

TOWARDS FORMULATING NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY

**Report of the Madras Working Group
Under the Chairmanship of
Shri C. Subramaniam**

October 1985

C. SUBRAMANIAM

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25.10.1985

Dear Shri Narasimha Rao,

The Honourable Prime Ministers' announcement relating to the formulation of the New Education Policy has stimulated a national discussion on the key issues and problems. On my initiative, an adhoc working group in Madras has been deliberating on the variety of questions that need consideration and direction in the New Education Policy to be formulated. The group, consisting of Senior educationists and professionals with vast experience in the education system, held ten sittings and considered in depth issues in Universalisation of elementary education and adult literacy, secondary education, vocationalisation, higher education, delinking of jobs from Degrees, management pattern, financing of education and the role of teachers.

The group also had the benefit of studying the recent publication of the Ministry of Education entitled "Challenge of Education" and made use of it in their recent meetings held in August and September.

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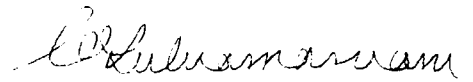
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The recommendations of the group are embodied in the report which I now have the privilege and honour of transmitting to you for consideration while the new education policy document is prepared.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(C. SUBRAMANIAM)

To

Hon'ble Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao
Minister for Human Resources Development
Government of India
Shastri Bhavan .
NEW DELHI 110 001.

PREFACE

From the time of the Honourable Prime Ministers' announcement relating to the formulation of a New Education Policy, the problems and issues concerning education in the country have been receiving considerable attention. A national discussion has been stimulated to identify the directions and thrusts that the policy must address itself to.

An adhoc working group in Madras under the Chairmanship of Thiru C. Subramaniam, former Union Minister, has been deliberating on the issues. The members of the group are:

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The group had ten sittings between February and October 1985 and the recommendation of the group are contained in this Report. This is placed before the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development for consideration, in formulating the new education policy.

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CHAPTER 1

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

"Education is the manifestation of perfection which is already in man"
Swami Vivekananda

It is generally recognised that the purpose of education is to develop the individual to realise his full potential; make him a responsible and useful citizen and help develop in him an integrated personality. It is also pertinent to point out that it should enable the individual to absorb democratic and secular values and enable him to make an effective contribution to national development. While the following sections focus attention on various aspects of national educational policy, it is pointed out at the very beginning that the fundamental objective of education, namely developing the individual to realise his full potential has been kept in the forefront.

Since the publication of the document entitled National Policy on Education in 1968 many developments have taken place and considerable changes have occurred; and a review of the policy has become necessary. The Prime Minister has therefore announced that necessary exercises may be undertaken for refining and redefining the national education policy. While formulating such an educational policy, it is necessary to take note of the following:

1.1 LINK WITH DEVELOPMENT

- i. A knowledge explosion has been taking place all over the world. We recognise that knowledge itself has become a major resource in man's endeavours towards a better life for all. As such, education to-day has become a powerful tool for development of society.
- ii. In order to link education to development, as would be the requirement more so in a developing society, the kind of development we foresee and want to promote in the next 20 years has to be at least broadly outlined. Our educational policy must recognise local needs and devote attention to improvements in resources utilisation, methods of work, sociocultural aspects and quality of life and must make an impact on the lives of ordinary citizens. Nearly eighty percent of the people lives in the rural areas. There is a great deal of disparity between the urban and rural populations in the matter of educational attainments and socio-economic development. A concentrated and continuous effort will be called for to improve the productivity and transform the quality of life of the rural folk through an appropriate educational policy.
- iii. The manpower requirement in the next 20 years will naturally depend upon the kind of development model we would like to adopt. We are yet to lay down clearly the model(s) that are suitable for our conditions and which we would like to promote. Keeping in mind the capital-scarce character of a developing economy, we need to reiterate and ensure through appropriate development and education programmes that the available natural endowments, especially human resources, are optimally used for continuing increase in the well being of all sections of our people. Our developmental policy will have to rely largely on non-conventional and renewable energy sources. Such a policy would call for improving the productivity of the people particularly in the villages through an appropriate educational system.

- iv. The general education content will also depend upon the kind of society we want to build, and the value system we would like to promote and adopt.

1.2 EQUALISATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

- i. To exploit the full potential of Science and Technology for development, a minimum level of literacy in the nation is imperative. It is considered that such a threshold level is over 50% which will provide the needed momentum for implementation. While our literacy level is low, women in this country are 25 years behind men in literacy. Both from the point of view of social justice and economic development, this imbalance has to be set right: this must receive due consideration in policy formulation.
- ii. Constitutional provision exists for reservation of seats to SC/ST candidates all over the country. However, it is also recognised that there is still a long way to go before these communities can be considered to have attained a comparable level of progress to compete on equal footing with the rest. Therefore, besides reservation, administrative and academic measures are needed to accelerate the process of their social uplift and integration.
- iii. Constitutional provision for reservation also exists for socially and educationally backward classes. However, definitions of backwardness are fraught with emotions and sensibilities. We have to devise parameters very soon which will enable us to recognise weaknesses and imbalances in educational opportunity available and accessible to various sections and make provisions for correction. Such factors as location, rural setting, professional status of the parents and the social environment may be relevant in assessing backwardness.

1.3 DEMOCRATIC BASE

We have established a strong and stable democratic base at the state and national levels. We need to strengthen and vitalise it by encouraging

local democracy, promoting local initiatives and fostering local leadership in the field of education. At the time of obtaining independence and immediately thereafter, considerable leadership emanated from the rural/agricultural areas. There is a noticeable decline in this regard at the present time. Educational opportunities should not only foster leadership at all levels, but also help to ensure that it emerges from as wide a base as possible.

1.4 DECENTRALISATION

Considerable disparities exist in the literacy levels and educational attainments among the States; and within each State between regions; and within a region between communities, and in a community between men and women. Given this distortion, strategies for educational and microlevel planning would require significant understanding of the local problems and fostering of local leadership. A national policy for education must recognise the massive need for decentralisation in planning and implementation of education programmes.

1.5 CURRICULUM CONTENT

The products of the new educational system will have to emerge as the key factors and agents of change for improving the standards and quality of life of both rural and urban populations. A majority of them will still have a rural base and the educational system should be designed to improve their effectiveness in rural employment, agriculture, agro-based industry, increasing the productivity of land and recycling of agricultural residue. The problems of the urban areas which are diverse and already quite intense, should also be reflected in the contents of the educational curriculum.

A common core curriculum for the country covering Indian history, our composite culture and common heritage is under consideration. The subject

field will be covered by stages right through the general education system. Guidelines regarding the format and structure could be formulated and made available at national as well as state levels, but only by ensuring local relevance (which curriculum formulation at the level of educational districts can only ensure) could the contents and the implementation of the educational programme at all levels create a substantial impact.

1.6 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

It is recognised that there is a preference, at all levels, for English as a medium of instruction. There are in several states substantial linguistic minorities who make use of English medium. However, English as a medium of instruction even at the primary school stage is a real burden for children from whichever strata they come, since the minds are not mature at that stage and problems of comprehension are compounded by the problem of language. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that upto the V Standard at least, the medium of instruction should be kept as the mother tongue/ regional language with provision for teaching English as a language. Linguistic minorities should be provided for separately in a suitable manner. It is important to design quick, easy and effective ways of learning languages other than one's own mother tongue.

1.7 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Education passed through the Gurukula system first, and the class room system next and has now entered what may be called the open school or the non-formal system. Class room and non-formal systems coexist today in a substantial way. Social and economic conditions in India point towards

increasing use on non-formal education. As a matter of policy, we have to put the non-formal system on par with the formal school system.

1.8 ROLE OF MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA

A revolution in communication technology is already underway in the country. The electronics and communication industry has provided very powerful and versatile tools of mass communication which should be harnessed for improving the effectiveness of the educational system. Radio and television which have penetrated the far corners of the country are already playing an important role in communicating the various aspects and benefits of the agricultural revolution to the public. Distance Education through such media is so full of promise that plans must be made to extend the coverage to all fields and to diversify the programmes to meet the needs of the primary, secondary, vocationalised and higher education levels. A country-wide programme of preparing audio and video cassettes on a wide range of topics should be embarked upon during the 7th Plan period. The Government of India should deliberately liberalise the use of radio and television by recognised educational institutions for dissemination of knowledge.

Although it is largely an urban phenomenon as of now, children and young adults are being exposed to video games and electronic toys increasingly. We expect the trend to gather momentum and spread to the rural areas as well. Educational toys of various types including word games, pattern recognition games, assembling kits, mathematical puzzles, science kits and others catch the imagination of the young and are powerful aids in training their minds. Investment in such educational toys or learning devices must be augmented substantially as a matter of state policy.

CHAPTER 2

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

2.1 UNIVERSALISATION

According to the VI Five Year Plan and the draft proposals for the VII Five Year Plan, the universalisation of education for the 6 - 14 age group is to be realized by the present target date of 1990. It is also noted that only 76% of the children in the age group is presently enrolled and the remaining 24% plus the population increase in that age group are to be enrolled. Given this picture, the target date needs to be reexamined and workable strategies for achieving the goal of universalisation of elementary education must be developed.

The country has reached a gross enrolment of 93% at the primary level as represented by classes I to V. In the country as a whole, the target date of 1990 for 100% enrolment and universalisation of education as envisaged in the directive principles of the constitution should be actively pursued. It is also recognised that there will be backward districts where it may be extremely difficult to ensure the universalisation of education for the 6 to 14 age group by the target date of 1990. In such backward districts it may be practicable to consider the target dates for primary (I to V) and middle levels (VI to VIII) separately: for such districts, the target date

for introducing universal education upto class V could be 1990 and upto 14 years the year 2000.

In order that the universalisation of elementary education as contemplated in the directive principles of the constitution has a reasonable chance of success, several aspects and contributing factors such as

- * infant development ,
- * school timings,
- * proximity of schools, and
- * non-formal education

will have to be considered.

2.2 INFANT DEVELOPMENT

In the universalisation of education, we are primarily concerned with two questions: methods of increasing enrolment and, once enrolled, methods of retaining the children in the school. The problem of drop outs from the school system is already a serious one representing wastage of precious resources. The problem is even more significant when we recognise that the drop out rate among the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates is much higher than the average, whereas it is a national objective to provide for uplifting and removing the social disadvantages of the SC/ST candidates. The children from such homes should also be made fit enough to assimilate the education provided for all.

Examining the causes of the phenomenon of drop-outs from the educational system at the primary level, the poverty of the parents (which forces the boy to work in the field or factory instead of going to school and the

girl to tend the home, cook the food, and look after the new born) along with malnutrition and lack of proper development of infants from disadvantaged homes stand out among the foremost contributing factors. The alleviation of the poverty of the parents as well as programmes to make the parents literate are prerequisites for countering the dropouts from schools. Only a healthy, well-nourished and cared-for child has the energy, enthusiasm and mental alertness to concentrate and participate actively in the learning process. Ensuring the health, nourishment and proper home environment of the pre-school children is, therefore, equally important for rendering the primary education system more effective and successful.

2.3 SCHOOL TIMINGS

In the context of the prevailing child labour practices in the rural setting, if universalisation of primary education is to succeed, children should be enabled to participate in productive activities to a certain extent, while going through the process of education. Accordingly, it would be necessary to carefully adjust the timing of the school session to suit the local conditions, especially in rural areas. For instance, the holidays may cover the planting or harvest seasons and the working hours of the school could be from the very early morning till noon or early afternoon thereby still leaving substantial amount of day-light time for other activities by the children, as may be found necessary.

2.4 PROXIMITY OF SCHOOLS

Among the constraints affecting enrolment, is the distance that a child has to cover to reach the school. 20% of the habitations have no primary

school within 1 Km. and a third of all habitations does not have a middle school within 3 Kms. Even where there are schools within easy reach, 37% of the primary schools are single teacher schools. This category of schools suffers from absenteeism of teachers, non-posting of teachers, and overcrowding of children to be handled by one teacher. Single teacher schools have very low retention capacity. Considering the improvement in transportation, abolition of single teacher schools as a matter of policy and prescribing atleast two teachers as the minimum for a school with the distance not more than 2 Kms. from the habitation deserve serious consideration.

2.5 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Non-formal education is indicated for more than one reason: there will continue to be, for quite some time, socially disadvantaged groups who may not be able to make use of full-time, formal education. Secondly there will be in different parts of the country remote habitations where it may not be feasible to establish formal schools. Thirdly, the rising cost of education will make it obligatory for us to seek other cost-effective methods of education.

Added to all these, educational opportunity must be made available for the large numbers of drop outs from the school system. Any scheme for universalisation of elementary education which does not give adequate attention to the problem of providing educational opportunity to drop outs will not serve the purpose. Non formal education should specifically address itself to the education of drop outs in particular and make full use of all available modern education tools. The role of mass media such as radio and

television and the use of educational toys such as word-games, assembly kits, science kits and mathematical puzzles are relevant in this context.

2.6 ADULT LITERACY

Universalisation of education should encompass programmes to remove the mass illiteracy among adults. The role of adult literacy in promoting participation in the working of democratic institutions, in accelerating programmes of production, especially in agriculture, and in quickening the tempo of national development in general is well understood, as the earlier policy document outlines. Accordingly, adequate priority needs to be given to adult literacy programmes and resources must be allocated to ensure fulfilment of this goal in the short term.

The condition for the success of this programme is the real means employed to achieve it. The only real means available are the educated men and women, and all types of employers. Considering the former, there is an option facing us in the Seventh Plan. One alternative is to mobilise all students and teachers in Higher Secondary Schools, Colleges and Universities during the first six months of 1987 or summer vacation of 1987 or 1988 to launch state by state a national literacy campaign under which all the 8.7 crores illiterate adults are made literate. If this option is chosen, 1986 should be the period for the training of students and teachers for running the required 25 lakh Adult Education Centres. The other alternative is that set forth in the document "Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective" of making adult education teaching a part of the under graduate course, which would involve a 3-year period to provide literacy education to the

8.7 crore illiterate adults. In addition, of the 25 million workers employed in the organised sector, over 60% are illiterate: the employers of these adults should be made legislatively responsible to render them literate within a period of 1 year. The other imperative is to use the State Resource Centres and the State Text Book Societies to produce from 1986 a massive output of learning materials, books, posters, charts, newspaper, TV and radio programme formats, so that materials to read and listen are available to the newly educated adults inexpensively and easily.

In adult education programmes, non-formal techniques such as Harikatha or folk songs could be gainfully employed for imparting proper values in the society. The programme must be organised as a mass movement. In this note, the words 'Adult education' and 'Adult literacy' are used synonymously.

CHAPTER 3

SECONDARY EDUCATION

3.1 DEFINITION

Secondary Education connotes the education between the elementary stage and the college stage and includes in its fold higher secondary education courses also. There is a certain amount of ambiguity in the country at the present time regarding the Standards that constitute secondary education: for example, in some States the classes from VIII+ and upto XII+ are referred to as secondary education whereas in certain other states it covers the Standards IX+ to XII+. There is a clear need for uniformity in identifying secondary education all over the country. It is recommended that, in view of the considerable efforts to be put in for universalisation of elementary education and in view of the very large numbers involved, elementary education may cover the Standards I to VIII whereas secondary education may refer to the Standards IX and X immediately following elementary education. The Plus Two stage (Standards XI and XII) will be referred to as higher secondary education as is the current practice and will be part of secondary education.

3.2 STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Secondary education represents a stage where the students are prepared either to pursue higher education at the university level or to

enter the world of work with the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore, this transition stage has to provide for a certain degree of general education for everyone and also enable the development of knowledge and skills for those who would terminate their education at the secondary level. The elementary education ending in Standard VIII will have undifferentiated curriculum. At VIII+, there must be provision for diversification. Some may step off the general school system and join institutes and schools of vocational education. Those who continue in the school system may either follow the general curriculum or take one or two prevocational courses as optionals. These may be provided in selected schools where adequate facilities exist for such programmes. It is pertinent to observe that the Kothari Commission has envisaged that 20% of the students at VIII+ will step off the general school system and enter vocational schools and institutes.

The group noted that work experience/socially useful productive work (WE/SUPW) has been accepted at the national level as part of the school education from the primary to the higher secondary stage. An allocation of 20% of time has also been accepted as part of the national policy. The group suggests that:

- * the time available for WE/SUPW may be made the best use of for acquainting the students with diverse productive occupations
- * the WE/SUPW may be used as preliminary preparation for vocational stream at +2 where possible
- * the WE/SUPW may be used to import into the academic stream of higher secondary education atleast 20% of vocational content.

It has been suggested earlier that streaming of the students may start from the Standard IX and need not be postponed to Standard XI. Such an early diversification should ensure a certain degree of flexibility for change over from one stream to the other. It also provides opportunities for advanced training and skill development after Standard X. The programme of vocational education in the school, opportunities for further education in the vocational stream and possibility for changeover to general education must be organised in such a manner that the vocational education programme gains social acceptability.

To enable mobility, there should be a provision in the secondary education stage to transfer from one stream to the other and such flexibility should be built into the system. It is recognised that switching from one stream to the other will mean filling up the gaps in knowledge needed for entering the other stream by supplementary courses. It could take upto a year to bridge such gaps. Therefore, it is envisaged that an additional year to secondary education will be needed in the case of those students who shift from one stream to the other using this provision.

3.3 HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION

Higher secondary education pertains to Standards XI and XII (Plus Two). An important question regarding higher secondary education is its location - whether it should be located in the schools or in the colleges. There is no uniformity in the country in this regard at present. Some States have adopted the Kothari Commission recommendation and located the Plus Two course in the schools, whereas some other States have gone in for junior colleges. The location of the higher secondary education in the

school system will enable the opportunity to be more widely distributed.

There is a section of opinion that believes that junior colleges may provide better facilities for instruction and training. This is not always the case.

The National Policy Document of 1968 recognises both the venues. It is recommended that Plus Two should be located in the schools.

It is better located where it belongs and it certainly belongs to the school system.

Besides, the main point is to ensure that school education is within reasonably easy reach of the community.

CHAPTER 4

VOCATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Education of children through activities and association that centre around their life and their living environment has become a globally accepted educational philosophy. It is now realised that such a process is based on sound psychological and sociological principles and offers a promise of increased national productivity and greater relevance of education to the needs of the society. The "Work Experience" (WE) programme and the concept of "Socially Useful Productive Work" (SUPW) are recognised as important and implementable projects leading to the vocationalisation of education. There are certain differences between the WE concept and the SUPW concept. SUPW includes a component of community service and occupies the central place in the school curriculum. It also highlights the linkage of various other curricular subjects with SUPW so as to involve the entire school faculty in SUPW activities. In contrast, WE is a curricular area where participation in a production process is emphasised rather than correlation with other subject areas and inclusion of community services.

A national working group on vocationalisation of education, recently constituted by the Government of India, Ministry of Education, considered

in depth the concept, operation and implementation of WE/SUPW and suggested incorporating certain improvements in the educational programme of the future along the following lines.

4.2 VOCATIONAL CONTENT AT PRIMARY STAGE (CLASS I-V)

At the primary stage, the objectives of WE/SUPW are very similar to those of "Education" itself, in general. "Learning by doing" and participation in a variety of activities are enjoyed by young children. It has been suggested that nearly 80% of the learning experience in WE/SUPW programme at this stage should be selected from areas of basic needs such as health, hygiene, etc. so that the programme will be implementable in all schools of the country. From the stand point of vocational preparation, WE/SUPW programmes in primary school will have to be viewed as the ground preparation and sowing of seeds to develop the child's interests and aptitudes. It must be made a school-based programme for proper implementation and the time allotted must be at least 20% to ensure a meaningful orientation. For urban children, some exposure to farm-related activities is desirable.

4.3 MIDDLE STAGE (CLASS VI-VIII)

This stage in the age group of 11+ to 14 consists of children mature enough to participate in well designed production and service-oriented projects of considerable duration for more intensive skill formation and pre-vocational preparation. The contents of the SUPW/WE curriculum at this stage should

give adequate confidence to the children for developing psychomotor dexterity needs in future life, since a significant proportion of the children enter the world of work after class VIII. Through the provision of 20% of the total instructional time for SUPW/WE, starting from the middle stage, sufficient skill proficiency may be acquired. Also, as an aid to the rententive capacity of the school, "earn while you learn" programmes may be created beyond the school hours for the students, on an optional basis. The proportion of food and nutrition, health and hygiene and social service oriented activities which could be performed in all situations may be to the extent of 50% of the total time available for SUPW/WE at this level: the remainder being spent on production-oriented projects with local relevance.

4.4 SECONDARY STAGE (CLASS IX-X)

This is an extension of the programmes suggested for the middle stage. However, the region-specific elective of production-oriented site-work may assume a much greater dimension than service, health, hygiene and other simpler activities performed as a core programme. An 80:20 proportion between production-oriented, prevocational areas and service-oriented, other areas may be suggested for this purpose in the time available for SUPW/WE at the secondary stage. Further, it would be desirable to link these activities with the vocational programmes of the + 2 stage if offered in the same school or in others nearby.

4.5 VOCATIONALISATION AT +2

Vocationalisation of higher secondary education is already underway in the country. Vocational education at this stage should recognise, the

potential for employment in all sectors (in the rural environment particularly) and the Science and Technology revolution that is already taking place and the skills that will be called for in the next decade or two, not only in urban areas but also all over the country. It should also be ensured that in the vocationalisation of higher secondary education, emphasis should be placed on preparation of the student for self-employment rather than for wage employment. Viewed against this framework, vocational education has to be much more comprehensive than the traditional training in crafts such as carpentry or smithy which passes for vocational education now.

Vocational education in the higher secondary system must be clearly differentiated from the one that will be imparted in I.T.I. level institutions. Facilities available for vocational education and training in the 5000 and odd vocational institutes and vocational schools must be expanded. The issue under consideration in this section is one of reorienting and strengthening the school system to prepare the youth for effective participation in the economic activity of the nation.

There is a need to recognise the Science and Technology inputs essential for an appropriate vocational education and be prepared for the wide range of challenges and opportunities the present higher secondary students will face within the next decade or two. The country should have a fairly clear picture of the nature of the vocational subjects which should be introduced now itself to prepare the student adequately for tomorrow. There are today numerous subjects in fields such as Humanities, Social Sciences, Agriculture, Medical Sciences, Engineering and Technology that are relevant to the economic development of the nation and the day-to-day life of individuals. They combine skill and knowledge. Training in those subjects need working with things

and working with people, and not merely with concepts. At present, subjects of that nature are not found in the traditional higher secondary curriculum. They must be introduced now. The subjects must be so chosen that they are relevant to the economic life in the district or the region.

In order to make vocationalisation at the higher secondary stage more meaningful and successful there is a need for linking it with the local productive activities. Participation by local industry in identifying the subjects for vocational stream, in imparting instruction and in providing opportunities for productive work can go a long way in popularising and enriching vocational education. The main objectives of a highly relevant vocational education and some revenue benefit from the children to parents even during their educational tenure can be simultaneously realised if a scheme of producing certain components in large scale demand by the industry and which are simple to assemble could be worked out for execution by the school students. Decentralised production of industrial components by the vocational stream of school children will give them the vital work experience as part of the learning process and therefore will greatly facilitate acceptance of vocational education. The higher secondary sections in schools or colleges could perhaps have a "vocational education-cum-production unit linked to industry". In establishing this, advantage may be taken of all available local industries who can identify the components for production, provide some infrastructural and training facilities and, in appropriate cases, provide also the employment opportunity for the vocational stream students.

It may be recalled that the 1968 national policy document on education has very clearly stressed that the school and the community should be brought

closer through suitable programmes of mutual service and support. Such a step will call for involving the students in work experience and national service including participation in meaningful and challenging programmes of community service and national construction. Emphasis on self-help, character formation and developing a sense of social commitment in the students at this level should necessarily form part of the community involvement programme. Utilising the free time including vacations available to higher secondary vocational students for community work is therefore a desirable objective. The work could be community-oriented such as conducting physical resources surveys or statistical surveys or involving the students in Government's development programmes. It is also recognised that while it is feasible, in principle, the Government may have to make a conscious decision to encourage involvement of all the higher secondary vocational course students in the Government's developmental programme/projects during the vacation. Due to the large numbers involved, the problem of placement of the higher secondary vocational stream students during vacations calls for early planning and careful follow up.

CHAPTER 5

HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 GENERAL

Higher education in India has taken considerable strides and there are today close to 140 Universities or similar institutions and over 5200 colleges. The expenditure on education, school and collegiate, is next only to that on defence. The education system at the higher level has produced a vast reservoir of trained manpower the top levels of which are comparable to those of the leading countries in the world. It is an irony that such a system has also developed at least three major weaknesses.

- * It still continues to be dominated by models and value systems which are a legacy of the colonial rule.
- * A great deal of emphasis is still placed on the formal school to the neglect of both non-formal and continuing education as a general concept.
- * The system presents a dichotomy of standards; a small minority of exclusive, elite-type of institutions where admission is selective and a large majority of institutions with easy access where the standards are relatively poor.

There is a conspicuous predominance of the upper and middle classes among the beneficiaries of the system. Such a higher education system, therefore, needs a transformation of its character, a substantial improvement of standards, an extension of its coverage and a management framework which can cope up with the considerable amount of reorientation.

5.2 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Courses at the undergraduate stage have to be restructured to make them more relevant and useful, both to the students and to the nation as a whole by assisting social transformation and national development. It may be worthwhile to recall the UGC suggestion in this regard that every under-graduate student should be given a grounding in four important areas:

- i. a set of foundation courses including Indian history and culture, social and economic life in India, the scientific method, exposure to other cultures and Gandhian thought;
- ii a set of core courses designed to prepare the student in a chosen discipline;
- iii. some applied studies projects/field activity which will form an integral activity of the course and will be carried out in the final year; and
- iv. a programme of national or social service for the first two years.

It has been suggested that several important measures will have to be adopted to derive full benefit from this reform. These will include, for instance, diversification of courses to cover emerging and interdisciplinary

areas, adoption of the semester system, modern and dynamic methods of study and examination reform as set forth in the Section 5.4.

With over 5200 colleges already in the picture, the emphasis should be on improvement of facilities and standards in such colleges, in preference to mere quantitative expansion. There is a need to diversify and expand the programme of central assistance to such colleges. The State grant-in-aid codes should be modernised and revised to bring about improvement of standards. It is imperative to take adequate and firm steps to improve the management of colleges. Colleges should be gradually allowed the freedom to decide on their admission precedures, to formulate their own curricula and to hold examinations, all under the overall guidance of the accrediting authority.

5.3 POST GRADUATE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

For maintaining high standards in education in general and for furthering programmes of development, the post-graduate education system is extremely important. The post graduate programme must go hand in hand with research in the universities in order to maintain standards, create new knowledge and promote excellence. Every institution providing post graduate education must have well qualified faculty actively engaged in research and adequate research facilities in terms of equipment and library. The qualifications for staff and standards of laboratory and library facilities in colleges that offer post-graduate courses must be the same as those of university departments. Only departments active in research must be allowed to run post graduate programmes.

There is a clear need to introduce interdisciplinary courses at the post graduate and research levels and special efforts must be made in this direction. For carrying out high quality research, individuals, groups and departments of proven ability in universities and colleges should be supported and helped to develop into centres of advanced study. In the context of developing indigenous instrumentation capability, support must be provided for appropriate research schemes and for establishing instrumentation and service centres at universities as well as regional instrumentation centres.

It may be pertinent to point out that whereas threefourths of the research funding of approximately Rs.1000 crores per year of the national laboratories is provided by the Government of India, only about 21/2 to 3% of the research funding from the Government goes to the universities. In this context, funding of university research needs urgent re-examination and universities need to be encouraged to take up both fundamental and applied research of high calibre. It is necessary to see that real talent and merit is encouraged and enabled to pursue post graduate education and research. The continuous stream of fresh minds passing through the gates of the system is a unique advantage, highly conducive to creative work and must be fully availed of.

5.4 DECENTRALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Real decentralisation of university education is called for and this will imply an increasingly large number of autonomous colleges. The rigidity of the affiliating system leads to needless delays and deprives good teachers of the opportunity to take initiative for creative and fruitful action. Autonomy for colleges implies that the college and its teachers assume full responsibility

and accountability for the academic programmes they provide; for the content and quality of their teaching as well as for the admission and assessment of their students. The concept of autonomous college does not imply categorisation of an institution under this label for ever. The institution should be continuously subjected to review and evaluation and it should prove itself worthy of the autonomy by sustained excellence in performance.

The existing examination system with its several faults should be gradually replaced by another system of evaluation based on continuous internal evaluation and the credit system.

5.5 PREREQUISITES

At the post graduate level, education must be very selective and the educational opportunity must be based on proven merit and excellence. Para-military training or compulsory national service for a year may be considered as a prerequisite for all students seeking higher education in order to encourage discipline. Competitive examinations may be considered for regulating entry to higher education after requisite discipline-oriented training.

5.6 PART-TIME EDUCATION, CORRESPONDENCE COURSES AND OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

There is a need to provide much larger opportunities for part-time education, correspondence courses and distance education at the university level. This may be selectively encouraged in disciplines or courses where

a variety of infrastructural facility and constant interaction with faculty are not normally required such as in arts and commerce areas. In the case of science, engineering and technology courses part time education may be selectively encouraged for inservice personnel.

It is stressed that the correspondence course should be conceived and developed as a device to enable a large number of persons whether working or not, to realise the ambition for higher education and, in that process, contribute to the raising of their effectiveness as workers and citizens. The institution of correspondence courses, accordingly, should not be looked upon as an income-generating activity for the authority, but rather as a democratisation device in higher education. Especially, concessions should be available for economically weaker sections in pursuing higher education through correspondence courses.

CHAPTER 6

DELINKING OF JOBS FROM DEGREES

In order to relieve the pressure on the universities and for the optimal utilization of resources for university and higher education, and to prevent the continuing devaluation of Degrees, there is a real need for delinking Degrees from jobs and developing effective systems of testing and evaluation. The present practice of prescribing a university Degree as a qualification for recruitment to posts where it is not of relevance should be discouraged. For example, prescribing a university Degree as minimum qualification for recruitment to routine administrative posts or clerical posts or even certain executive posts such as junior level officers in non-development departments such as Revenue, Cooperation, Employment, Commercial Taxes, Charitable Endowments and others, imposes a needless burden on the university system. It is preferable to recruit candidates for such posts from the general education stream after completing the school level, through a competitive examination, and then provide in-service training for them. It would be desirable to evolve functional qualifications for various categories of jobs rather than specifying a general university Degree for purposes of recruitment. Such a delinking of Degrees from jobs calls for a carefully designed system to test and certify knowledge, skills and aptitudes necessary for identified categories of jobs or work. One of the pre-requisites for implementing the "delinking of Degree from jobs" would, therefore, be the development of such a testing system together with training facilities therefor.

After entering service, those with the capability and aptitude for higher education should be enabled to obtain relevant Degrees by providing study leave, fellowships and other suitable opportunities.

CHAPTER 7

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

7.1 GENERAL

The weakest link in the educational chain today is its management. A system evolved for maintaining and linearly expanding a given system has proved incapable of bringing about changes which need innovation, experimentation, evaluation and adoption. The system has long outlived its purpose. It is today structurally weak, professionally incompetent, organisationally centralised and administratively bureaucratic. The most urgently needed reform in education is the management reform. The three important components will be:

- i. Decentralisation
- ii. Modernisation
- iii. Professionalisation

7.2 SCHOOL EDUCATION

At present a single Directorate of Education is administering the whole of school education. It is necessary to split school education into two units and put them under two directorates, namely, i. Directorate of

Elementary Education and ii. Directorate of Secondary Education. In addition there could be a separate Directorate of Adult Education for implementing the adult education programme with vastly increased scope as envisaged now.

The higher secondary Board which plans and administers the secondary education in the states is at present a state -level organisation. It has been the general experience that such an organisation, large and controlled from the headquarters, can respond to felt needs and implement changes only slowly. In view of the fundamental changes foreseen in the school education system and in view of the need to train a very large number of students in a variety of subjects related to local needs and industry, regionalising the higher secondary Board will facilitate better and faster implementation of the changes to be made. Vocational subjects at the plus two level are already handled locally in some states; it is a desirable trend: there is, however, a definite need for an adequate degree of control in the handling of the academic subjects. Accordingly, it is suggested that "Educational districts" could be conceived and formulated as units of administration of the school education system in the states. Such educational districts consisting of perhaps only a few taluks could have their own Management Committees with significant local participation. They could be termed "District Council for Secondary Education" and must be non-political in character, with 10 to 12 members and adequate representation for women and teachers. Recruitment and disciplinary functions must rest with this Committee, subject to Government guidelines. Persons in active politics should be debarred from nomination to the Committee. There should be

a separate organisation at the District level for management of elementary education. This may be called "District Council for Elementary Education".

For each secondary school, a school management Committee should be constituted. For the primary schools, each panchayat should have a local committee. These should also be non-political in character and have atleast 50% representation for women.

The school education can benefit substantially by a well informed and active Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Accordingly, each school should be encouraged to establish a suitable Parent-Teacher Association.

7.3 UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The problems in administering the universities are very many and the chief ones are the following:

- i. Vice-Chancellors are not always selected from among the competent persons with the required academic experience and administrative ability. The members of the Committee to select the panel of names for Vice-Chancellors should be preeminent men of learning with vast and varied educational and administrative experience. Naming persons of scant concern for academic and administrative qualities to be members of the committee is the major blunder committed under the present procedure. Therefore, almost the first and most important thing to be done, to set right the deficiencies in University management is to improve the procedures set for selecting and appointing the Vice-Chancellors.
- ii. The term of appointment of Vice-Chancellors in most cases is for three years and rarely it extends upto five years. Three years is too short a period for the Vice-Chancellor to do anything substantial. It takes atleast six to twelve months for him to come to

grips with administration and by the time he formulates his plans and starts functioning with conviction, the time is up for him to leave, and he is not sure of a second term in Office. It would therefore be necessary that once the proper choice is made, the Vice-Chancellor is appointed for a five year period. There should be provision to continue 'successful' Vice-Chancellors for periods upto ten years, without going through the same process of selecting afresh, since the process brings in uncertainties in administration.

- iii. In selecting the members of the Syndicate and Senate, the Vice-Chancellor should be consulted. There should also be provision to remove such members from the university bodies, when once the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor are convinced of the negative role of such persons. Necessary statutory provisions should be made in the university Acts and Statutes, for the purpose.
- iv. Senior positions in the university administrative set up such as Registrar and Deans should be on tenure basis, with a provision for the Vice-Chancellor to select his own team of officials from among the seniors in the university to work with him on the administrative side.
- v. The University rules and regulations in most cases are outmoded and do not suit the present day conditions. The office procedures, which are identical in most cases to those in the Government should be drastically changed, so as to simplify decision making process, with complete decentralisation of administrative powers. This is also true in respect of financial administration. It should be recognized that the Government procedures of financial management would not suit autonomous academic institutions which have to function with set time targets in dealing with students and staff. The Deans, Principals, Heads of Departments, etc. should be given full administrative and financial powers.

- vi. The general attitude of the academic, administrative and supporting staff as well as the student community in the university is to look to the Vice-Chancellor for everything. This happens even when the decision making authority rests at the lower levels. It is, therefore, necessary to educate everyone concerned from the Chancellor and Ministers down to the common man on the administrative set up of the Universities, and the role of the various bodies of the University; every staff member, on the academic set up in administering and managing the affairs of the colleges and class-rooms, students and their hostels; and the supporting staff on their obligations to the university administration.
- vii. The staff of the university at all levels, from the Vice-Chancellor down to the lowest administrative office assistant should be trained in the scientific management. It should be made clear to the administrative staff that university administration is incidental to academic programmes and the academic programmes are meant to support teaching and learning process, in which the interests of the students are supreme.
- viii. The university Acts should be examined in detail from the point of view of day-to-day running of the universities and efficient administration and suitably amended.

7.4 SETTLING OF DISPUTES

It is strongly recommended that measures should be undertaken to ensure that the education system is free from the ill-effects of politics and political interference. The question of classifying education as an "Industry" with reference to disputes between management and teachers needs to be reexamined. From the point of view of maintenance of academic atmosphere and ensuring effective teaching and learning in a tranquil setting, the question of banning strikes, dharnas, gharoes and other industry-derived trade-union activities should be given careful and serious consideration. It is recommended that education should become a "politics-free zone" functioning in a purely

academic atmosphere. Any disputes arising in any educational institution should be settled by a special tribunal consisting of academics and education management professionals. A speedy disposal of the disputes would ensure the elimination of strikes and other undesirable methods to get the grievances redressed.

7.5 MANAGEMENT PATTERN

The following management pattern of education is suggested at the union, state and local levels.

At the Union level: Two wings are contemplated to deal with matters of administration and general management of education. A National Board of Education with the Education Minister as Chairman should be set up. The Board should consist of experienced professionals in management of education. The second wing would be a National Academy of Education to deal with all academic matters.

At the State level: Correspondingly, at the State level, there should be a State Board of Education with the Education Minister as Chairman and a State Academy of Education. The following chart (Next page) illustrates the proposed management set up.

University Grants Commission: There are over 140 universities and 5200 colleges. The affiliated colleges happen to be the weakest link in the chain; but they account for over 85% of the undergraduate and 55% of the post-graduate students. The UGC may have to initiate special measures to improve these institutions. It is desirable that the U.G.C. sets up four regional offices in the country.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

At the Centre

Administration

National Board of Education with Education Minister as Chairman and full time and part-time members

Policy Formulation and Academic Standards

National Academy of Education to deal with purely academic matters with full time and part-time members



At the State level

State Board of Education with Education Minister as Chairman with full time and part time members

State Academy of Education for academic matters with full time and part-time members



At the local level

Education Districts

District council for Secondary Education. Non-official Chairman with District Educational Officer as Secretary.

District Council for Primary Education. Non-official Chairman with District Educational Officer as Secretary



Management Committee for each Secondary School with 1/3 women members, with Headmaster as Secretary



Panchayat level committee for Elementary Schools with atleast 50% women members with Headmaster as Secretary

CHAPTER 8

FINANCING OF EDUCATION

8.1 GENERAL

The gap between the educational requirements even in 1990 and the possible budgetary allocation of resources from public funds will be substantial. According to an estimate, assuming some degree of success in population control measures and the accomplishment of universalisation of elementary education by 1990, as envisaged, even at the same unit cost the budgetary requirements for school education will be four times the level of allocation in 1980-81. When we consider the financial needs of higher education, vocational education and other components, the requirements will be such that new avenues of financing education at all levels must be thought of to meet the challenges.

The Sixth Plan is ending with the union and state Governments spending about Rs.6200 crores per annum on school and university education including professional education and adult education. The union government's responsibility is financing Technical Education, Central Universities (100 per cent), National Institutes, CBSE Schools (100 per cent), State Universities and Colleges (through UGC plan grants which average 30 per cent) and Adult

Education (about 70 per cent). Now there is the proposal for one model secondary school in each district costed at Rs.800 crores and for a national curriculum and national text books, as yet uncosted. Some line of distinctive responsibility in the educational field between the union government and the states will enable financial divisions to be made appropriately.

Among the ills that besiege the school education system, lack of adequate infrastructure such as buildings and equipment, lack of adequate number of teachers and their poor preparation may be mentioned as those requiring urgent attention. It has been estimated that India will require at the elementary education levels nearly 22 lakhs of additional teachers by 1990 over the 1981 figure of 21.7 lakhs, if universalisation of elementary education is to be achieved by that time. Another estimate points out that there are over one lakh schools without building and even where there is some sort of a structure for the school building, furniture such as mats, benches, tables and black boards are sadly lacking. The recent national working group on vocational education constituted by the Government of India has estimated the budget for vocationalisation of education at Rs.2200 to 2900 crores, for 10% and 25% diversion respectively. The higher education budget including technical education will also be a sizable sum.

8.2 INCOME CONSIDERATIONS

- * In seeking new avenues of financing for meeting challenges in education both in the short term and the long term, far greater role should be played by private initiative and philanthropy.
- * Industries should be encouraged by adequate incentives to participate in the national process including by way of assuming responsibility for worker education, vocational education and continuing education.

- * Industries should also be enabled to adopt some schools in the neighbourhood.
- * Private enterprise and charitable trusts should be enabled to take part in a large way in the development of the infrastructure for education not only at the higher levels but also at the school stage.
- * Educational institutions should be enabled to obtain loans and grants from term-lending institutions such as IDBI, IFCI, NABARD, LIC, etc. It may be worthwhile considering the establishment of a separate financial institution to cater to the capital needs of the educational system.

All these measures need to be instituted with utmost urgency.

Considering income for education, a major question arises from the fact that as 80 per cent of school and college-completers are from the top 20 per cent of society, the financing of education by the union and state governments (from general revenues which to the extent of 83 per cent arise from commodity taxation paid mainly by the poor masses) has become a means of transferring resources from the poor majority to the rich minority. One correction for this is that except for the students from poor families (to be established by an income test) who should be given freeships, scholarships and grants for hostels, books and clothes, all other students should pay fees to cover their cost of education. In respect of those who can afford to pay, there is no need to subsidise education at the higher level. Only children from poor families should be entitled to scholarship, etc. By this, grants payable to colleges and other institutions of higher learning would be considerably reduced.

In the meanwhile all fees (except for children from poor families)-tuition, library, sports, laboratories, etc.-should be raised during the next 2 years to cover the rate of inflation since the time they were fixed.

8.3 EXPENDITURE CONSIDERATIONS

On the expenditure side:

- a. Priority should be given to primary education and adult education to give them the full funds for building schools, furnishing them and building centres for adult education.
- b. Expenditure on teacher salaries which accounts for 98 per cent of the primary education budget and 80 per cent of secondary should be carefully scrutinised to cut all malpractices.
- c. Expenditure on university and college education should be stabilised as far as public funds are concerned, with no limit on the private funding of higher education through fees and donations.
- d. In higher secondary, public funding of vocational streams for the poor students who should be in a majority, should be ensured.

In the context of a large proportion of schools and colleges lacking in even the rudimentary laboratory equipment of fairly good quality, there is a need to promote and support industrial units for fabrication of certain standard items of equipment for instruction. These may be supported by the Government through subsidy or tax concession or through a combination of measures. A large proportion of existing schools and colleges work only for a limited number of hours each day leading to underutilisation of the

facility. The cost-effectiveness of the existing infrastructure can be enhanced and a larger number of persons can participate in the formal education system if a fuller utilisation of the facilities in existing institutions can be promoted. This will mean working more than one shift and utilisation of facilities for vocational and industry-related activities during holidays and vacations.

CHAPTER 9

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The National Policy on Education (1968) rightly stresses that, of all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the teacher is certainly the most important. The success of all educational endeavours invariably and ultimately depends upon the teachers' character, qualities, educational qualifications and professional competence. Unfortunately, the role of the teacher has diminished considerably and his importance and impact in the educational system has been gradually declining, especially in the context of the very rapid quantitative growth in the system during the last four decades. Only if the dignity of the teacher and his principal role in the educational system are restored, the system can deliver the goods and be effective. Teachers must be accorded an honoured place in society and their emoluments and other service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory having regard to their qualifications, preparation, and responsibilities. Their service conditions must be such that the right type of person is attracted to the profession and continues in it after entry.

Among the causes for decline in the role of the teacher may be mentioned the fact that he is no longer able to exert adequate influence individually on a very large number of youngsters who are to be taught by him. His work is very often judged by the type of examination results that he produces and, therefore, much of his time and energy is spent in equipping the students for examination and helping them to somehow go through the various test routines. Added to this, other mass communication media such as radio, television and films attempt to play equally significant parts in education. It is often a fact that the atmosphere outside all educational institutions, generated by vested, non-academic interests and sustained by conflicting ideologies, largely neutralises the good work by the teacher. In formulating the new educational policy there is a real need to enhance the teaching and guiding role of the teacher, protect his academic freedom and remove any obstacles to his speaking and writing about significant national and international issues. The teacher education, particularly in-service education, should definitely receive due emphasis.

The following steps are needed to ensure that the profession of teaching attracts talent and the level of academic leadership required is developed in the country:

- i. The Indian Education Service may be revived and positions of policy and decision making as well as senior academic positions be held by the members of the service.

- ii. The teacher must be involved in all stages of academic process - preparation of syllabi and curriculum, instruction and evaluation.
- iii. The existing service conditions, emoluments and career prospects must be thoroughly examined and revised in a manner that the service is worthy of the ambitions of talented men and women.
- iv. As a matter of policy there must be inbuilt provision for direct recruitment at all levels.

Along with the improvement of his status and emoluments, the teacher should be expected to play his role in preserving the academic atmosphere in the educational institutions. Teachers should not take part in active politics and should not become members of any political party. Any grievance should be got redressed through peaceful means without in any way affecting the functioning of the institution. Special tribunals at various levels may be established to speedily remove any legitimate grievance of the teaching community. Strikes, agitations and demonstrations should be banned. It is important to develop a separate educational culture rather than inject the industrial culture into the academic institutions. This aspect requires a thorough examination and an appropriate system should be evolved to maintain the high status of the teachers and also ensure the academic sanctity of the educational institutions. We should create conditions in which strikes or agitations by the teachers or the students would be no longer necessary or tolerated.



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