole process transparent and publicly accountable. Gradually this can bring about a qualitative improvement in the professional thinking and conduct of teachers.

### **Two Safeguards**

9.27 Two safeguards need to be ensured in respect of the whole operation. One is simple to prescribe and enforce. This relates to anyone connected with the School Boards being not permitted to write or edit a textbook or be connected with the operation in such a way as to suggest that any undue advantage is being taken or can be taken by anyone. Once this regulation is laid down, it can be followed without much difficulty in future.

9.28 Secondly, as the Boards strengthen their Academic, Research and Inservice divisions, they would come to possess more and more expertise of the kind which is now available to NCERT. As and when that comes to pass, the Boards would become increasingly self-reliant in respect of the editorial input. This is an objective that has to be aimed at as also worked for. It may also be useful to establish linkages with professional publishers, and particularly the editorial staff that some of them maintain. Editorial skills of the right kind are in short supply. Once the new system picks up momentum, it would be helpful for COBSE to arrange workshops in different parts of the country

for the further training of those involved with the editorial dimension of the publication of textbooks.

### **Two Patterns**

9.29 It is time now to turn to the commercial aspects of textbooks. Broadly speaking, there are two patterns at work. In certain states, U.P. for instance, books are got written by the Board in terms of its requirements and preferences. This part of the job is not delegated to anyone but is handled by the Board itself. After the manuscripts are ready and have been approved and so on, commercial publishers are brought into the picture and they make their bids for the rights of publication, i.e. the printing, publication and distribution of textbooks. They are permitted to make some marginal profit. Why else would they be interested otherwise? The margin however is not very large because the intention is to make textbooks available at as low a price as possible. But because the quantum of sales runs into lakhs of copies, the overall return is generally attractive.

9.30 The other pattern is that books are not only got written by the Boards but are also printed, published and distributed by them. The whole operation is handled by the Board from the beginning to the end. West Bengal is one model and Punjab is another. A variation upon this model is represented by Maharashtra, M.P., and a few other Boards. These states have separate corporations dealing with the commercial aspects of textbooks. The School Board interacts with them very closely—it cannot be otherwise—but the commercial aspects are mainly taken care of by the corporations. Once again, the margin of profit is on the low side. But it is there. Whatever profit is made goes into the coffers of the state.

9.31 In this pattern of organisation, there are problems not at the level of printing and publishing (these operations can be easily controlled) but distribution. It is a tricky one without question. The corporations cannot have the required number of sales outlets in every nook and corner of the state and, therefore, a certain degree of involvement of private booksellers becomes unavoidable. The attempt to involve them is not always successful. There have been instances in certain states, and not all that infrequent, where private booksellers have ganged up

and not been always cooperative. Sometime this leads to black-marketing of textbooks and various other related problems. Issues such as the sale discount that the booksellers are allowed also keep on cropping up and lead to unpleasantness.

9.32 Stung by some of these problems, the state of Karnataka (where things are by and large controlled by the State government) had the problem reviewed through the appointment of a high powered committee a couple of years ago. This committee recommended a certain degree of liberalisation as also involvement of the private sector on a competitive basis. Meanwhile vested interests had surfaced and the recommendations made by this Committee in favour of privatisation have not been implemented in full. On the whole, the situation is somewhat confused.

### ***Right Model of Organisation***

9.33 Of the two models described above, we are in favour of the U.P. model. The Boards should be primarily interested in ensuring the quality of writing; and also the right kind of production and distribution. An additional item of considerable importance is that the books prescribed should be affordable. This is ensured by devising a certain pricing formula. When there is bidding for the printing and sale of textbooks by private publishers, the formula is already available to them. Whoever bids does it in terms of that formula. The margin of profit is low and therefore, there is hardly any room for manipulation or corruption. Those who are more efficient or have larger resources or are better organised or maintain a strong network of outlets generally outbid the others. Most of these organisational attributes are to be found in whoever bids successfully.

9.34 Efficient distribution is ensured because these private publishers are in the trade and have contacts all over the state. In certain states, stocks of publications are stacked in different regional or district centres so that they can be released on time and avoid creating temporary shortages. The whole intention is to thwart those interests which would profit from the shortages of supplies. While the private sector generally has a bad odour about it, and this bad odour was indeed one reason why, some decades ago, the prescription and sale of books was nationalised,

the fact remains that the private sector, with its network of distribution is better organised as compared to the officially-run Boards. This extensive network of distribution is an aspect that the Boards are unable to match.

### **Role of Private Sector**

9.35 The issue that has to be decided therefore is this: Do we continue to view the private sector as unadulterated evil and a source of corruption or may this sector be used by the Boards in a manner so as to achieve the desired end? In our opinion, the attempt to replace the private sector has not been successful nor has it led to a better quality of textbooks. In most cases, the quality of writing has improved—that is what the Boards can within limits ensure—but the quality of production leaves a lot to be desired—that is something which is beyond the capacity of the Boards. We are of the view that the Boards should primarily concern themselves with the task of improving the quality of textbooks and not spend their time and energy in trying to market them as well.

### **Competing for the Captive Market**

9.36 It should not be necessary to repeat here what was stated in the earlier part of this chapter wherein it was explained how the Boards can improve their capacity as well as their performance as far as the writing of textbooks is concerned and, equally important, identify, involve and encourage a large number of practising teachers both in the writing and assessment of textbooks. This should be the primary objective of the Boards. Getting involved in the commercial aspects of textbook publishing has somehow come to assume a degree of importance which is unwarranted. Even NCERT, under pressures of various kinds, got seduced into spending a somewhat high proportion of its time and energy in textbook publication. Of late, the level of this preoccupation has come down to some extent. If the line of argument advanced here is to be accepted, this preoccupation needs to be brought down even further. That is for NCERT to decide however.

9.37 Attempts to change the system of both the jobs being done by the Boards are resisted for the simple reason that certain



interests stand to gain from the status quo. They are opposed to bringing the private sector into what they are doing. In our opinion, such an attempt militates against the imperatives of commercial efficiency and economy and also the trends of the times. Amongst other things, liberalisation demands that in a matter such as the circulation and sale of textbooks, the private sector has and ought to have its legitimate role.

9.38 The feeling of hostility towards the private sector continues to be strong, it needs to be acknowledged. We are of the view therefore that if this feeling of hostility cannot be overcome or diluted, let there be some kind of a competition between the Board-sponsored and funded publications and the privately-published textbooks. Whoever can do the job more effectively and more cheaply would succeed. The existing situation gives the advantage of a captive market to the Boards. It is this captive market which should be thrown open to competition. If the private sector can give a good account of itself on the commercial plane and quality is ensured through the academic and organisational exertions of the various Boards, the right balance will be maintained.

### ***Hindi-speaking Market***

9.39 How is it that there are half a dozen Hindi speaking states but the textbooks prescribed in one state are hardly used in other states? In a subject such as geography, there can be variations from state to state and even from district to district. But in a subject such as mathematics, there is no reason why a textbook of one Hindi-speaking state cannot be used in another Hindi-speaking state. Is it a case of vested interests or sheer indolence? We pose the question here and will not venture to give a reply. This much is clear, however, that if a particular textbook can be sold outside the boundaries of the state and brings in some returns by way of royalty etc., that will be a much better proposition than that each state sets up a kitchen of its own, cooks its own meals and seeks to serve its clientele.

9.40 This matter has not been given as much thought as ought to have been given to it. In fact there is hardly any agency which even undertakes to compare the quality of textbooks in one Hindi-speaking state with another. Earlier in this chapter, we put

forward the idea of translating good textbooks from one Indian language to another. We regard that as a highly laudable objective. We regard it as equally laudable that textbooks circulate freely in the various Hindi-speaking states. Were the private sector to be involved in the job of selling books more actively than it is today, it will be interested in having a bigger print run and a larger turnover of the same textbook than is possible today. Today, the School Education Boards in the Hindi-speaking parts of the country do not even interact with those in the neighbouring states even though they speak the same language and their curricula for various classes are not particularly different. This unnatural situation ought to change.

9.41 In some states, textbooks have an additional useful feature—a practice that needs to be emulated by other Boards too. The relevant portion of the syllabus which that textbook covers is reproduced at the end of the book. This will help both the teachers and the students.

# 10

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## FINANCING

**P**erhaps no aspect of the financing of the Boards requires closer and more detailed scrutiny than how they earn their revenue and how they spend the funds available to them. In the next few pages, we intend to discuss this issue broadly in respect of the following heads.

- (a) The sources of revenue,
- (b) Government subsidy, if any,
- (c) Raising additional resources,
- (d) Existing modes and levels of expenditure,
- (e) Rationalising the expenditure,
- (f) Meeting new expenditures,
- (g) Ensuring financial autonomy and accountability.

### *Various Patterns*

10.02 On the basis of the scanty data available with us, various types of patterns emerge. In some states, the bulk of the expenditure is met from various sources of revenue, and in a sense, the Boards are financially solvent. This is more true of the large sized states. In case they also publish and sell textbooks, it constitutes a considerable source of financial strength to them.

10.03 In those states where the Boards are not statutorily established and the government controls their functioning, whatever income is received goes into the government treasury and whatever be the requirement is also drawn from the same source. In such cases, it is difficult to judge to what extent the Boards are solvent or otherwise. This is on the assumption that full data are available. In most cases it is not the case.

10.04 There are also Boards which are subsidised by the government. The most notable case is that of West Bengal. In terms of the political philosophy of the state, the examination fee charged is exceptionally low; almost one-fourth of what other Boards charge. It may be mentioned in passing that the figure (Rs. 35.00 per candidate) was fixed in 1951. Most Boards are, therefore, in a state of chronic deficit. According to the data supplied by the West Bengal State Board, in the year 1995-96, the annual state subsidy was to the tune of 7 crores.

10.05 The situation in the north-eastern states is particularly difficult. The number of students is small whereas some of the essential expenditure has to be incurred, whether the numbers are small or large. Economies of the scale of operation are not available to these small sized Boards. States like U.P. have an enormous advantage in this respect.

10.06 We sent out a circular to all the State Boards in mid-September asking them to work out the per capita expenditure on each examinee both for the 10th and the 12th classes. Only half a dozen large sized Boards supplied the requisite figures. Three of the north-eastern Boards also supplied information. The reason we asked the Boards to work out the calculations themselves was that in the absence of detailed data available with us, we could have gone wrong. Therefore we specified the heads that had to be taken into account and we had asked the Boards to work out the exact figure. The incomplete data given in Table 10.1 speaks for itself.

10.07 In view of the wide range of patterns of income and expenditure and the confusing manner in which they are projected, it becomes difficult to work out any precise norms, either of income or of expenditure. In view of this limitation, we have decided to confine ourselves to laying down certain broad principles which, as far as possible, may be followed by each Board. A broad distinction has to be made between large sized and small sized Boards. What we propose to say is more applicable to the former than to the latter.

10.08 Before doing so, however, the figures in respect of Gujarat and Nagaland might be seen and pondered over. Out of the grossly incomplete data supplied by the Boards, these two figures

**Table 10.1: Per Capita Cost on the Conduct of Examinations  
by Certain Boards Established by Different States**

S.No.	States	Examination	Per capita cost in rupees
1.	Assam	H.S.L.C. Exam/ Assam High Madrassa Exam.	Rs. 118.00
2.	C.B.S.E.	Class X (1994-95) Class XII (1994-95)	Rs. 115.00 Rs. 245.00
3.	Gujarat	Class X (1994-95) Class XII (1994-95)	Rs. 45.16 Rs. 24.86
4.	J&K	Class X (1995-96) Class XII (1995-96)	Rs. 190.00 Rs. 190.00
5.	Karnataka Secy. Edn.	S.S.L.C. 1993-94 S.S.L.C. 1994-95 S.S.L.C. 1995-96	Rs. 97.24 Rs. 97.68 Rs. 98.36
6.	Maharashtra	Class X Exam. Class XII Exam.	Rs. 70.02 Rs. 101.62
7.	Manipur	Class X Exam.	Rs. 146.00
8.	Mizoram	1993-94 1994-95 1995-96	Rs. 318.65 Rs. 336.55 Rs. 447.05
9.	Nagaland	H.S.L.C. Exam.	Rs. 469.55
10.	Tripura	Madhyamik Exam. 1994 1995 1996 H.S. Exam. 1994 1995 1996	 Rs. 144.00 Rs. 149.00 Rs. 185.00  Rs. 169.00 Rs. 169.00 Rs. 222.00
11.	Orissa	HSC - 1993 HSC - 1994 HSC - 1995 HSC - 1996	Rs. 151.00 Rs. 165.25 Rs. 179.71 Rs. 212.87
12.	West Bengal	H.S. Exam. Madhyamik Pariksha	Rs. 129.70 RS. 155.78

stand out as representing two extremes. Nagaland is a typical example of a small sized Board where the per capita cost is bound to be high. In the case of Gujarat it is difficult to explain how it is so low. Does this indicate an exceptionally high degree of efficiency in operations? But, perhaps more than that, it is the economy of scale which enables that State Board to keep its expenditure on the low side. Had other Boards too supplied the information asked for, it might have been possible to say something more specific and, maybe, more meaningful.

### **Broad Principles**

10.09 We expect the Boards to broadly follow the principles, laid down below:

- (a) Each Board must not only be financially self sufficient, it should also have a surplus at its disposal both to (i) reorganise itself along the lines suggested and (ii) to initiate certain new programmes of quality improvement envisaged in the body of the Report.
- (b) The obvious sources of revenue are (i) examination fee, (ii) penalties charged for delays or violation of rules and regulations and such other income, (iii) recognition fee. Nothing is said here about income from the sale of books. This issue has been dealt with separately.
- (c) Certain norms in respect of expenditure on (i) staff, (ii) examination work, (iii) maintenance expenditure, (iv) development expenditure, (v) recognition of schools have to be observed. In the absence of more detailed data, we are not in a position to be more specific than to suggest the need for doing so. Here is something which COBSE should undertake to discuss on a priority basis. Perhaps somebody would have to visit each single Board before he can collect the requisite data. At the moment, most Boards, or at least the majority of them, are not equipped to collect and supply the information asked for.
- (d) While the financial situation of every Board is generally reviewed at the time the budget is framed, the common tendency is to keep on adding something under different heads each year. The issue whether those heads are in order

from the point of view of economy, flexibility, yield, social justice and such other considerations is seldom raised. Perhaps in addition to whatever is done every year, a three-yearly cycle of a total review of income and expenditure will be in order. While doing so, it may be advisable to associate one or two knowledgeable and experienced persons with the exercise.

### **Careful Planning**

10.10 In order to be self sufficient, a certain amount of planning and careful husbanding of resources would have to be done. If a Board wishes to be independent and self sufficient, clearly it has to manage its affairs in such a way that it does not have to ask for any subsidy from the government. And yet, as will become clear presently, there are certain items of expenditure where the government must subsidise the Board. What are the items of expenditure on which subsidies are required has to be precisely defined so that there are no unnecessary arguments every year and nothing is withheld in order to put pressure on the Board to make it comply with certain 'requests'. This issue will be taken up again a little later.

### **Examination Fees**

10.11 There is such wide disparity in regard to examination fees charged from students that it is difficult to generalise. The average is around Rs. 150.00 per candidate at the higher secondary level and a little less in the case of X class examination. There are Boards which charge less and others which charge more. The only important exception referred to earlier is West Bengal for reasons that are peculiar to that state. Another variable factor is that in some of the Boards there are separate charges for private candidates as distinct from those enrolled in recognised schools. In yet another set of Boards, there is a higher fee in respect of science students. These variations apart, the general pattern is as described above.

10.12 To balance the budget, the level of the examination fee must be linked to remuneration payable to paper setters, moderators, examiners, head examiners, checkers, those on invigilation duty, etc. On the basis of the meagre data available to us, these rates in certain cases are as low as Re. 1.00 and as

high as Rs.5.00 per answer book at the higher secondary level. With the inflationary pressures that are there, it stands to reason that if we have to insist upon reasonably competent and fault-free performance from the different categories of persons involved in examination work, the rates would have to be revised upwards.

10.13 In Chapter 4, where we have discussed the conduct of examinations, we have not favoured revaluation which in any case is permitted only by a couple of Boards. Surely, when revaluation is not to be countenanced, there would have to be internal mechanisms for ensuring that what is done is not open to questioning. In other words, the procedures of assessment and evaluation would have to be tightened up and made so rigorous and so subject to internal control and audit that no one can even ask for revaluation with any show of reason. All this would call for considerable advance planning and require greater budgetary outlay than is generally provided.

10.14 While the increasing use of computers has certainly rationalised and simplified administrative operations and also made for economy and speed, the human element is so crucial both to efficiency and integrity of examination work that it has to be suitably remunerated. This is a job in which different Boards should make their own calculations and work out an appropriate figure. It is also recommended that in the wake of the acceptance of this Report, while interim steps may be taken by different Boards, it would be advisable to coordinate the thinking and the decision making process of all the Boards under the auspices of COBSE, regarding these basic issues.

10.15 The salaries paid to different categories of workers, the staff working in the field of examinations and related services, expenditure on the conduct of examination including remuneration to examiners, consumption of paper, printing of question papers and such other expenditure, indeed the whole range of operations, must be worked out separately. In other words, there should be a sub-budget of the Examination branch within the general budget. This budget should be operated by the Vice Chairman/Controller of Examinations within the parameters laid down. It is only when the expenditure on examinations is worked out precisely that it would be possible to decide how much should be charged per candidate.



### **Help to Weaker Sections**

10.16 While disadvantaged sections of the population such as students of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, girls, etc., are helped by the state in respect of their tuition fee, no such help is extended in respect of the examination fee. We see no reason why this should not be done.

10.17 While working out the costs, there should be no differentiation made between these disadvantaged categories and the rest. While computing the costs, each one should be charged in full. Subsequently, it is for the government to pay for them and compensate the Boards.

10.18 The kind of help that can be provided to other poor and deserving candidates must also be considered. This is being said on the assumption that if the expenditure on examinations is upscaled, as proposed above, the quantum charged from the candidate will unavoidably go up. Therefore a certain category of poor and deserving candidates will need financial help. We are not in agreement with the West Bengal approach whereby the examination fee is pegged at a low level and then a substantial subsidy is given to the Board. This prevents, if it may be said, the Board from charging in full even from those students who are in a position to pay. Instead, the system should be that while the level of the examination fee should be in accordance with whatever is spent under different heads of expenditure, there are certain categories of students who would require help. And they should be helped in the manner described above.

10.19 Put another way, while some subsidy would always come from the state coffers, it need not be in the nature of a bulk figure but should be linked with certain heads of expenditure. Those may go up or down depending upon the general price level, efficiency of operations, greater use of computers and such other factors. Once the items of expenditure are identified and scrutinised closely, year after year, the efficiency and economy of the operations is likely to improve.

10.20 It perhaps needs to be restated that what is being proposed is not to ask for greater subsidy from the state but a more rational and a more viable mode of doing so. In the bargain, it would also ensure greater social justice.

### ***Penalties and Other Income***

10.21 One source of income for the Boards are penalties that are levied in certain cases; delays for example. The quantum of income from this source may not be large. But it is an identifiable source of income. Also it needs to be added that the fines as and when levied must be based on a certain rational basis. The rate of fines was fixed decades ago and has remained unchanged since then. If everything else is to keep pace with inflation, surely this source of revenue too has to be regulated accordingly. In addition to fines, all kinds of charges are levied on various items of activity. In all such cases, the approach to be adopted should be as recommended above.

### ***Recognition of Schools***

10.22 The system in regard to the recognition of schools is not as well defined as it ought to be. For one thing, there are two types of recognition; the initial recognition and the annual renewal and the two are not clearly distinguished. For another, the amounts charged are unrealistically low. It is not for us to suggest any definite figure. Instead what we propose is that the expenditure on the Recognition division should be worked out separately as in the case of the Examination division. The full cost be recovered from the schools and a certain surplus also generated. The full managerial costs of maintaining that particular division as also a part of the general expenditure of the Board needs to be recovered. Once again, we would like initial calculations to be done by the Boards. This matter should then be thrashed out at a meeting held under the auspices of COBSE.

### ***Sale of Textbooks***

10.23 Coming to the sale of books, the issue has been dealt with at some length in the chapter on Textbooks. A few additional points need to be made.

- (a) Whatever be the system followed, and we have expressed our preference for the U.P. model, it should be possible to generate additional revenue for the Board to the tune of 10 per cent of the net profit. Anything more than that would make the books more expensive than can be defended publicly. In respect of

examinations, we favour 5 per cent surplus but in respect of textbooks it could be 10 per cent.

- (b) One important consideration when textbooks were nationalised some decades ago and still continue to be nationalised in most of the states was to keep the sale price low. We are in complete agreement with that approach. However, when we suggest a 10 per cent rate of surplus from the sale of textbooks, we simultaneously wish to propose a formula to ease the hardship for certain categories of students.
- (c) The formula has to be on the lines of what is charged in the case of the examination fee. The disadvantaged categories may be given some kind of a subsidy towards the purchase of books. This job for obvious reasons would have to be delegated to the schools. The difference in price would not be all that large. A book costing, say, 15 rupees would be cheaper by a rupee or two and no more. While misuse of such delegated powers cannot be ruled out, appropriate safeguards would have to be taken. Between the Boards and the principals of the secondary schools, a system will have to be devised whereby even the marginal room for corruption that can arise is taken care of. As in the case of a subsidy for the examination fee, this part of the subsidy must also come from the State government.
- (d) In case the formula of commercial sales as recommended by us is not accepted by certain states and certain Boards, the subsidy proposed above can still be administered in the same manner and with the same kind of safeguards. The intention in each case is that there should be some surplus available with the Boards. Even when the State governments help the Boards, it should not be on a flat or an ad hoc basis but on a predetermined and publicly defensible basis; also linked to the number of candidates, number of copies sold and such other details. Such a system will hopefully tone up the financial working of the Boards also.

### **Scrutiny of Expenditure**

10.24 The expenditure incurred by the Boards has to be

scrutinised constantly. Elsewhere in the Report we have referred to the somewhat chaotic position in respect of the staff. While some data are available with us it is neither detailed nor comprehensive enough to be quoted here. In some cases, there is overstaffing, in some cases there is understaffing. Since both the extremes have to be avoided, there has to be some rationality about the whole system.

10.25 While the Boards are not to be entirely exempted from mismanagement on this score, the larger part of the explanation derives from the fact that the political bosses look upon School Education Boards as some kind of employment bureaus. Even teachers and other employees are recommended for appointment not because they are suitably trained and equipped for the job but because, according to their perception, schools do not matter. The overriding consideration in their eyes is how to provide employment to some people. Once financial procedures are tightened, separate budget heads for different divisions are provided and the budget in respect of the Examination division is even operated independently, things will start changing.

10.26 About the expenditure on examination, a good deal has already been said. No more need to be said here for fear of repetition.

10.27 Maintenance is a broad head covering expenditure on salaries, allowances, etc., the physical plant, the services provided and such other sub-heads. Certain norms in this regard already exist. Mostly they are based on the government model. To the extent that they are applicable to School Education Boards, they may be made applicable here but there is nothing wrong, indeed it would be eminently desirable, if the Boards were to evolve their own independent norms with the help and guidance of COBSE.

### **Development Expenditure**

10.28 Development expenditure is a new heading that we are proposing. In the body of the Report, we have suggested considerable revamping of the activities of the Boards. Not only that, we have even tried to phase out those activities in a certain chronological order. Once these activities get under way, they will demand more and more budgetary support. This amount of funding therefore must come from the internal resources of the Board and not any other source.

10.29 There is one item of development expenditure which we have identified separately for reasons stated at the appropriate place. This refers to inservice training and professional development of teachers. Except for a couple of Boards, this activity has hardly been taken up anywhere. We are of the view that this activity is so vital for quality improvement at the secondary level that as stated in the next chapter something like a five year plan of retraining of teachers should be prepared. We have suggested that the State governments, NCTE and various other organisations such as, NCERT, SCERTs, NIEPA, etc., should be involved in the planning.

***Inservice Training: 50 : 50 Share***

10.30 When it comes to funding for this programme, we are of the view that it should be on a 50-50 basis. Half of the development expenditure should come from the Boards and the other half of it from the State coffers. This should be worked out clearly and precisely and provided for accordingly. We have also favoured a certain amount of help from the Centre. But we are not providing a distinct slot for it. To do that would make it uncertain whereas we need to be very definite about it.

***Three-Yearly Review***

10.31 As already observed, a three-yearly review of the budget must be a regular feature of the functioning of each Board followed by an all India meet on this theme under the auspices of COBSE. Such a meeting will not curtail the discretion of each Board for itself. The purpose is to ensure that the Boards follow a generally agreed upon mode of functioning in keeping with the different sizes of the Boards. The larger Boards will obviously have greater flexibility in respect of their operations. This might oblige the smaller Boards to pool some of their operations. If the curriculum is about the same, even the question papers can be set jointly and printed jointly. There are several ways of collaborating with one another. A three-yearly review, if undertaken after due preparation, would act as a force in that direction.

# 11

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## PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

**R**eports of various committees and commissions do not always get implemented to the extent that they should. Some get implemented partially; others not even that. There are also cases where certain recommendations are picked up at random from these reports and implemented. Of late, the recommendations which qualify for consideration are generally of two kinds. The first are such that they do not disturb the status quo except marginally and the second are those where the additional cost of implementing a particular recommendation is not particularly high. Refusal to spend on a new set of priorities as against continuing with the existing heads of expenditure is also an acceptable variation.

### *Changing the Status Quo*

11.02 We are unable to anticipate or judge what will happen to the report in hand. Hopefully, it would launch secondary education on a path of greater relevance, better quality and a more lively appreciation of the central role it can play in the task of development. It is important to view secondary education as terminal in character so that fewer and fewer young people are obliged to go to college. Secondly, the existing position of the Directors of Education may have to be given a different focus so that the Boards can function on their own without any bureaucratic interference. It should not come as a surprise if some people who represent vested interests choose to oppose or undermine the implementation of the second proposal directly or indirectly.

11.03 Of the two proposals, the second one is easier to implement and except for a few individuals who may be affected to some extent, this refocussing of priorities need not cause much disquiet.

Treating the secondary system of education as the logical culmination of what a young person should complete before he seeks entry into the organised sector or even unorganised sector of the economy is different. It would involve a good deal of restructuring, indeed a radical break with what is happening today. Are we prepared for it?

11.04 Would our social attitudes help towards such a change of priorities? How do we create an alternative system whereby going to college ceases to be the 'done' thing? This would imply raising the standards of performance at the senior secondary level. This shift in favour of quality learning would signify all kinds of consequential adjustments of curriculum, upgrading of staff capabilities, better facilities in respect of libraries and laboratories and a dozen other things. Above all, this would signify a complete break with the neo-colonial heritage of the economy. This agenda of work sounds a little drastic. Even the professional government planners do not seem to be prepared for it beyond a point.

11.05 We are also of the definite view that each Board should be independent as well as autonomous and should function on its own steam rather than be pushed by forces below and above it or be goaded in any direction by anyone from outside the system. School Boards are doing an immensely important job which is of direct concern to substantial sections of the community. What happens to these Boards therefore should be a matter of informed public and academic interest. We would like to believe that if our recommendations are implemented, as they should be, there would be a noticeable difference between the situation as it obtains now and as we would like it to be.

### **Politicised Decision Making**

11.06 Much depends upon the commitment of those in power to the cause of education. Out of 34 Boards that are in existence today, only one of them is without a regularly appointed Chairman at the moment. The job has been vacant for some time but it may be filled up any day. This is not the first time that this vacancy has not been filled up for quite some months as mentioned earlier. There have been similar occasions even in the past. As per past precedent in this particular state, it is the Deputy Commissioner of the district where the Board is located who is usually asked to look after its day-to-day functioning.

11.07 Why do such things happen? Why is education being so remorselessly politicised? The simple answer is that those who control decision making do not think that this kind of odd political conduct requires any corrective action. The management of the school system as a whole and the secondary classes in particular suffers because of this attitude of political indifference. In such a situation, it is not the recommendations of a committee that would count. What would count and is indeed decisive is how the state is being run. For our part, we have no solution to offer to such situations. There has to be a willingness on the part of the political masters of such states to learn from their experience or that of others. If there are constraints of an inbuilt attitude of mind or unwillingness to learn from experience, there is little that that can be done from outside.

11.08 In brief, the issue is primarily political. Further, it is the states which are primarily concerned with education and school education in particular. The Centre hardly comes into the picture as far as field operations are concerned. The Centre does not handle more than one or two per cent of the total spectrum of educational activities. Almost everything therefore depends upon how the states think and perform. This is crucial. While we have suggested some marginal role for the Centre, basically the re-organisation of School Boards of Education is a matter that concerns the states. It is for the State governments to make or mar the future of their citizens.

### ***Two Roles of the Centre***

11.09 The Centre too has a role to play but, as stated earlier, it is marginal in character. There are two things however which the Centre can do in a somewhat planned and meaningful manner. The first is not so easy to implement because the claims of elementary education are so difficult to resist that financial support for secondary education may not be forthcoming in the measure that it ought to be. The second thing is perhaps equally difficult to handle. This refers to policy interventions. But since it is only the Centre that can intervene, hard decisions need to be taken.

11.10 In handling education as a whole, the states have virtually seen to it that undergraduate education of the non-professional



kind is reduced to a state of utter anaemia and irrelevance. Except for 10-15 per cent of the colleges, the rest are performing so poorly that it hardly makes any difference whether they exist or do not exist. These substandard colleges provide a safety net against young people going astray or acting in a disorderly way. While enrolling them in the college, the attempt is to keep them out of mischief, at least to some extent. Mischief takes place nonetheless. The issue today is therefore that this device of containing social disaffection is beginning to be less and less effective.

11.11 What is to be done to meet the challenge of booming numbers and declining standards? Every year, more and more students pass out and join college. Underfunded as these colleges are, their capacity to contain disaffection has been decreasing steadily and inexorably. That is why we have presented the alternative scenario of a strong system of secondary education which to a substantial extent is also terminal in character. If the alternative strategy of making secondary education terminal in character can be put into effect, fewer and fewer people would aspire to join college.

11.12 It is a mistake to assume that college education is basically a function of the UGC. It is not. It is primarily the responsibility of the State governments which in any case meet the bulk of the expenditure at this level. Secondary education needs to be regulated in a way as to make sure that the youth of the state is neither left rudderless nor pushed towards a rebellious frame of mind. More than the Centre, it is the states which have to deal with the problem. To that extent, it is their job to steer things intelligently as well as purposefully. Since the job market at the professional level is all India in character, each state has to take this factor into account.

11.13 The Centre is in a position to advise, and guide different states regarding secondary education, help to improve quality and eventually provide an alternative to the substandard teaching that is done in colleges. But the Centre's performance has not been exactly satisfactory. And this is in a situation when the expenditure involved will not be all that large. As a matter of fact, it would be more a case of saving at one end and spending at another end. And, in the process, getting much better results. What is involved is commitment, professional guidance and continued political support.

11.14 It may be noted in this connection that while there was a separate Commission on Secondary Education in 1952-53, the Kothari Commission (1964-66) also gave quite some attention to it. Since then, however, most government reports at the Centre have by and large not dealt with secondary education. The 1986 Policy made some reference to it but the Ramamurthy Committee which came five years later did not do even that. Even the appointment of this Task Force on the Remodelling of School Education Boards was unduly delayed. In other words, for a considerable span of time, secondary education has suffered from neglect at the hands of the Centre.

11.15 The Centre owes it therefore both to itself and to the states to make amends for this far-from-enlightened and academically indolent frame of mind. It is not generally realised that by its not intervening decisively in favour of secondary education, higher education too has been rendered both unproductive and sub-standard.

#### ***Excessive Fragmentation***

11.16 It is necessary to refer again to the peculiarly bureaucratised and fragmented situation in respect of secondary education in the southern states as also the north-eastern states. In the southern states, largely for historical reasons, no notable attempt has been made to reorganise secondary education during recent decades. In the northern, western, and eastern India, Boards of the kind that we have recommended have been set up by and large. In the four southern states, even that has not happened. Whatever be the explanation, the fact remains that the Boards continue to function as they have functioned for decades earlier. Some thing has been done to supplement and strengthen their working in various ways but no basic reorganisation has been undertaken at any stage. To that extent these four states (each one in a different way) are somewhat out of step with the rest of the country. We see no justification for monitoring the status quo.

11.17 Vested interests have got involved and no decisive action is being taken to straighten things out. The longer the status quo continues, the more difficult it will be to break with the past. The decision has to be taken at the political level. As to the

administrative details, those have been provided in the body of the Report.

11.18 The problem in the north-eastern states is somewhat different. The size of the states is small but that has not inhibited some of them from having more than one body dealing with secondary education. We do not propose to restate our reasons in favour of ONE STATE, ONE BOARD except to say that the existing situation is decidedly unsatisfactory.

### **Regional Variations**

11.19 At this stage, it would be helpful to look at the regional variations which prevail and the remedies that need to be applied. What we have been able to gather about the functioning of the Boards may be presented in an abbreviated and simplified manner. Hopefully, this would help the concerned states to take appropriate corrective action:

#### **Northern Zone (J&K, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh)**

While the structure of the Boards is satisfactory in so far as each one of them is statutory in character, there are other problems. Briefly these are:

- (a) While they are statutory in status, they are not free from political interference. Both Punjab and Haryana have removed, on more than one occasion, the Chairmen of their respective Boards. In the case of Haryana, even the vacancy is not filled up for long stretches of time and day-to-day work is looked after by the Deputy Commissioner of the district where the Board is located.
- (b) The composition of various bodies of the Boards is lop sided and weighted in favour of the government. Since a good deal has been said on this subject in Chapter 6, it should not be necessary to elaborate further.
- (c) While each one of these Boards looks after the entire range of school education from Class I onwards, in actual fact not much is being done in respect of the lower levels of education. Though this issue does not concern us, it indicates an important lacuna in their functioning.

- (d) Since funding is not a problem with these Boards, (the textbooks are handled by the Boards and not corporations, they earn considerable revenue for them), much more in respect of academic development is possible and requires to be initiated and seen through.

**Eastern Zone** (Orissa, West Bengal and Assam)

In terms of statutory status, the Boards in these states have more or less a uniform pattern. While the West Bengal Board has had a certain measure of stability and also that of Assam to some extent, Orissa, like Punjab and Haryana, has witnessed one or two unhappy interventions by the State government. These need to be put an end to so as to ensure stability as well as autonomy for the State Board. Three other things therefore might be said:

- (a) Unlike West Bengal where the bulk of the job is done by the Secondary Board and there is close interaction between it and the Senior Secondary Council, both in respect of Orissa and Assam, there is no sense of stability as far as the tenure of the chief executive is concerned. Individuals come in for a brief duration of time and either retire or leave without making much of an impact.
- (b) Each one of these states has more than one Board. One of them looks after the secondary stage and the other after the senior secondary stage. For reasons stated in the body of the Report, we see no justification for it. The odd thing in regard to Orissa in particular is that the two Boards are not situated in the same town. One is located at Cuttack and the other at Bhubaneswar. This may have served to satisfy certain local aspirations but it comes in the way of close interaction between the two.
- (c) The West Bengal Board has played a pioneering role in respect of having undertaken inservice training of teachers. Only a couple of other Boards have done so. The scale of operations needs to be stepped up however. It should be possible to do so once some of the recommendations of this report are implemented and more funds become available to the State Board

### **North-eastern Zone**

Out of the 7 states in this region, 5 have their own separate Boards. One of them, Manipur, has two Boards. In the case of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, they do not have Boards of their own and have linked up with the CBSE. As should be apparent, this pattern has created a number of problems. These are discussed below:

- (a) One obvious consequence of this excessive fragmentation is that secondary education fails to make any impact. Some of these states have a high rate of literacy and from that point of view the situation is praiseworthy. But when it comes to the management, considerable restructuring is required.
- (b) It would be presumptuous on our part to make any specific recommendation other than the one made in the course of this Report. Our general position is One State, One Board. In what manner this formula can be applied in this part of the country is for the various states to decide.
- (c) Because of the uncommon degree of fragmentation, a heavy burden has been put on the resources of the various states. There is not enough funding to go around and even a key issue such as the preparation and prescription of textbooks gets neglected. Most of them use NCERT textbooks but then, unless those are adapted to the local situation, problems are bound to arise and sometimes they do arise. In certain cases, private publishers also manage to promote and sell their publications. Whether this has led to corruption or not is for those in the know of things to decide but this is the general impression. In any case, the issue of textbooks suited to the needs of the local students has a direct bearing on the quality of secondary education. As such, this issue cannot be overlooked.
- (d) When the size of the Board is so small, it is pointless to assume that the elaborate structure recommended in respect of each single Board can be put into operation without suitable funding being available. Even if funds of the required magnitude are forthcoming, there would be acute shortage of trained professional manpower. One solution could be that different states look after the examination part and everything

else is pooled together under the auspices of one Board for the whole region. This would be in the nature of a Confederation of Boards. To repeat, we have no ready made solution to offer. It is definite, however, that some steps would have to be taken to put an end to this high degree of fragmentation.

- (e) With such small numbers, the role of the DPI cannot be diluted beyond a point in favour of the Chairman of the Board. Indeed, in some of the states, the DPI is also the Chairman of the Board. We have no other reservations in this regard except that we want secondary education to have a standing somewhat independent of the government. With the DPI in that dominating position, this cannot happen. The issue of One State, One Board therefore bristles with all kinds of difficulties in this part of the country. All that we wish to suggest is that the problem needs to be resolved in a constructive, and financially as also academically viable way and at an early date.
- (f) Yet another formula can be that these states link up with the CBSE as Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh have done. Should this solution be found acceptable, the whole idea of school complexes can be given a fresh impetus. The number of schools in these states is not very large and it should be possible to ensure coordination amongst them.

**South Zone** (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala)

Boards in the four South Indian states are, as already stated, out of step with the structure of the Boards in the country as a whole. Each one of them is controlled by the State government, either by the DPI directly or by some one else of equivalent or lower rank. On the whole, the situation is unenviable. More specifically, we would like to propose as under:

- (a) The State governments have to take a decision in regard to the statutory status of these Boards. We have recommended a certain structure. While doing so, we were aware of the situation in the Southern Zone. Even after having taken that factor into account, we still reiterate that the Boards in these states would do well to fall in line with the pattern

recommended in the body of the Report within a couple of years.

- (b) Each of these states has more than one Board. For reasons stated on more than one occasion, we see no justification for this system to continue to prevail.
- (c) To some extent, the problem is complicated in some of these states by the usage of the term Junior Colleges. The word 'college' suggests that they may have something to do with undergraduate education. This is not so and the different State governments, despite pressure to the contrary, have successfully resisted the repeated moves of teachers in these colleges to be put in the same scale of pay as was sanctioned by the UGC in respect of undergraduate colleges.
- (d) The pressure was more acute in Kerala than in other states. Fortunately, a policy decision to phase out these colleges and locate the plus two classes at the school level was taken some years ago. With the passage of time, the problem is ceasing to be as acute as it was at one time. This problem is to be encountered in Karnataka also but not to the same degree as in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Vested interests have grown over the years and a decision to conform to the all India pattern, as and when taken, is bound to be resisted. This is, however, an insurmountable problem.
- (e) In no other zone do the Boards come across as examining bodies so visibly as they do in the south of India. This character of the Boards is utterly inconsistent with what has been visualised and projected in the body of the Report. The sooner the situation is rectified, the better it would be for the future of secondary education.

**Western Zone (Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa)**

The School Boards in these states are fairly powerful bodies both in the academic and administrative sense. In terms of status, however the shadow of bureaucracy falls darkly upon each one of them. To that extent, it takes away something from their standing and their ability to take initiative on their own. In our opinion, the following few steps need to be taken.

- (a) While each one of these Boards has been created through legislative enactment, in respect of their standing and autonomy, the linkage between the Department of Education and their functioning needs to be recast. In the body of the Report, we have suggested that while administrative matters of the government-run schools might continue to be looked after by the DPI, all academic matters should be the responsibility of State Boards. In Maharashtra, for example, the Chairman of the Board has the rank of the Additional DPI. Since the Director of Education is senior to him, it cannot be said that he is fully autonomous in his functioning.
- (b) Both Gujarat and Maharashtra have separate corporations for textbooks which have been performing well. Without repeating what has been said in this regard in the chapter on Textbooks, we are of the view that these commercial activities take a heavy toll of the administrative energies of those involved in the management of these corporations. These can be diverted, with profit, to the service of the School Boards as and when the formula suggested by us, in Chapter 9 is put into operation.
- (c) As in some of the South Indian states, Maharashtra has a problem in locating the plus two classes in schools. The State government has invariably taken the right decisions in this regard but is unable to detach these classes from colleges. In each case, it is lack of resources which comes in the way. It is to be hoped that some kind of a time-bound plan would be worked out soon and the transfer effected within the next 5-10 years.

**Central Zone** (Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and M.P.)

The Boards which are included in this zone serve large states in terms of population as well as size. The situation regarding various aspects varies widely. While Rajasthan has the reputation of being a pace setting Board regarding status, academic activities, innovations of various kinds, control over the schools and so on, the Bihar Board, though also statutory in character, has been subject to violent fluctuations of a different kind. Apart from Punjab, Haryana, and Orissa, this is the only Board where Chairmen have had to quit at the behest of those in power. The M.P. Board is fairly stable and has been performing well. In service



training has been one of its notable initiatives. The Chairman of the U.P. Board is the DPI in his ex-officio capacity. He is based in Lucknow but the headquarters of the School Board are at Allahabad. In consequence, the main job is done by the Secretary of the Board, of course under the supervision of the Chairman. Considering the number of students that this Board handles (almost 3 million every year), it is highly creditable of this Board to have functioned successfully without any serious breakdown at any stage. A few comments that may be offered are as under:

- (a) Despite the School Board being statutory in character in Bihar, the tenure of the chief executive has been shockingly erratic. Something has to be done to ensure greater stability of tenure. While the Board has never failed to conduct its examination on time, it has had no time to attend to other academic matters.
- (b) In the case of M.P., the Board is performing well despite the size and diversity of the state. M.P. needs to decentralise further. A certain degree of decentralisation already exists but it needs to be pushed even more. From this point of view, U.P. has done reasonably well and so has Rajasthan. Bihar however has not decentralised as decisively as it could have and indeed it should.
- (c) In the chapter on Textbooks we have referred to the importance of textbooks in Hindi-speaking states circulating freely amongst such states. Since each one of them is a Hindi-speaking state, they would do well to pool their professional talent and other resources so as to ensure that the quality of textbooks is about the best in the whole country. This is both feasible and desirable.

### ***Placing of Plus Two Classes***

11.20 Another allied question is the planning of plus two classes. The Kothari Commission had recommended that these plus two classes essentially belonged to the school sector and should be located there. This rearrangement has been carried out in about three-fourths of the country. But some of the states are yet to fall in line with this recommendation. No one disagrees with the merits of the restructured system. But vested interests are coming in the way of implementation. The sooner the concerned State

governments come to terms with the changing situation and sort things out in the way they should be sorted out, the better it would be for the future of secondary education.

### ***The Boards Too Have to Perform***

11.21 It would be a fallacy to assume that everything has to be done by the government, whether Central or State. Those involved in administering the Boards have also a duty to perform. Experience has shown that the Boards do not respond to enquiries even after repeated reminders and this throws a revealing light on their academic and administrative functioning. It is neither lack of resources nor absence of administrative competence nor the unavailability of staff which are entirely responsible for this unwillingness to respond to queries. Most Boards are just not accustomed to functioning as academic and professional bodies. Most of them function in a manner which in one sense is self centred and in another sense isolationist. One could even say that this attitude of isolationism indicates a certain cast of mind. That needs to be combated. Professional functioning should be the ideal for the Boards. But before that ideal can be reached, a number of intermediate steps would have to be taken. Interacting with others in a productive way is only one of the necessary steps.

11.22 Our interaction with the Boards was not exactly satisfying. Several times we got the feeling that we were imposing ourselves on them. It was not a case of failure at the personal level nor lack of courtesy on either side. The plain fact is that most Boards, over the years, particularly those which are still tied to the apron strings of the government, had never been enabled to function autonomously. Autonomy gives dignity, self respect, the desire, as also the ability to deal with others and, in course of time, such organisations become professional in their functioning. One reason therefore why we have stressed autonomous functioning of the Boards is to make sure that they overcome some of these inhibitions and become full participants in the fraternity of secondary education all over the country.

### ***The Outlook for COBSE***

11.23 It is not an accident that COBSE took so long to be born

For almost a decade, it functioned under the tutelage of CBSE. Even when that link was severed, it did not enable COBSE to attain its full stature. How that can be done has been described in the chapter on Linkages. To recall briefly, COBSE has to be made into an active and fully functioning body, indeed a powerhouse of ideas and initiatives. This can happen only if its different units cooperate with it not only readily and through appropriate financial support, but through a sense of commitment to the all India presence of COBSE as the representative body of secondary education. If the Boards continue to be insular in their outlook and not entirely professional, this ideal would be difficult to attain.

# 12

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## **TOWARDS QUALITY: SOME KEY ISSUES**

**O**ne of the terms of reference of this task force is to make recommendations on such issues as have a bearing on the quality of secondary education vis-vis the functioning of the Boards. As far as we are concerned, the focus on quality has been a matter of paramount importance with us. Whatever we have discussed or recommended was always from the point of view of improving the performance of the Boards in terms of academic quality and efficiency. As such, it should not have been necessary for us to write a separate chapter on this issue. Nonetheless, we have decided to draw attention to some key issues.

12.02 This note will enable us to recapitulate some of the more crucial recommendations made and to underline the urgency and importance of planned and systematic implementation. In this connection, we wish to draw particular attention to the fact that at present several factors are impeding the School Education Boards from reaching their full stature. Amongst the causes that are responsible for this situation, the following factors may be specifically identified.

- (a) The failure of the Boards to emerge as independent and autonomous units of operation is largely because, in many states, they continue to be limbs of the government rather than independent statutory bodies.
- (b) As a corollary to the foregoing, there is hardly any question of their being financially independent. Whatever be their income, it goes into the state exchequer and whatever be their expenditure is also drawn from that source. In other words, State Boards are as much a part of the government set up as any other department of the government.

- (c) In such a situation, the dominating role played by the Director of Education is not only inevitable but forms an extension of the general pattern of state administration. This carry over of the dominance of the DPI goes back to the nineteenth century when the number of schools was small and the Department of Education looked after schools as well as colleges. In the case of government-run schools, it looked after all aspects. In the case of privately-run schools, there were two patterns. Some of them were self financing and self managing. The rest of them however managed their own affairs but received funds from the government in the form of grant-in-aid. Almost the same formula applied to colleges.
- (d) With the growth in numbers, primarily after 1947, the pattern of governance had to be modified somewhat and in about two-thirds of the states, separate Directors were appointed for primary, secondary and higher education sectors. Technical education had been hived off earlier. Separate directorates came to be established in certain states for medical and agricultural education also. These various steps were calculated to take care of the increasing administrative burden.
- (e) A large number of states, except for South India, switched over to the new pattern of statutorily-created School Boards. They were vested with considerable powers and allowed to function sometimes autonomously and sometimes under the open or not-so-open tutelage of the government. Of the northern states, U.P., which has the second oldest School Board in the country, has stubbornly stuck to the model of managing everything through the Department of Education. The north-eastern states have their own peculiar problems. They developed a mode of functioning where some kind of distinction, however, was drawn between the working of the Department and the working of the Boards. The distinction was more notional than real.
- (f) Though numbers have been increasing rapidly (some details based on the latest all India Survey conducted by the NCERT are provided in the first chapter), the administrative arrangements in some other states which are still managed and controlled by the government have not been rationalised.

The quality of management is bound to suffer in such a situation.

12.03 All this has led to a situation where the management of School Education Boards has to be revamped urgently. Of the patterns that are available, it appears to us that no pattern other than the statutorily established Boards would prove to be practical and in tune with the nature of demands made upon them. Amongst the merits of this system are increased flexibility, autonomy, diversity of operations, more emphasis on research, inservice training, etc., and, above all, better accountability. No other pattern of organisation can promise as much.

12.04 There can be no disagreement with the proposition that the quality of management is certainly an important factor but it is by no means the most decisive. The two most decisive factors are the richness and range of the curriculum prescribed and revised from time to time and the professional competence of those engaged in teaching. Other factors such as availability of teaching space, library and laboratory facilities and such other supporting amenities are a crucial input. But, the most important aspects are the range and depth of the curriculum and the competence of teachers.

12.05 It is not within our purview to discuss the curriculum of secondary education. That is a job which NCERT has to undertake in consultation with the Boards and other concerned groups such as industry, commerce, agriculture, science and technology including information technology. According to the information available, the curriculum at the secondary level was last revised over a decade ago, in 1987 to be precise. Perhaps another round of revision is called for and is likely to be initiated shortly. As and when it is done, we would expect that certain aspects of curriculum making which have not received as much attention as they deserve will now be given due attention.

12.06 For instance, it is important to shift the focus from the history of a particular subject to its relevance and application to real life situations. Then there is the need to bring in an element of technology in addition to the academic study of science subjects. While the latter provide intellectual content of a specified kind, the former can be linked with those practical skills

which are some of the missing ingredients in secondary education today. Should even some of these ingredients (and a few others not even enumerated here) of curriculum making get introduced with a certain amount of salience, teaching can become much more meaningful than it is today. No less important, it will, in course of time, develop into self-learning. Furthermore, learning by rote will give way to understanding of basic concepts as well as information retrieval and several other significant shifts of focus. These are of vital importance and would hopefully be given the attention due to them.

12.07 It is the quality and intensity of professional training at the time of induction into the profession and the inservice training of teachers once they have started doing their job which have been grievously and consistently neglected over the decades. If the quality of secondary education is to be improved, and this is the basic thrust of this report, the single most important step which needs to be taken is planned and systematic retraining of teachers.

12.08 Training colleges and University departments of education need to be revamped primarily through the good offices of NCTE as stated earlier. The major part of the responsibility for inservice training should be taken over by the School Education Boards. In the chapter on Financing, we had suggested that 50 per cent of the financial responsibility should be shouldered by the State Boards and the remaining 50 per cent support should come from the State governments. This is a broad formula and the proportions can be varied in accordance with the capacity of each Board and its financial capability. Even the Centre ought to help and a specific mention of such a possibility has been made. The actual job of training would have to be done by the Boards themselves with the assistance and cooperation of SCERTs, training colleges, University departments of education and other such institutions.

12.09 We may go as far so to say that once the details are worked out and agreed upon between the Boards and the State governments, something akin to a five-year plan should be launched. Every single teacher should be made to undergo

retraining. How it is to be done has also been discussed at some length earlier. The country does not have enough resources to work according to the traditional modes of training. Non-traditional modes like the open learning system would have to be adopted. It is only then that there would be a reasonable likelihood of the target being met.

12.10 Even if the first five year-plan of retraining is fulfilled, which is a difficult goal, it does not follow that there will be no subsequent rounds of further training. Training has to be an ongoing process. The Inservice Training division will be the nodal agency for it. It will take steps to fortify itself with both intellectual and other resources as suggested already. At the same time, the division will necessarily have to make use of the nontraditional mode of training. This is a colossal task, more particularly when it is realised that the number of teachers at the secondary level alone is more than a million. As the figures quoted in the first chapter show, the rate of growth of teachers at the higher secondary level from 1986 to 1993 was over 40 per cent. This is only an indication of the size of the problem.

12.11 While a good deal has been said on this subject, we are convinced that the most crucial job that the Research divisions in various School Boards will have to undertake will be to analyse pupil performance both quantitatively and qualitatively. The work in this sphere is so inadequate and so lacking in professionalism that one of the first things that this division, should do is to make this a regular, annual feature of its normal work. In our opinion, undertaking this form of achievement analysis would help the schools enormously in improving their work and performance.

12.12 It must be however added that there are not many trained people available throughout the country in this area of work. We recommend that COBSE should immediately undertake a series of workshops in different parts of the country and train people in this area. This training cannot be completed in a week or two weeks. We would therefore suggest that it should be split into three levels—Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced. Preliminary training should be imparted for two to four weeks to about 100 people each in different parts of the country in the



first round. Those who show some promise may be given further training at the Intermediate level for another seven to eight weeks. Out of these will get identified another 10-15 people per region who should then be administered advanced training. This set of individuals should become the trainers of trainers. The appropriate thing for COBSE, NCERT, NCTE and agencies such as NIEPA and some of the University departments of education would be to put their heads together, pool their intellectual resources and work out a plan of action which may be put into effect within a year.

12.13 During the last few years, the Department of Education has taken considerable pains to determine and establish the levels of learning at various stages with the help of competent professionals in the field. This is in accordance with one of the directions of the 1992 revision of the Policy. While something was done in regard to the primary level earlier, a committee is currently working to determine levels of learning at the upper-primary level. This exercise will provide some kind of a benchmark in terms of which what is being achieved can be measured and categorised.

12.14 In our opinion, it is time for this exercise to be extended to the secondary levels of learning as well. For one thing, it will complete the pedagogic process initiated several years ago. For another, it will ensure that those who discontinue after 10 years of schooling will be judged in terms of the criteria laid down by a body of professionals. In the case of those who complete their plus two stage of schooling, there would be two categories. Those intending to join college will be judged in terms of the criteria laid down by the university, but those intending not to pursue their study any further will be judged in terms of the criteria laid down by the Department of Education. It is to be hoped that these criteria would in course of time get accepted by the School Boards. That this exercise, when completed and implemented, would most emphatically contribute towards better quality is something so obvious that it does not have to be elaborated.

12.15 It may be reiterated here that this chapter does not provide a summary of the Report. What it does is to call attention to certain areas that need to be attended to on a priority basis.

Indeed, were we asked to prioritise the jobs that have to be done by the remodeled Boards, we would put it as under:

- (a) Restructuring the Boards along the lines indicated in the Report. This would also include setting up new divisions and embarking upon various new activities such as sports and cultural competitions.
- (b) Of all the jobs that require to be done by the Boards in the next few years, perhaps the most urgent is Inservice Training. Allied to it are research and analysis of (i) pupil achievement, (ii) mode and mechanics of question paper setting, (iii) quality of answers given by students and such other issues.
- (c) In brief what we are advocating are two things: (i) considerable emphasis on academic performance of students and (ii) greater professionalism on the part of teachers. The two objectives are interlinked. Also implied in this proposal are attention to issues such as the number of working days for schools and the intensity of work done in that duration of time.
- (d) If the Boards have to move into the new area of quality performance, they have to stress the need for Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (C&CE) in an increasing number of schools. This issue has been discussed at some length already. What needs to be re-emphasised now is that if the quality is to be ensured, C&CE is an indispensable input.
- (e) Modernisation of management is so central to the successful working of School Education Boards that it should not be necessary to refer to it again.
- (f) That there ought not to be any distinction between the procedure of recognition as applicable to privately-run schools and government-run is self evident. We have dwelt on it more than once. Here we wish to underline its importance once again at the level of enforcement.
- (g) In the external system of examinations, which is unavoidable in the existing situation, it is imperative that costs be brought down, efficiency improved and both reliability and credibility

made the cornerstone of the functioning of the Boards. Hence, whatever be the level of achievement at a given point of time, there is always room for improvement.

12.16 It is not intended to elaborate the issue of quality any further except to repeat that if secondary education is to become terminal in character and replace college education to a substantial extent, the focus would unwaveringly have to be on high levels of performance and concern with quality.

# 13

## IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

**W**hile primary education was neglected for a long time, it is to some extent now being given the requisite attention. Higher and professional education have always been at centre stage since the last century. It is secondary education which has not received its due all these year. (1.05)

2. Largely for historical reasons, School Education Boards have looked upon themselves mainly as examining bodies and little more. Consequently, the Boards have never functioned as organisations which were responsible for secondary education in the complete sense of the word. (1.13)

3. In terms of allocation of funds too, secondary education has never been in focus.(1.17)

4. More than one-third of the students that pass out from higher secondary schools join college. The secondary level of education is not looked upon as terminal in character. Therefore the rush to join colleges continues unabated. (1.22)

5. This situation has to change both in the interests of secondary education and higher education. The experience of other countries, particularly in East Asia as also other not so developed countries, shows clearly that without a strong and self reliant system of secondary education, no country can progress in this scientific and technological age. (1.24)

6. If this objective is to be achieved, it is a matter of supreme importance that School Education Boards are reorganised, strengthened, diversified in their approach and functioning and made responsible for the entire spectrum of education from the primary to the higher secondary stage. In other words, from being mere examining bodies which they have been for more than half

a century, they have now to become academic bodies which determine and shape the direction and quality of education at the school level. (1.39)

## **Chapter 2: Boards: Status and Powers**

7. Schools should be seen as part of an independent system of education which responds to the needs of the society. It is therefore important to ensure that the school system becomes autonomous in character and learns to operate on its own. (2.04)

8. Furthermore, there has to be an appropriate weaning of the schools from the dominance of the university system as well as the Departments of Education. It is only when this comes to pass that the school system may be said to have come into its own. (2.04)

9. To ensure autonomy of the school system, the first requirement is that it should have an autonomous organisational structure. School Education Boards exist in almost all states but they are not always statutory in character nor fully autonomous in their functioning. Powers vested in the Boards need to be defined precisely as well as comprehensively so that they can function freely within the parameters laid down for them. Their functions should be diversified and expanded as well as redefined. (2.08)

10. The Boards should have a statutory status. This in a sense is a precondition for ensuring autonomy to the Boards. (2.09)

11. The Union Government should examine (under the powers that accrue to it today in terms of the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution) the possibility of making a constitutional provision for establishing Boards with statutory status on a mandatory basis as in the case of the universities. (2.10)

12. Every Act setting up a School Education Board must provide for a clear definition of the powers of the Chairman, the authorities of the Board and everything else connected with their functioning. (2.14)

13. The tenure of a Chairman's appointment should be clearly specified. Also his emoluments and entitlements of various kinds should be laid down precisely. (2.15)

14. There is a need to ensure that School Boards are insulated against political interference. To achieve this objective, it is important to build certain checks and balances into the system of the appointment of the chief executive which protect it against political interference. (2.17&2.18)

15. It should be specified in the rules in respect of which matters the appointing authority (i.e. the Union government or the State government) can give directions to the Boards and in what respects the Boards are autonomous in their functioning. (2.19)

16. The Finance Committee of each Board should be constituted with two representatives of the government (preferably the Education Secretary and the Finance Secretary) on it, so that all expenditure is incurred in line with the general approach adopted by State/Central governments and followed in related organisations. Such representatives will not however have the right to veto any decision being taken by the Board. (2.21)

17. (a) The Chairman of the Board must be a fulltime and salaried person who is appointed for a fixed and non-renewable tenure of five years. (b) He should not be a political appointee. (c) He may be suspended or removed only through due process of law. (2.24)

18. If, at any stage, the government has to intervene, it should do so only in matters of high policy which must be conveyed to the Chairman of the Board in a formal manner through a written communication. (2.24)

19. The Chairman is expected to be an eminent person. He may be eminent in the field of education or administration. (2.24)

20. In order to select the Chairman, a statutory selection committee consisting of a nominee of the Board, the Chief Justice of the state or his nominee, the Chief Secretary of the State or

the Union Education Secretary, as applicable, and the current Chairman of COBSE should be set up. (2.24)

21. The Chairman of the Board should have the same protection against harassment or termination of his tenure as any Vice-Chancellor has. In case any enquiry has to be instituted against him, it should be presided over by a judge of a High Court and most emphatically not an official of the Central or State government. In terms of status, emoluments and other facilities, the Chairman of the Board should be treated as equivalent to any Vice Chancellor in the state. (2.24)

22. Each state should have only one School Board. The Board of School Education should deal with school education from the primary to the higher secondary level in each state. (2.26)

23. Depending on the size of the state, the Board's functioning can be decentralised through the establishment of regional offices. These offices may be mainly given the job of issuing roll numbers, evaluating answer scripts, and declaration of results. (2.32)

24. It is imperative to strengthen both the office of the DPI and the office of the Chairman of School Education Board. Apart from choosing the right individuals for these two jobs, it is equally important that the jobs are delinked from each other. This will enable both of them to concentrate upon their respective mandates and perform better than they do at present. (2.34)

### **Chapter 3: Restructuring the Boards**

25. Secondary education should be treated as terminal in character and should be autonomous in outlook and functioning. An unerring indicator that this stage has been reached will be when secondary education becomes vocational; that is to say that it equips students for entry into the world of work also. (3.06)

26. The mission of School Education Boards should be to ensure that the right kind of secondary education is imparted and, hence, there is a need to reconceptualise the purpose and

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mandate of these Boards. Since educational activity is multi-dimensional, the activities of the Boards also ought to be multi-dimensional. (3.08)

27. Everything connected with school education—students, teachers, curriculum, academic issues, management, health, sports and cultural activities—should fall within the purview of the Boards. (3.11)

28. The Board in each state should be the central agency for carrying out the educational agenda of the community. (3.12)

29. In order to fulfil their mission, the Boards must remodel themselves in such a way that they have different divisions looking after the relevant sectors of activity. Its work may be divided as under: (3.13)

Academic Orbit	Examinations	Administration
Academic Division	Examination Division	Administration-cum-Finance Division
Inservice Training Division	Research Division	Recognition Division
Research Division	Recognition Division	Grievances
Redressal Cell		
Recognition Division	Computer and Information Unit	Legal Cell
Vocational Education Division	Grievances Redressal Cell	
Sports & Co-curricular activities Division		
Library & Documentation Cell		
Computer & Information Unit		

30. The Academic Division must be headed by a competent professional, preferably in the rank of a University professor with a deep understanding of various problems and issues in curriculum



making, teaching-learning methodology, contemporary advances in cognitive learning and all such related matters. (3.15)

31. In the Academic committee, while some people with University background may be included, they should not be allowed to dominate decision making at the school level. (3.16)

32. There is an acute dearth of competent persons in the field of secondary education. To overcome this deficiency, two steps will have to be taken. One is to attract more talent into secondary school teaching and the other is to give them sustained and well organised opportunities for professional growth. (3.18)

33. A separate division of Inservice Training has been suggested in order to facilitate upgradation of the teaching skills of teachers. The Inservice division would naturally interact closely with the Academic and Research divisions. (3.22)

34. The Boards however would be well advised to interact with SCERTs and other such mechanisms for ensuring better inservice training of teachers. (3.26)

35. A strong and well staffed Academic division would be a source of strength to the Inservice Training division. The professional training imparted by this division will, in the long run, help to strengthen the academic functioning of the Boards. (3.29)

36. In order to ensure that the Boards maintain high standards of professional efficiency, they should follow the system of promotion through merit and not be guided merely by seniority. This is particularly applicable to the Academic division. (3.31)

37. The Research division of the Board needs to be properly staffed. In order to achieve this objective, it has to be ensured that people well-versed in research and also conversant with the realities of the field situation are located and appointed to this division. (3.36)

38. The Research division may undertake analysis of examination data and pupil's performance with a view to help improve the level of achievement of the students as well as the proficiency of teachers. (3.37)

39. It should be feasible for the Research division to sponsor some research work, farm out projects to others and, in general, create an atmosphere of enquiry and serious investigation. (3.38)

40. Although many Boards have computerised their work, yet there is a need to train the staff further in the use of computers not merely for the processing of examination-related work but also for improving the management of the Boards. It is therefore suggested that there should be a full fledged Computer & Information Unit in each Board. This will enable the staff in position to perform better than they are doing at present. (3.41)

#### **Chapter 4: The Conduct of Examinations**

41. Every student must be given what may be called a School Registration Number. The issuing of roll numbers at the time of the examination would then become a derivative function. (4.04)

42. Normally, the practice followed in most Boards is to issue roll numbers from the headquarters. This job can be delegated to schools. However, there will be apprehensions against such a proposal. If the School Boards work out a fool-proof system coupled with appropriate punishment meted out to the offending schools, it would become possible to enforce the new system within a few years. (4.05)

43. Since imposition of fines is being suggested for acts of omission and commission by the schools, it is suggested that fines imposed should be the same whether it is a government school or a private school. (4.05)

44. Five per cent (though more to start with) of the entries submitted by every school in regard to roll numbers etc. should continue to be scrutinised at random in the office of the Board. Both at the school level and the Board level, the individuals who make or scrutinise entries must sign. This will place the onus of responsibility on one person. (4.05)

45. The NPE 1986 (revised in 1992) has talked in terms of a National Evaluation Organisation. It is time that steps are taken

to establish such a body. (4.15)

46. Integrity in the conduct of examinations is non-negotiable. To a great extent, this would depend upon the way the Chairman uses his powers and authority. The Chairman has the power to cancel any examination and this cannot be questioned by anyone. In case of a situation which warrants such a decision, this power should be invoked consistently and more decisively than has been done in most cases. (4.16)

47. Several steps have been taken by certain Boards which have had a positive outcome. One such step had been to give different question papers to different students. Some questions have been raised in regard to the scientific validity of this practice. This systems needs to be further analysed therefore and appropriate guidelines worked out. COBSE must pay an active role in this exercise. (4.16)

48. To deal with unfair means, more than one committee should be set up. These multiple committees can work simultaneously so that decisions are taken within a matter of days as has been done in a number of Boards. (4.16)

49. Cheating in examinations is an issue which must receive detailed attention every year after each examination season. The situation must be reviewed and ways found to combat the malady. COBSE should undertake to annually convene an all-India meeting (for two or three days) of Controllers of Examinations to exchange experiences and evolve a somewhat unified approach. (4.16)

50. The location of examination centres has a direct bearing on ensuring integrity in the conduct of examinations. The obvious thing to do is to lay down rules in advance for locating examination centres. Once laid down, not even the Chairman should have the authority to make any exception. (4.17)

51. Barring occasional leakages, the manner in which question papers are set, printed and distributed is fairly well run. Today, different procedures are followed. Clearly, COBSE needs to coordinate the thinking of the various Boards so that these procedures can be improved upon further. (4.21)

52. To avoid the need for re-evaluation and to ensure greater transparency in the examinations, the Boards should improve the internal mechanisms of management and control, the system of the marking of scripts and other related issues that are connected with the working of the Boards. The procedures adopted should be made known to all concerned. (4.27)

53. A manual in respect of examination work needs to be prepared under the auspices of COBSE. This manual can be reviewed annually by the meeting of the Controllers of Examinations as suggested earlier. (4.28)

54. In the drafting and finalisation of this manual, transparency of operations must be emphasised. At this stage, it needs to be affirmed that procedures cannot be treated as confidential. All confidentiality should relate to the identity of the individuals and not the procedures. Another thing that needs to be ensured is that procedures are followed implicitly and honestly. (4.29)

55. After each examination season, an internal review must be carried out by the Controller of Examinations and a report submitted to that effect to the Chairman of the Board. (4.30)

56. Every three years, there should be a mandatory review of the working of the Examination branch by a committee appointed by the Board for this purpose. (4.31)

57. Both efficiency and transparency used to be looked upon as the cornerstone of how the work of the Examination division is to be organised. The Chairman of the Board in his capacity as the chief executive must ensure that whatever is laid down is fully and faithfully implemented. This responsibility of the Chairman is non-transferable in character. (4.33)

58. It is imperative to impart systematic and continuous training to those assigned to responsible and sensitive jobs in relation to examination work. (4.33)

59. A system of rewards and punishments has to be an integral part of the Examination division as distinct from other divisions. (4.33)

60. It would be a good idea to grade the level of integrity of the conduct of examinations of different Boards every year. (4.36)

61. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (C&CE) is an important reform which needs to be introduced to improve the quality of school education. While scholastic achievement is important, non-scholastic achievements are equally important and need to be identified as assessed so as to get a total picture of the student's ability and personality. (4.39)

62. To introduce C&CE, it is important to convince both parents and teachers of its advantages. (4.39)

63. No agency other than the Boards can promote C&CE and the Boards have to play a pioneering role in this regard. Boards can also take up this matter with training colleges and departments of education in different universities so that it is included in the preservice training of the teachers. (4.40)

64. The Boards would be well advised to survey how every single school goes about the job of introducing C&CE. It must guide them and deal with any resistance to its introduction. (4.41)

65. One of the important ways of making C&CE an integral part of schools would be to compare the achievements of students under this scheme and the external examination conducted by the Board. We suggest that this be done on a systematic basis. On the basis of information provided by the schools, the Boards should issue a certificate of C&CE under its seal to formalise this system. (4.42)

66. COBSE which represents the Boards in their corporate totality must play a more vigorous role in regard to coordination amongst them as far as examinations are concerned. Perhaps, no other item in the working of the Boards requires as much coordination as examinations do. (4.43)

### **Chapter 8: Other Areas of Activity**

67. In regard to recognition, the conditions laid down by School Boards must be the same for privately-run schools as well as government-run schools. There is no distinction whatsoever between them nor should there be any bias in favour of government-run schools. COBSE should convene a workshop

where all these different issues are discussed in detail and a common approach evolved. (5.08 & 5.09)

68. Every single school must be required to return a detailed proforma worked out in advance and embodying the relevant rules and regulations. It must also respond to objections, if any, sent to them by the Boards within a couple of weeks. In case any deficiency comes to the notice of the Board, the concerned schools must be informed about it. While doing so, a deadline for repairing the deficiency should be indicated. (5.10)

69. Irrespective of their managements, fines should be levied automatically for different kinds and types of lapses committed by the schools. (5.10)

70. Each Board should have a Vocational Education division. It should be well staffed and it should become the starting point of the new initiative and the controlling authority in this comparatively new area of activity. (5.12)

71. Steps have to be taken under the auspices of COBSE to draw up (a) a manual in respect of administrative rules and procedures and (b) another in respect of financial rules and procedures. (5.17)

72. COBSE in collaboration with the Association of Indian Universities should work out a set of rules parallel to those that obtain in the government. Rules in universities and Boards have to be a little more flexible than those in the government. (5.20)

73. It is high time School Boards took over other important functions such as sports and co-curricular activities. These should be organised in a professional manner. (5.22)

74. In the wake of the above proposal, the School Games Federation of the Ministry of HRD would have to be reorganised and revamped. (5.23)

75. Coordination with the National Institute of Sports and the state level bodies dealing with sports would also have to be ensured, particularly for students at the secondary level. (5.24)

76. A Library and Documentation Cell is essential for the strengthening of the Academic and Research divisions. This will also add to the tempo of inservice training. We suggest that multiple copies of certain books may be provided in the library and it will be equally necessary to provide audio-visual materials. It is through this activity that the Boards would come to acquire an academic flavour in respect of their functioning. (5.26)

77. Computer literacy should be given further impetus, at least for some time, by giving some extra allowance to those who acquire it. (5.30)

78. It would be advisable to set up a Legal Cell in each Board. COBSE should take the initiative to convene a meeting of the various Boards to discuss their increasing involvement in legal cases. (5.35)

79. It is necessary to establish a Grievance Redressal Cell both under Administration and Examinations divisions. (5.36)

80. If re-evaluation is to be discontinued wherever it exists, it imposes a further, inescapable obligation upon the Boards to have an internal mechanism for redressal of student grievances. This mechanism should be such that every grievance is attended to promptly as well as adequately. (5.49)

81. The issue of the redressal of staff grievances needs to be attended to if the performance of School Boards is to improve. (5.41)

82. The rules of appointment, promotion and staff management should be laid down precisely by the Boards so that there is neither corruption nor mismanagement. (5.44)

### **Chapter 6: The Working of the Boards**

83. It is advisable to have a Vice-Chairman and even more advisable to have two Vice-Chairmen in the case of the larger Boards. One may look after the academic functioning of the Board and the other could be in charge of examinations and/or other administrative functions. (6.03)

84. The Secretary of the Board who will be a responsible functionary should be selected by the Executive Committee of the

Board with the Chairman presiding over the meeting of the selection committee. Such a person should have a certain amount of administrative experience. The status of the Secretary should correspond to that of the Registrar of a University. (6.03)

85. The successful functioning of the Boards will depend upon whether they are manned by the right kind of persons on their various committees. It is desirable to have a healthy balance among those nominated or elected and those co-opted. We suggest election of one-fourth of the members, nomination of one-fourth, co-option of one-fourth by those who belong to the first two categories and co-option of the remaining one-fourth by all those already in position. Under no circumstances should the number of persons in the general house exceed 100. Normally, a smaller number would do. (6.11)

86. Teachers who have spent a whole time in the cause of education must be involved in substantial numbers in these committees. One way to identify and nurture talent among teachers is to involve them in policy-making to a much greater extent than is happening today. One precondition for the growth of professionalism is to vest teachers with the powers to take decisions. School Education Boards are the appropriate training ground for this purpose. (6.11)

87. While the ultimate authority of the Board be vested in the Chairman, he cannot be allowed to become autocratic. The various bodies of the Boards should provide the necessary checks and balances. However, they should not be allowed to become so powerful as to thwart his functioning. (6.13)

88. In emergencies, the Chairman of the Board has to have authority to take decisions, if the occasion so demands. Once this power has been used, it should be incumbent upon him to report the same to the body which in the normal course of things would have taken a decision in that regard and secure its approval. (6.15)

89. Rules of business regarding incurring of expenditure should be both precise and flexible. But there may be situations when a



decision has to be made on an emergency basis. If such a situation arises, it is for the Chairman to justify the use of his powers. (6.15)

90. The functioning of a Board may be regulated with the help of the following committees. (i) Executive Committee, (ii) Finance Committee, (iii) Planning Committee, (iv) Academic Committee, (v) Other Committees. (6.16)

91. The Executive Committee should have about 15 persons consisting of the Education Secretary/DPI, one or two Principals, other nominees representing interests such as universities, professional education, industry, commerce, agriculture etc., a couple of heads of various divisions by rotation, one or two Vice-Chairmen and a few other individuals. This committee should exercise all executive powers including those of policy making. (7.16)

92. While enjoying a separate statutory status, the Finance Committee should function in close coordination with the Executive Committee and must invariably have the Finance Secretary or his nominee represented on it. (6.16)

93. The Academic committee should deal with all matters concerning academic functions of the Board. As is customary, there will be separate committees for different subjects. It will also deal with equivalence, recognition of schools and such other matters. (6.16)

94. Depending upon the nature of the problem and its complexity, a Board may decide to set up any other committee/committees. In certain cases, these can also be advisory in character. (6.16)

95. It needs to be emphasised that the working of the Boards should be so oriented that while executive decisions are sometimes taken and immediately implemented by the Chairman, policy decisions are made by these committees. (6.16)

96. As regards academic matters, the government does not have that type of expertise which will entitle it to issue directives. It is mainly the NCERT which will continue to be the source and

inspiration of new ideas and new initiatives. (6.17)

97. The whole process of interaction between State governments and the Boards should get defined in a legal manner leaving no room for controversy or ambiguity. (6.23)

98. The idea of autonomous schools has so far not taken root. This is something which needs to be encouraged in our country. We would suggest that suitable provisions in respect of autonomous schools must be made in the Act of each Board. (6.24)

99. School complexes was an innovative idea suggested by the Kothari Commission. A number of schools in close neighbourhood can decide to interact in such a way that they become a source of strength to one another. The experiment is worth undertaking and will produce positive results. (6.26)

100. Universities should be persuaded, largely through the agency of IGNOU and other open universities, to draw up a plan for the reorientation of those working in the teacher training colleges so that they can, in turn, have an impact on the training of teachers in the schools. (6.31)

101. The Boards should draw up a plan for the reorientation of those working in schools. It should be the responsibility of the NCTE to involve the UGC also in this job. There is a need to inject and sustain enthusiasm for such a massive programme of retraining. This can be done if there is a close linkage between NCTE and various School Boards. Without such a linkage, the momentum will neither get built up nor be maintained. (6.31)

102. School Boards in association with NCTE should prepare both a five-year plan and a ten-year plan. In the former, the traditional activities should be strengthened and streamlined. Then there would be some new divisions and cells to be established. By the time that Plan is about to come to a close, a beginning would have been made to establish the three innovative divisions (Academic, Inservice and Research). (6.32)

### **Chapter 7: Linkages**

103. If the School Boards are to be reorganised, the all India

body, i.e. COBSE, which represents them must also be reorganised. (7.11)

104. COBSE must have a permanent office in Delhi or its neighbourhood and must be headed by a wholetime individual who has either been the Chairman of a School Board or has the calibre to be one. (7.12)

105. The organisation of work in COBSE must be arranged into divisions which more or less correspond to the various divisions in different Boards. This will involve the appointment of a minimum of three or four professionals at the headquarters in addition to the chief executive. (7.13)

106. The bulk of the expenditure on COBSE must be met by the Boards. But, in the beginning, about one-fourth should be met by the Department of Education. Gradually it can be brought down to about 10 per cent of the maintenance expenditure. (7.14)

107. COBSE, a voluntary association of School Boards, needs to be strengthened and made much more effective than it has been since it was established. No one other than the Boards can be responsible for its establishment, upkeep and running expenditure. (7.15)

108. The Department of Education has a stake in the healthy functioning of COBSE. Towards this end therefore, it should play a helpful role in keeping it afloat and helping it to grow. (7.15)

109. While COBSE has some kind of a constitution already in force, it would be necessary to amend it particularly when its functions are proposed to be enlarged, diversified and professionalised. (7.16)

110. In this regard, several crucial tasks have been assigned to COBSE. Since each one of them has to be done on an urgent basis, it follows that convening all India meetings of Controllers of Examinations and other similar functionaries should not be unduly delayed because certain related decisions are yet to be taken. (7.18)

111. NCERT has carved out a distinctive place for itself. It is a

professional body whose basic focus is on providing guidance and support in respect of various aspects of secondary and elementary education. It has organised a number of programmes to improve the quality of external examinations. It is therefore necessary to have more intensive and sustained interaction between NCERT and COBSE, particularly for more systematic and sustained training of functionaries of the Boards in the area of examination reforms. (7.19)

112. The marking of scripts needs to be improved in terms of both validity and reliability. While NCERT can guide and help, the actual implementation of the job would have to be left to each Board. (7.24)

113. Once answer books have been analysed, it is possible to judge what kind of instruction was imparted in the classroom. In order to do this job effectively, a pool of well trained professionals would be required. Since there are a number of subjects, it would require a committed band of researchers to undertake this exercise each year. NCERT and COBSE should join together to evolve a common, if not a unified, approach to the future range of such activities. (7.25 and 7.26)

114. Since the Boards have to interact with one another, the issue of comparability does arise and their relative standards of performance have to be appropriately assessed. In other words, the issue of equivalence gets put on the agenda. While COBSE is the right agency for doing this job, a certain degree of help from NCERT on the professional plane would be useful as well as welcome. (7.27)

115. In certain areas of activity, there would have to be closer collaboration between NCERT and COBSE than exists today. Such collaboration is taking place even now. What needs to be ensured is that this collaboration is made more frequent, more intensive and more systematic. (7.28)

116. Once School Education Boards are reorganised, most senior officials would require infusion of new ideas and training every two to three years. For undertaking this responsibility, NIEPA is admirably equipped. A time bound scheme of retraining the staff of the Boards at the senior level by NIEPA may be worked out. (7.31)

117. One of the crucial bottlenecks in strengthening the School Boards would be the lack of availability of trained persons who could be asked to handle greater professional responsibilities. Some kind of a plan of action needs to be drawn up by COBSE in association with NIEPA and NCTE. (7.32)

118. The ultimate responsibility of overseeing secondary education is that of the Department of Education at the Centre. Secondary education would languish or flourish to the extent that strong and consistent support is forthcoming from the Bureau of School Education, Department of Education. (7.33)

119. If there is one area of activity in the field of secondary education which requires massive support from the government and the industrial sector, it is vocational education. The Central government can help with funds for engaging new teachers, retraining them and acquiring new equipment whereas industry can help with its expertise. (7.35)

120. It is for the Department of Education to decide about the implementation of this report. Whatever part of this report is accepted by the government, there should be planned follow-up action. (7.36)

121. CAGE should set up a Standing Committee to deal with Secondary Education. At every meeting, this Standing Committee should meet in advance and submit a report to CAGE in regard to the progress being made in respect of implementation. (7.38)

122. As in several other countries, it may be useful to set up a high powered **National Committee on Education**. Such a committee may be nominated by the Prime Minister under his chairmanship for a fixed tenure of three years. Its membership should consist partly of ex-politicians who have some commitment to education, a few professionals in the field of education and some individuals drawn from diverse backgrounds such as industry, commerce, law, agriculture and business management. Its job would be to review the trends of development in respect of the entire spectrum of education in its totality. One of its more important jobs would be to ensure inter-institutional coordination. (7.43)

123. In addition to what has been proposed earlier, there are

three other areas where the Centre needs to pay special attention. These are: (a) a significant role, particularly in respect of funding, in regard to inservice training, (b) establishment and fostering of School Complexes, and (c) strengthening of science education, environmental education and population education. (7.50)

124. In the case of secondary education, while some part of the linkage would be with organised industry, the greater part would be with the unorganised sectors of industry. This sector contributes a substantial share of the national income. However, it is not easy to establish contact with this sector. Therefore, ways and means will have to be found at the local level to establish such contacts. (7.57)

125. As far as linkage with industry is concerned, it will be desirable to involve both the Department of Industry of the state and any group or body of entrepreneurs at that level, provided they are willing to get involved. In such a case, a Memorandum of Understanding would have to be worked out. If there are any technical colleges which can be brought into the network for advice and guidance, it will be helpful. (7.59)

126. The involvement of School Boards should be seen as a move which is essentially logical, economical and realistic for strengthening vocational education in the school curriculum. (7.60)

127. The School Boards will be required to give certificates in vocational subjects. Therefore, they must ensure that the norms are worked out in conjunction with industry and these should conform to the norms laid down by the Bhopal Institute to ensure equivalence of achievement in this area. (7.61)

128. It should also be possible for the School Boards to establish contacts with agricultural universities and their departments of extension services. Such contacts will benefit the community, including the student community. (7.61)

129. Some of the issues that have agitated public consciousness during recent years need to be identified. While drugs have been

a problem for some time, of late, AIDS has also become a public menace. The problem of population control has always been on the agenda but has not received the attention that it ought to have received. This is an issue that also calls for intervention by the Boards. (7.64)

130. It should be possible for schools which show interest in social welfare activities to establish contacts with similar agencies and develop meaningful local programmes. (7.69)

131. It is important that linkages with various social welfare programmes form part of an appropriate framework of educational instruction and inservice training. Unless a change of thinking is brought about both in the minds of teachers and the community at large that teachers are soldiers in the battle against ignorance and superstition and, more positively, are the agents of change and development, the overall picture will continue to be one of unredeemed stagnation. (7.72)

### **Chapter 8: All India Boards**

132. As in respect of other Boards, CBSE should be a body which is not merely concerned with examinations alone but is also concerned with the entire spectrum of educational growth and development of students. (8.09)

133. CBSE is not only an examining body. It should also guide the functioning of the secondary schools, whether they are government-run or privately managed. (8.09)

134. There is a need to strengthen CBSE's mechanism or, if need be, to devise new mechanisms of control and management of schools in different states. CBSE must project itself as an all India Board and should not remain Delhi-oriented. The manner in which CBSE should supervise the academic (and even the administrative) functioning of schools situated all over the country (with no formal or regular contact between them and the Board) is a matter which requires detailed and sustained attention. (8.09)

135. Like all other Boards, CBSE should also be made a statutory body. (8.10)

136. The status of the Chairman, CBSE, does not conform to the all India pattern. This matter needs to be taken up as and when a decision is taken regarding future organisation. In case this is going to take time, the issue of his status may be attended to separately. (8.11)

137. There is a need to evolve a mechanism to ensure that NCERT and CBSE work in close coordination with each other. (8.12)

138. Centrally sponsored/ controlled schools administered by KVS and NVS are attached to CBSE. The relationship between these bodies and CBSE needs to be defined more precisely. The guiding principle should be that with regard to all academic matters, it is CBSE which should make the decisions. (8.13)

139. Certain states such as Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh do not have any Board. It is for consideration whether CBSE has a role to play in respect of such situations. (8.14)

140. Only CBSE should have the right to affiliate foreign schools. This is for the simple reason that CBSE works under the general supervision and guidance of the Centre. At any future date, problems of dealing with other countries may arise. Should that come to pass, a body which is directly under the purview of the Centre would be the appropriate body for the purpose. (8.17)

141. CBSE and all other Boards generally follow the curriculum laid down by NCERT. In our view, the right pattern to adopt would be to ensure that the curriculum and structure as suggested by NCERT is followed by all Boards including CISCE. (8.20)

142. While all Boards, including CISCE, follow the system of external examination, there may be occasions when C&CE may be conducted differently by different Boards, including CISCE. There should be no problem about that as long as the score awarded by the school and the score of the external examination are not added up to form the aggregate score. (8.21)



143. Rules laid down by CISCE to give recognition to schools need to be worked out in greater specificity and detail. (8.22)

144. The National Open School (NOS) does not have an all India set-up to control or supervise the examination work when it is conducted away from Delhi. Why not coordinate with different School Education Boards and depend upon them for assistance required to conduct their examinations effectively? (8.24)

145. There is no reason as to why similar open schools cannot be established in different states. Such schools would have fewer teething problems because the NOS has already solved quite a few of them. NOS can provide guidance, consultancy and its teaching-learning materials and several other inputs which are indispensable for setting up open schools. (8.32)

146. The issue of equivalence of certificates given by NOS with other Boards needs to be discussed further at a meeting with COBSE. Chairmen of other Boards should participate in such a meeting to work out a solution to all these problems, particularly in regard to the courses requiring practical or laboratory work. (8.33)

147. Ultimately, NOS can act as a resource centre for similar Boards in other states. Its experience with different teaching media should pave the way for similar Boards (yet to be established) to learn from it. (8.33)

148. The Department of Education must have a representative on the Finance Committee of CISCE. As in the case of Central universities, no meeting of a selection committee is valid till the Visitor's nominee is present. Some such mandatory provision needs to be introduced in the case of both the key committees of the Council. (8.35)

### **Chapter 9: Textbooks**

149. Textbooks at the school level should ideally be written by school teachers operating at the appropriate levels. Others may be invited to do so generally when school teachers with the required expertise are not available. (9.05)

150. Every textbook prescribed should be tested for its intellectual content and its pedagogic suitability both before and after its prescription. (9.10)

151. All textbooks should be reviewed by experts and these experts should be chosen in consultation with knowledgeable people and their names should be finally approved by the Chairman of the Board. Their opinion in regard to a book should be obtained in writing. (9.10)

152. Once a textbook has been prescribed and circulated, a second round of evaluation after a year should also be undertaken. However, it should be ensured that mainly practising teachers from different institutions are involved in this job. They may be particularly chosen from amongst those who have distinguished themselves by winning national or State awards. (9.10)

153. Remuneration to those selected to undertake the assessment or reassessment of books should be reasonably adequate. The names of the reviewers should be kept confidential to start with. However, when their report is circulated after some time, the identity of the reviewers or assessors should be made public. (9.10)

154. Quite a few of the teachers are talented and capable of writing good books but their talent needs to be identified and projected. It is time to break with the status quo of the almost total disempowerment of teachers by involving them in the writing of textbooks. (9.14)

155. No definite recommendation is made as to how long a book should remain prescribed. At the same time, the decision in this regard should be both transparent and participative. (9.19)

156. Whether a textbook is to be adopted or written afresh and so on, must be decided by a Board of Studies whose recommendations in regard to this matter should be submitted to the Academic division for approval. (9.20)

157. There should be incentives such as awards to the best textbooks in different subjects. Also, the same gifted author(s) may be asked to write for different classes and so on. (9.22)

158. A textbook written in one Indian language may be translated into another Indian language. In that case both the writer and the Board may be paid something by way of royalty or compensation for the right to reprint. (9.23)

159. The membership of the Boards of Studies and the Academic division must be both strengthened and professionalised if these have to improve the resource input for improving the quality of school education. This is particularly necessary for the preparation of textbooks. All this is being suggested to ensure that intensive attention is given to the quality of textbook writing. (9.25)

160. No individual who is connected with School Boards should be permitted to write or be connected with this operation in any manner. (9.27)

161. The editorial skills of the right kind for editing textbooks are in short supply. COBSE must arrange workshops in different parts of the country for identifying and improving this important input into the writing and publication of textbooks. (9.28)

162. In some of the States, textbooks corporations have been established but they do not have the required number of sale outlets in every nook and corner of the state. Therefore a certain degree of involvement of private booksellers becomes unavoidable. (9.31)

163. The Boards should be primarily interested in ensuring the quality of textbook writing; and also the right kind of production. An additional item of considerable importance is that the books prescribed should be affordable. This can be ensured by devising an appropriate pricing formula. When there is bidding for the printing and sale of textbooks by private publishers, this formula should be available to them. Whoever bids successfully does it in terms of that formula. (9.33)

164. The involvement of the private sector is imperative for ensuring commercial efficiency and economy in the printing and sale of textbooks. Among other things, liberalisation demands that in a matter like the circulation and sale of textbooks, the private sector has and ought to have its legitimate role. (9.37)

165. Let there be some kind of a competition between the State-sponsored and privately-published textbooks. Whoever can do the job more effectively and more cheaply should be allowed to succeed. (9.38)

166. Boards in the Hindi-speaking states must develop a mechanism whereby good textbooks of one Hindi-speaking state can be sold in another Hindi-speaking state. This will make the availability of Hindi books cheaper as well as help improve the quality of textbooks. (9.40)

167. In some states, textbooks have an additional useful feature and this practice needs to be emulated by other Boards too. The relevant portion of the syllabus which that textbook covers is reproduced at the end of the book. (9.41)

### **Chapter 10: Financing**

168. Each Board must be financially self-sufficient both to (a) reorganise itself along the lines suggested, and (b) initiate certain new programmes of quality improvement envisaged in the body of the report. (10.09)

169. Norms in respect of expenditure on staff, examination work, recognition of schools, etc., have to be observed. There is a need for COBSE to develop such norms by collecting data from different Boards. (10.09)

170. A three-yearly cycle of a total review of income and expenditure of each Board will be in order. While doing so, it may be advisable to associate one or two knowledgeable and experienced persons with the exercise. (10.09)

171. There are certain items of expenditure where the government must subsidise the Boards. What are those items of expenditure regarding which subsidies are required has to be precisely defined so that there are no unnecessary argument every year and nothing is withheld in order to put pressure on the Board. (10.10)

172. The level of the examination fee must be linked to remuneration payable to paper setters, moderators, examiners, etc. The rates of examination fee will have to be revised

upwards if we want reasonably competent and fault-free performance. (10.12)

173. The human element is so crucial to the efficiency and integrity of examination work that it has to be suitably remunerated. It would be advisable to coordinate the thinking of different Boards in regard to this issue through the agency of COBSE. (10.14)

174. There should be a separate budget of the Examination Branch within the general budget. (10.15)

175. The disadvantaged sections of the population such as scheduled castes/scheduled tribes, girls, etc., should be given the same concessions in respect of the examination fee as is being done for tuition fee. (10.16)

176. One source of income lies in the penalties that are levied in certain cases; delays, for example. The quantum of income from this source may not be large, but it is identifiable. Also it needs to be added that fines, as and when levied, must be based on a certain rational basis. The rate of fines was fixed decades ago and hence needs revision. (10.21)

177. Expenditure on the Recognition division should be worked out separately as in the case of the Examination division and the full cost recovered from the schools. In fact, this item should also generate some surplus. (10.22)

178. The Board should also be able to raise additional revenue by charging a 10 per cent profit on the textbooks. This 10 per cent surplus on the sale of textbooks may create hardship for certain categories of students. Such disadvantaged categories of students may be given some kind of a subsidy towards purchase of books. The job, for obvious reasons, must be delegated to the schools. (10.23)

179. There is a need for the Boards to incur expenditure particularly on the retraining of teachers. A five-year plan needs to be prepared and the State governments, NCTE, NCERT, SCERT, NIEPA should be involved in planning. When it comes to funding this programme, it should be shared between the Board and the States on a 50:50 basis. (10.28)

180. A three yearly review of the budget must be a regular feature of the functioning of each Board followed by an all India meet under the auspices of COBSE. (10.31)

### **Chapter 11: Problems of Implementation**

181. Implementation is primarily a political issue. The states in particular have a crucial role to play. Therefore, it is up to the State governments to take initiative for the reorganisation of School Boards of Education. (11.07)

182. There are two things, however, which the Centre can do in a somewhat planned and meaningful manner. The first is increased funding though this is not so easy to give because of the claims of elementary education which are difficult to resist. The second is policy interventions. Though perhaps difficult to enforce, it is only the Centre which can do so in statutory terms. (11.08)

183. If the alternative strategy of making secondary education terminal in character is put into effect, fewer and fewer people will aspire to join college. (11.10)

184. Secondary education needs to be regulated in a way as to make sure that the youth are neither left rudderless nor pushed towards an anarchic frame of mind. (11.11)

185. One State, one Board should be the policy. A decision in this regard requires to be taken at the political level. (11.16)

186. When the size of the Board is small, it is pointless to assume that the elaborate structure recommended for each single Board can be installed without suitable funding or if it is even necessary to do so. Even if funds of the required magnitude are forthcoming, there would be acute shortage of trained professional manpower. One solution could be that the small States look after the conduct of examinations and everything else is pooled together under the auspices of one Board for the whole region. This is being stated particularly for the states in the North Eastern Zone (11.18)

187. As regards states in the South Zone, they have to take a

decision regarding the statutory status of their respective Boards. It would be advisable for them to fall in line with the pattern recommended for the rest of the country within a couple of years. (11.18)

188. The Kothari Commission had laid down that the plus-two classes essentially belonged to the school sector and should be located there. This re-arrangement has been carried out in three-fourths of the country. But some of the States are yet to fall in line with this recommendation. The sooner the concerned states come to terms with the changing situation and sort things out in the way they should be sorted out, the better it would be for the future of secondary education. (11.19)

189. Professional functioning of the Board should be the ideal to achieve. But before that ideal can be achieved, a number of intermediate steps would have to be taken. Interacting with others in a productive way is only one of the necessary steps. (11.20)

190. COBSE has to be made into an active and fully functioning body, indeed a powerhouse of ideas and initiatives. This can happen only if its different units cooperate with it not only readily and through appropriate financial support, but through a sense of commitment to the all India presence of COBSE as the representative body of secondary education. (11.22)

## **Chapter 12: Towards Quality: Some Key Issues**

191. Curriculum at the secondary level was last reviewed a decade ago. Another round of revision is likely to be initiated shortly. As and when it is done, we would expect that certain aspects of the scheme which have not received as much attention which they deserved would now be given due attention. (12.05)

192. If the quality of secondary education is to be improved, and this is the basic thrust of this Report, the single-most important step which needs to be taken is planned and systematic retraining of teachers. (12.07)

193. The actual job of training would have to be done by the Boards themselves with the assistance and cooperation of NCTE, SCERT, training colleges, university departments of education and other institutions. (12.08)

194. The country does not have enough resources to work according to the traditional modes of retraining. Non-traditional modes like the open learning system will have to be adopted. (12.09)

195. There are not many people who are trained to undertake research and several other professional jobs envisaged by the Task Force. Therefore, COBSE should immediately undertake a series of workshops in different parts of the country and train people particularly in the area of research. The appropriate thing for COBSE, NCERT, NCTE, NIEPA, etc., would be to put their heads together, pool their intellectual resources and work out a plan of action which may be put into effect within a year. (12.12)

196. An exercise in regard to minimum learning levels of achievement at the secondary stage needs to be undertaken urgently. (12.14)



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A

No. F.16-2-93-Sch. 3  
Government of India  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
Department of Education

New Delhi the 18th July 1995

### **ORDER**

**Subject:** Constitution of a Task Force to suggest ways and means to strengthen the role of the Boards of Secondary Education

The National Policy on Education, 1986 as updated in 1992, has resolved to reorganise the Boards of Secondary Education in the country and to vest them with autonomy in order that their ability to improve the quality of Secondary Education is enhanced. In pursuance of this Policy directive, the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 has recommended for setting up of a Task Force to study the present position and status of the Boards of Secondary Education and to draw up a scheme to transform the Boards into effective instruments for bringing out qualitative improvement of Secondary Education.

2. The above mentioned Policy postulate and the POA recommendation have been engaging the attention of the Department for quite some time. It has now been decided to set up a Task Force to suggest ways and means to strengthen the role of various Boards of Secondary Education in the country.

3. The Task Force shall comprise of the following:

- |     |  |                          |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| i)  | Dr. Amrik Singh<br>2/26 Sarvapriya Vihar<br>New Delhi 110017 | Chairman                 |
| ii) | Dr. K.J.S. Chatrath<br>JS (SE) Dept. of Edn.,<br>MHRD        | Member<br>(From 25.4.96) |

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iii)	Prof. B.P. Khandelwal Chairman CBSE	Member
iv)	Prof. J.R. Rathore Chairman, J&K State Board of School Education	Member
v)	Dr. J.S. Sarma Education Secretary Andhra Pradesh	Member
vi)	Shri Sumit Bose Education Secretary Madhya Pradesh	Member
vii)	Dr. Chitaranjan Banerjee President West Bengal Board of Secondary Education	Member
viii)	Dr. P.B. Das President Orissa Board of Secondary Edn.	Member
	Prof. D. Misra President Orissa Board of Secondary Edn.	Member (from 25.4.96)
	Dr. P.C. Mahapatra President Orissa Board of Secondary Edn.	Member (from 14.1.97)
ix)	Smt Nini Meru Secretary Nagaland Board of Secondary Education	Member
	Shri P. Thakur Education Secretary Rajasthan	Member (From 25.4.96)
x)	Shri Abhimanyu Singh Education Secretary Rajasthan	Member

- |       |  |                          |
|-------|--|--------------------------|
| xi)   | <b>Km. Jayanthi</b><br>Education Secretary<br>Tamil Nadu   | Member                   |
|       | <b>Shri L.N. Vijayaraghavan</b><br>Education Secretary<br>Tamil Nadu   | Member<br>(from 25.4.96) |
|       | <b>Shri S.P. Elangovan</b><br>Education Secretary<br>Tamil Nadu  | (from 7.8.96)            |
| xii)  | <b>Shri Francis Fanthome</b><br>Chief Executive & Secretary<br>Council of Indian School<br>Certificate Examination, Delhi. | Member                   |
| xiii) | <b>Shri S.C. Behar</b><br>Chief Secretary<br>Govt. of Madhya Pradesh<br>Sachivalaya<br>Bhopal                              | Member                   |
| xiv)  | <b>Dr. T.N. Dhar</b><br>A-60 Yojana Vihar<br>Delhi 110092  | Member                   |
| xv)   | <b>Smt Indu Pillai</b><br>Principal<br>Mother's International School<br>Aurobindo Marg<br>New Delhi 110016                 | Member                   |
| xvi)  | <b>Prof. Y.P. Agarwal</b><br>Education Department<br>Kurukshetra University  | Member                   |
| xvii) | <b>Dr N.K. Jangira</b><br>Prof. & Head<br>Department of Teacher Education<br>NCERT, New Delhi                              | Member                   |
|       | <b>Prof. A.K. Sharma</b><br>Director, NCERT  | Member<br>(From 25.4.95) |

- xviii) Smt K. Sharadamma Member  
DPI & Chairman  
Karnataka Secondary Education  
Examination Board  
Bangalore
- Shri R.H. Kanade  
DPI & Chairman  
Karnataka Secondary Education  
Examination Board  
Bangalore
- Km. Prema Devi  
DPI & Chairman  
Karnataka Secondary Education  
Examination Board  
Bangalore
- xix) Prof. Kuldeep Mathur  
Director, NIEPA
- xx) Shri D.V. Sharma Member-Secretary  
Secretary  
Council of Boards of School  
Education in India  
Delhi

4. The Terms of Reference of the Task Force will be

- i) To study the relevant provisions of the Acts of the State Governments laying down the composition and functions of the State Boards of School Education and to suggest modifications therein, if considered necessary, for enhancing the administrative and academic ability of the State Boards towards qualitative improvement of the schools and Intermediate/Junior Colleges.
- ii) To suggest structural arrangements necessary in the Board of Secondary Education for fulfilling the objective of the National Policy on Education and to plan for Secondary Education of high quality for the future.
- iii) To study the existing composition, function and powers of the Boards of School Education at national level and to suggest modifications, if considered necessary, to enhance their capacity for qualitative improvement in the schools respectively afflicted to them; and

iv) To make recommendations on any other issues which have a bearing on quality of secondary education vis-a-vis the functions of the Board.

5. The Task Force will devise its own procedure and methodology of work and will submit its report within the period of one year (extended to 18.11.1996 and then to 18.2.1997) from the date of issue of this order.

6. The secretarial assistance and other services to the Task Force will be provided by the National Council of Educational Research and Training.

7. TA/DA to the non-official members of the Task Force will be paid by the NCERT as per the usual rates.

Sd/  
(Anurag Bhatnagar)  
Director

Copy to:

1. Prime Minister's Office
2. Members of the Task Force
3. Education Secretaries of State Government/UT Admn.
4. Director, NCERT and Secretary NCERT
5. Secretary, University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi 110002
6. PS to Minister of Human Resource Development
7. PS to Deputy Minister (E&C) Ministry of Human Resource Development
8. All Divisional Heads of Department of Education
9. Private Secretaries to ES/AS/JS (SE)
10. SO School 1/School 4.

**Boards of Secondary Education:  
Status and Date of Establishment**

State	Board	Year of Establishment	Administrative Set-up
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	i) Andhra Pradesh Board of Secondary Education	1953	Part of the State Department of Education
	ii) Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education	1971	Statutory
Assam	i) Board of Secondary Education, Assam	1962	Statutory
	ii) Assam Higher Secondary Education Council	1984	Statutory
Bihar	i) Bihar School Examination Board	1952	Statutory
	ii) Bihar Intermediate Education Council	1980	Statutory
Goa	Goa Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education	1975	Statutory
Gujarat	Gujarat Secondary Education Board	1960	Statutory
Haryana	Haryana Board of Education	1969	Statutory
H.P.	Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education	1969	Statutory
J&K	J&K State Board of School Education	1965	Statutory

1	2	3	4
Karnataka	i) Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board ii) Karnataka Board of the Pre-University Education	1966  1970	Part of the State Deptt. of Education  Part of the State Deptt. of Pre-University Education
Kerala	Kerala Board of Public Examinations	1949	Part of the State Deptt. of Education
Maharashtra	Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education	1966	Statutory
Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education	1959	Statutory
Manipur	i) Manipur Board of Secondary Education ii) Manipur Council of Higher Secondary Education	1972  1992	Statutory  Statutory
Meghalaya	Meghalaya Board of School Education	1973	Statutory
Mizoram	Mizoram Board of School Education	1976	Statutory
Nagaland	Nagaland Board of School Education	1974	Statutory
Orissa	i) Orissa Board of Secondary Education ii) Orissa Board of Higher Secondary Education	1965  1955	Statutory  Statutory
Punjab	Punjab School Education Board	1969	Statutory
Rajasthan	Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education	1957	Statutory

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1	2	3	4
Tamil Nadu	i) Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Education	1908	Part of the State Deptt. of Education
	ii) Tamil Nadu Board of Higher Secondary Education	1982	Part of the State Deptt. of Education
Tripura	Tripura Board of Secondary Education	1973	Statutory
U.P.	U.P. Board of High School & Intermediate Education	1922	Autonomous Body under the Deptt. of Education
West Bengal	i) West Bengal Board of Secondary Education	1951 (Reconstituted in 1964)	Statutory
	ii) West Bengal Board of Higher Sec. Education	1929 (Reconstituted in 1962)	Statutory
All-India Boards	i) C.B.S.E., New Delhi		Autonomous body under the Government of India
	ii) Council for Indian School Certificate Examination, New Delhi	1958	Registered Society
	iii) National Open School	1989	Autonomous body under the Government of India



**Relative Position of Chairpersons of the Board**

State/UT	Designation	Tenure	Status	Terms & Conditions	Emoluments
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate examination	Chairman	3 years but will continue till the successor enters upon his office	Ex-officio	Govt. appointee	As per terms & conditions of appointment
2. Assam Higher Secondary Education Council	Chairman	—	—	Nominated by the Govt.	As fixed by the Government from time to time
3. Board of Secondary Education Assam	Chairman	Ex-officio (as fixed by the State Government)	Director of Education	Govt. appointee from State Govt. service	As per Government rules
4. Bihar School Education Board	Chairman	3 years may be reappointed	Not yet fixed. Supposed to be the rank of Minister of State	As decided by the Government	As per terms of appointment
5. Board of School Education Harvaha	Chairman	To be specified by the Govt.	Vice-Chancellor	To be appointed by the Govt. on such terms and conditions as it may think fit	To be fixed by the State Govt.
6. Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education	Chairman	To be specified by the Govt.	Vice-Chancellor	To be appointed by the Govt.	Rs. 7600 & other allowances as admissible

1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	H.P. Board of School Education	Chairman	To be specified by the Govt.	Vice-Chancellor	Nominee or appointee of the Government as per conditions specified by Government	Rs. 5,000 fixed+ allowances as admissible
8	Karnataka Secondary Education Commission	Chairman	Ex-officio	Director of Public Instruction	Govt. appointee from State Govt.	As per Govt. pay-scale
9	Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education	—	—	—	—	—
10	Council of Higher Secondary Education Manipur	Chairman	To be specified the State Govt.	Director of Public Instruction	On deputation from Govt. service	Substantive pay in the original scale of pay & deputation allowance as admissible
11	Nagaland Board of School Education	Chairman	3 years (can be extended for 1 year Total period may not be more than 5 years)	Not specified	To be appointed by the Government either on contract basis or on deputation on the terms and conditions as specified by the Govt.	If on deputation substantive pay in the original scale & deputation allowance and other allowances as admissible

1	2	3	4	5	6	
12.	Board of Secondary Education Cuttack, Orissa	President	—	Director of Education	Terms and conditions of appointment as determined by the State Government	As per the terms appointment
13.	Board of Secondary Education Tamil Nadu	Director of Govt. Examinations Chairman	Ex-officio	Director of Education	Govt. appointee from the State Govt. Service	As per Government pay-scale
14.	West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education	President	Period to be specified by the Government but not more than 4 years in the first instance even after extension. Govt. may reappoint after the expiry of the term	Pro-Vice- Chancellor	Govt. appointee	Govt. may decide At present Rs. 7300 fixed and allowances as per Govt. rules
15.	West Bengal Board of Secondary Education	President	—	Pro-Vice- Chancellor	Govt. appointee	Appointed by the government as terms and condi- tions of appoint- ment

1	2	3	4	5	6
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ALL INDIA BOARDS

CBSE	Chairman	5 years		Appointed by the Government of India	Scale Rs. 5900-6900. Appointed by the Govt. as per terms and conditions of appointment
CISCE	Chairman	Biennial renewable appointment		Elected by the General Body of the Board	Scale Rs. 5900-6900. Appointed by Governing Body
NOS	Chairman				Scale Rs. 5900-6900. Appointed by the Govt. as per terms and conditions of appointment

**Status of Implementation of Examination  
Reforms at the School Level**

Sl.No.	Steps for Examination Reform	Boards/States which have introduced reform
1	Development of policy statement (designs) for each question paper	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, CISCE, J&K, Haryana, Tripura, Karnataka, Goa, U.P., West Bengal.
2.	Appointment of paper setters from among those trained in evaluation	Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, CISCE, J&K, M.P., Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Goa, U.P., West Bengal.
3.	Appointment of panels of paper	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, CISCE, Tripura, Goa, U.P.
4.	Allocation of definite proportionate percentages of marks in question papers for testing different abilities.	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan, CISCE, J&K, M.P., CBSE, Haryana, Manipur, Tripura, Karnataka, Goa, U.P.
5.	Ensuring an effective coverage of the syllabus through the question papers	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, CISCE, CBSE, J&K, Manipur, M.P., Haryana, Goa, U.P.
6.	Introduction of specific pinpointed questions in the question paper	Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, CISCE, CBSE, Haryana, Tripura, Goa, U.P., West Bengal.

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 7.  | Inclusion of short-answer questions in the question papers, besides the easy-type ones   | Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, CISCE, CBSE, Haryana, Tripura, Goa, U.P., West Bengal. |
| 8.  | Introduction of objective type questions (multiple choice) in the question papers.   | Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, CISCE, Tripura, Goa, U.P.                                     |
| 9.  | Use of question banks for setting question papers.   | Gujarat, Rajasthan, CISCE, Haryana, West Bengal.   |
| 10. | Abolition of overall options in the question papers  | Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Rajasthan, CBSE, U.P.   |
| 11. | Development of marking scheme alongwith each question papers by the setter himself.  | Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, CISCE, CBSE, U.P., Goa, Maharashtra, West Bengal.  |
| 12. | Division of question papers into two separate sections for fixed response and free response questions with fixed separate time limit | Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, CISCE.  |
| 13. | Introdution of Centralised spot evaluation of scripts  | Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, CISCE, CBSE, Tripura, Goa, U.P.   |
| 14. | Introduction of mechanical processing of examination results   | Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, CISCE, CBSE, U.P.  |

15	Scaling of subjectwise results for making them comparable	Gujarat, Kerala, CISCE
16	Allowing students to clear the examination in parts	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab, CBSE.
17	Permitting students to improve their grades by appearing at subsequent examination	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab, CBSE.
18.	Reckoning both the product and performance in evaluation of practical work in science subject examination	Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, CISCE, Tripura CBSE, Goa, U.P.
19.	Incorporation of both academic and non-academic areas of pupil growth in the scheme subject	Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu
20.	Issue of separate certificate of internal assessment along with that of external examination	Rajasthan
21.	Analysis of question papers in details as feedback for paper setters	Rajasthan
22	Analysis of answer-scripts of the examination locating common errors, correlation in score and functional value of item, etc.	Rajasthan
23	Autonomy to schools in curriculum teaching, textbooks, evaluation, etc.	Rajasthan

**Norms for Minimum Physical Facilities in  
Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools**

(An exercise done jointly by NCERT & COBSE)

The following norms are an outcome of Programme of Action (POA) 1992's recommendation to evolve standards regarding the minimum physical facilities in schools. These norms have been evolved from the norms adopted by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), which they have prepared for providing affiliation to schools. For science laboratories, the designs evolved by the NCERT have been consulted.

- Coming to the specifics of minimum physical norms, the first point for consideration is the land requirements. The land size for a school will depend on the number of pupils in a school. Generally a secondary school is from Class VI to Class X and a higher secondary school is from Class VI to Class XII.

**Land Requirements for School Building (Secondary and Higher Secondary)**

A school should not have less than two acres of land and a building constructed on a part of the land as mentioned in the table given in this Appendix and proper playground on the remaining land. In metropolitan cities with a population exceeding 25 lakhs, the land may be one acre with adequate building and arrangement for imparting physical and health education.

- Schools having less than one acre of land, should have plinth area of 500 sq.m. + 1 sq.m. for every student on the rolls for a secondary school and 750 sq.m. + 1 sq.m. for every student on the roll for a Higher Secondary School.
- The guidelines regarding plinth area for higher secondary school building are available in the table given in this Appendix.

**General Considerations**

In planning of a school building the minimum considerations, which should be kept in mind are the climate of the place, the layout of the ground and the size of the school required.



### **General Minimum Facilities Required in a School**

1. Adequate number of classrooms, i.e. one classroom for each section should be there.
2. A few other class/special rooms may also be provided for various activities in the school such as group discussions, seminars, combined lectures, etc.
3. Adequate toilet facilities should be there separately for boys and girls and for gents and lady staff members. These toilets should be spread out in the school building and should be equipped with proper ventilation and water facilities.
4. The circulation space should average 20 per cent of the total covered area.
5. There should be a multipurpose hall in every school.
6. Every school should have a library with reading room facilities.
7. The schools which offer science should have science laboratories.
8. The school should have a Principal's room and a staff-room, if possible, with attached toilets.

#### **I. Classroom**

- (1) Taking about 40 children at an average, the classroom size should be at least 50.37 sq. m. with adequate light and ventilation.
- (2) The number of classrooms will depend on the number of classes and their sections in the school (Each section should be allotted a separate classroom).
- (3) (i) The minimum furniture in the classroom should have atleast one seat and writing space for each child. So there should be 40 seats and 40 places for writing.  
(ii) One table and one chair for the teacher alongwith at least a blackboard of normal size.
- (4) Adequate light and fan points in the classroom should be there in such a manner that they are uniformly distributed. (This is for the places where light is available and fans are needed.)

#### **II. A common hall for various functions in the school should be there.**

- (1) The size of the hall will depend on the enrolment in the school. For 560 students the size of the hall should be 432 sq.m.

(2) There should be adequate furniture in the hall with the facilities of stage, fans (if required), lights, toilets, etc.

### **III. Other rooms in the school**

Every school should have some other rooms like Art-room, Music room, Home Science room, Computer room, Geography room, and Activity room, etc. (This is according to the specialisations offered in the school.) The sizes of these rooms should be at least 67.62 sq.m.

### **IV. Laboratories**

If the school offers science subjects, laboratories are needed. In a secondary school there may be a general science laboratory but in a Higher Secondary School separate labs will be needed.

- (i) The General Science lab may be at least of 114 sq. m. area including the store and ancillary spaces.
- (ii) Physics lab including the store and dark-room for higher secondary classes may be 99.36 sq.m.
- (iii) Chemistry lab including the store and balance room may be 99.36 sq.m.
- (iv) Biology lab including the store and museum may also be 99.36 sq.m.
- (v) The laboratories should have the working space for at least 15 to 20 students and should be equipped with necessary equipment.

### **V. Library**

Library is a necessary requirement for a school.

- (i) The size of a library will depend on the enrolment in the school. For a school of 560 children the library may be 79 sq.m. whereas for 880 children, it may be 102.12 sq.m.
- (ii) It should be well ventilated, well lighted with reading room and issuing facility.
- (iii) The library should contain some good encyclopaedias, dictionaries, reference books, general books and textbooks. There should also be books for the professional growth of the teachers.
- (iv) Some journals, newspapers and magazines should be subscribed regularly.

## **VI. Teachers and Other Staff**

The school should have adequate staff according to the classes which are there in the school. Number of teachers will depend on the number of classes, number of students and the number of subjects offered in the school.

- (i) The teachers of secondary and higher secondary classes should possess a postgraduate degree with a B.Ed.
- (ii) The teachers for Class IX and X should have at least a graduate degree with a B.Ed.
- (iii) There should be a principal in a higher secondary school with at least P.G.T. qualification with administrative experience.
- (iv) The other staff may include the clerks in the office, typists, accountant, peons, sweepers, laboratory assistants, librarian, waterman, etc.
- (v) In the secondary classes, there should be at least one T.G.T. each for History, Geography, Maths, Hindi, English and Science. For higher secondary classes there should be a P.G.T. in each subject offered by the school in all the streams, viz., Humanities, Commerce, Science and Vocational.

**For a higher secondary school having 10 sections from classes VI to XII, the suggested guidelines for the plinth area as follows:**

S. No.	Type of rooms	No. of rooms	Area of each room in sq.m.	Total area in sq.m.
1.	Class Rooms	10	50.37	503.70
2.	Science Lecture theatre	2	50.37	100.74
3.	Laboratories (Physics, Chemistry, Biology)	3	99.36	298.08
4.	General Sc. Lab.	1	114.00	114.00
5.	Social Sc. Room	1	67.62	67.62
6.	Art Room	1	67.62	67.62
7.	Work experience/ Craft Room	1	67.62	67.62
8.	Activitiy Room	1	67.62	67.62
9.	Computer Room	1	50.37	50.37
10.	Library	1	102.12	102.12
11.	Principal's Room	1	19.00	19.00
12.	Office	1	29.30	29.30
13.	Staff common Room	1	44.50	44.50
14.	Physical edn. Room	1	44.50	44.50
15.	General Store	1	50.40	50.40
16.	NCC/ACC/Scout	4	44.00	176.00
17.	Medical Unit	1	29.30	29.30
18.	Book Store	1	44.50	44.50

**Tasks Assigned to COBSE**

1. To coordinate with AIU regarding tests conducted by universities at the instance of the State governments for admission to professional courses. (4.13)
2. To organise annual meets of Controllers of Examinations. (4.15)
3. To prepare a manual for examination work by the Boards. (4.19)
4. To standardise the rules of recognition of schools by the Boards. (5.09)
5. To coordinate with AIU and prepare a set of financial regulations applicable both to universities and school Boards. (5.19)
6. To organise sports and co-curricular activities at the national and state levels. (5.20)
7. COBSE to expand and professionalise its working. (7.14)
8. COBSE to revise its constitution in keeping with its new role. (7.15)
9. To work out a solution to the problem of the inter-variability of standards. (7.27)
10. To evolve a proforma to assess the suitability and quality of textbooks proposed to be prescribed. (9.10)
11. To organise workshops for different Boards to help them to develop editorial expertise for textbook writing. (9.28)
12. Norms in respect of staffing, examination work, maintenance expenditure, development expenditure, recognition of schools, etc., need to be laid down through the agency of COBSE. (10.09)
13. To evolve a system whereby a three-yearly review of the budget can be undertaken. (10.22)
14. To work out a system of systematic financial support for itself so as to promote more dynamic functioning. (11.22)

**Task Force Meetings Held**

The Task Force held seven meetings in all at Delhi. These meetings were organised as given below:

1. On 9th September 1995 at 10.30 a.m. in the Committee Room, Dr. Zakir Hussain Block, NCERT, New Delhi.
2. On 10th January, 1996 at 10.30 a.m. in the Conference Room No. 202, CIET, NCERT.
3. On 31st January 1996 at 10.30 a.m. in the Committee Room, Dr. Zakir Hussain Block, NCERT, New Delhi.
4. On 1st April 1996 at 10.30 a.m. in the Conference Room No. 229, CIET, NCERT, New Delhi.
5. On 16th January 1997 at 10.30 a.m. in the Committee Room, Dr. Zakir Hussain Block, NCERT, New Delhi
6. On 17th January 1997 at 10.30 a.m. in the Committee Room, Dr. Zakir Hussain Block, NCERT, New Delhi
7. On 16th February 1997 at 11.00 a.m. in the Conference Room No. 229, CIET, NCERT, New Delhi.

## Appendix II

### **Places visited by the Chairman & Member-Secretary of the Task Force to interact with certain Boards of School Education in different regions of the country**

1. Gandhinagar (Gujarat) for meeting the members of the Board, the DPI, and the Secretary of Education on 3.2.1996.
2. Guwahati (Assam) for interaction with the Boards of the North East Region on 3-5.4.1996.
3. Bhopal (M.P.) for a discussion with the Education Secretary on 6.6.1996.
4. Lucknow (U.P.) for meeting the member of Board, the DPI, and the Secretary of Education on 28-29.6.1996.
5. Calcutta (West Bengal) for a meeting with the Minister of Education, Shri Kanti Biswas, and members of the Board of School Education on 18.7.1996.
6. Chennai (Tamil Nadu) for a meeting with the Minister for Education Shri K. Anbazhagan, and Members of the two Boards on 22.7.1996.
7. Bangalore (Karnataka) for a meeting with the Minister for Education, the Commissioner of Education and Shri K.P. Surendranath, Chairman of a Committee constituted by the Government of Karnataka for restructuring the Boards of Secondary Education on 26.7.1996.
8. Hyderabad (A.P.) for a meeting with the officials of the Boards of School Education on 27-28.7.1996.
9. Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) for a meeting with the Minister for Education, Shri P.J. Joseph, the Commissioner of Secondary Education, the DPI and Chairmen of the Boards on 5/6.9.1996.
10. Chandigarh for a meeting with the Chairmen of the Boards of the Northern Region (J&K, H.P., Haryana and Punjab) on 20-21.12.1996.