

Task Force on NCERT

Report on Organisational Reforms



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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Dear Smt. Kaul,

In pursuance of a recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee, the Ministry of Education and Culture had set up a Task Force to examine the role and structure of NCERT. You were kind enough to nominate me as its Chairman.

2. Besides discussing amongst ourselves in depth the various issues, members of the Task Force held extensive consultations with officers of the State Governments, faculty of university education departments and NCERT, and eminent educationists. We had also collected responses from different sources to a comprehensive questionnaire which we had formulated. Thus, we had the benefit of wide-ranging consultations with the expert advice from a cross-section of persons deeply concerned with NCERT and its activities.

3. I have now great pleasure in submitting to you the Report of the Task Force. I am confident that the Ministry of Education and NCERT will give serious consideration to the various recommendations that we have made so that NCERT is enabled to play the vital role that is expected of it.

4. May I take this opportunity to thank you for nominating me as the Chairman of this important Task Force. I am grateful to you for the confidence that you reposed in me. It has been for me a very rewarding experience.

5. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude for the wholehearted cooperation that I received from the members of the Task Force—Dr. S.K. Mitra, Prof. V.G. Kulkarni, Prof. Satya Bhushan, Shri P.K. Umashankar, Shri J.A. Kalyanakrishnan and Shri S. Sathyam. I would, in particular, like to record my appreciation of the role that Shri Sathyam played as Member

(iv)

Secretary of the Task Force in completing the task assigned to us.

With kind regards,

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-

(MADHURI R. SHAH)

SMT. SHEILA KAUL
Minister of State for Education
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(vi)

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Summary of Major Findings and Recommendations

A. Overall Perspective

1. NCERT must confine attention to school education. Its resources must be reasonably distributed between different stages of school education with elementary education getting a major share. (110)*

2. NCERT should not be saddled with work relating to adult education. (111)

3. Programme and activities of NCERT have necessarily to reflect the national concern for universalisation of elementary education. A distinct and deliberate bias towards the problem of development of elementary education must inform its role performance. (88)

4. NCERT has to develop capabilities to play the role of a national think tank in the area of school education. NCERT will need to develop the culture and capability to promote organised and purposeful debates and discussions, in a professional way about the problems, concerns, issues, etc., which afflict, hamper sound educational development. (89)

B. Concerns in School Education Relevant to NCERT's Role

5. There is a high percentage of single teacher schools at the primary stage. It is necessary to devise ways and means of improving the quality of education in such schools. NCERT should engage itself in innovative work including preparation of materials, development of methods to strengthen teacher competence, etc. This is a major concern with the States. Changing the hours as well as the duration of a school day should be another major area of experimentation and innova-

*Paragraph number.

tion, where the States should work in close collaboration with NCERT. (37)

6. Having provided a primary school within walking distance for every child, it is now urgently necessary to identify socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and pedagogic factors that impede universalisation of elementary education and to take appropriate and bold measures to overcome them. (40)

7. There is considerable scope for discovering and developing the kind of education that will attract girls, who constitute a major segment of the non-enrolled population, to attend schools. It will be necessary to develop educational facilities, and not just schools, in a manner which will suit the requirements of girls in relation to the economy and the society where they live. (42)

8. A practical problem in promoting girls education is the difficulty in recruitment and posting of women teachers. It may be necessary to make relevant changes in the rules, for which, studies need to be made both at the national and State levels. (43)

9. Target-oriented planning needs to be developed, backed by research support, in order to make education accessible and meaningful for different groups of disadvantaged children. (44)

10. It is necessary to devise appropriate strategies of making education available to the handicapped children in the ordinary schools through special training of teachers, production of special books and accessories, etc. There is vast scope for innovations in this field. (46)

11. The magnitude of the task in developing non-formal education throughout the country is formidable, because it will require training of teachers on a large scale, development of appropriate instructional materials, proper supervision and administration of the learning centres (not schools which focus on teaching) and developing of relevant curricula in relation to the various groups of learners with diverse occupational, economic, social and cultural backgrounds and handicaps. Much research and experimentation will be required as well as firm support from the State because not

only do habits die hard but also anything new is viewed with reservation. (49)

12. The importance of early childhood education is highlighted on all account—for its significance for learning, development of the child, and as a strategy for promoting equilisation of educational opportunity. In this context the development of appropriate instructional materials and the training of early childhood education workers are the two major challenges which have to be met. (52)

13. One of the strategies of universalisation of education is the use of modern educational technology, particularly the use of mass media, for communication and development. The problem here is one of establishing appropriate structural arrangements, building linkages, developing flexible curriculum arrangements, and establishing innovative management practices. The assimilation and exploitation of the advances in communication technology for supporting, facilitating and accelerating learning and the process of educational development is thus a major emerging concern. (53)

14. The question of transformation of the educational system is one of quality and orientation of education at all levels, requiring changes in structure, curriculum, processes of teaching and learning, teacher preparation, textbooks and other instructional materials, system of evaluation, supervision, establishment linkages with agriculture, industry and social services, etc. The need for quality improvement and value orientation is not specific to school but common to the entire educational system. (55)

15. How often the curriculum should be revised and updated, what principles, besides knowledge explosion, should prevail in curriculum revision and how the total 'load on the child can be kept within reasonable limits without sacrificing standards and relevance, are the burning issues of the day, and will remain major issues. (60)

16. A major concern of educational development now as well as for the next two decades will be vocationalisation of the higher secondary stage, with all its implications for work experience as part of the school curriculum in the elementary stage of education. A more challenging task for

vocationalisation is to think of skills which will diversify our economy, particularly the rural economy. (63)

17. The two major concerns in vocationalisation are terminality of the +2 stage and self-employment. The insistence on terminality will mean that the standard of knowledge and skills required for vocations should be achieved by students completing the +2 level vocational courses. There are several issues related to self employment and unless these are resolved successfully self-employment as a goal of vocationalisation can only be for very few resourceful persons. (65)

18. A new orientation has to be given to Indian education and the values of humanism, rationalism, socialism, as well as ethical and moral values will have to enlighten the entire curriculum and work in our schools. (68)

19. There is need for transformation of the pre-service teacher education structures and processes at all levels, if the strategies to meet the challenges in school education are to succeed. (69)

20. Whereas pre-service teacher education in the one thousand five hundred institutions at the elementary school and secondary school stages, needs immediate attention, we must emphasise the need for wider and better facilities for in-service education of teachers at all levels. The three million teacher who are already in the system need to upgrade their knowledge and skills, improve their competence and develop proper value orientation in order to match the efforts that are being made by others in the system to improve education. There is need for networking, where universities and colleges take up the responsibility of upgrading the knowledge and professional competence of secondary school teachers and they in turn that of elementary school teachers. (71)

21. It is necessary to utilise the mass media of communication like the radio and television to reach out to teachers wherever they are, because one of the constraints in organising on-campus in-service education is the cost of travel, board and lodging. (72)

22. Distance learning systems have to be developed for

teachers as much as for students of which correspondence may be a part, but of which the more important part should be to develop self-instructional materials, multi-media packages, and the like to cater to the diversity of background, knowledge, skill, and status of teachers. (72)

23. In order to counter the evils of one public examination dominating entire schooling, it is necessary to develop continuous assessment of pupils, unit-wise testing, cumulative record of pupil achievement, periodic achievement tests and improvement of the final summative evaluation, procedures and management. (75)

24. It is necessary to have a data base against which the rise or fall in the standards of education can be measured. This requires the development and use of carefully prepared tests of educational progress, tests which will measure fairly accurately those learning outcomes which are not merely specific to curricular topics but are more general in nature and cut across topics and over the years. (76)

25. Disparities and laxity prevail within and among the States in standards of education and students' attainment. A major concern in education would, therefore, be the designing of a nationwide system of testing students' knowledge, skills and aptitudes. Admission to institutions of higher learning, particularly those offering facilities for advanced scientific and technological education, on the basis of the testing done by the National Testing Service would, in our view, require urgent attention. (77)

26. No country can afford to neglect its talented pupils irrespective of their background. This is one area which requires considerable work to develop a programme of testing in order to identify talent as early as possible, at all stages of education and even more importantly from all sections of society. It is essential to devise institutional arrangements, and not just award merit scholarships, in order to help each talented child to realise in fullest measure its potentialities. (78)

C. How should NCERT Act ?

27. It will be necessary to build up a Policy Research

Group in NCERT which will work towards strengthening the data bases as well as the research bases for policy studies, promoting and coordinating policy research not only in NCERT but also in SCERTs/SIEs and University Departments of Social Sciences/Education and other institutions of social science research.

It will be useful, in the long run, to promote collaborative research or funded research so that the initiative and capability of the States as well as those of NCERT are improved in the process. (89)

28. NCERT should identify from time to time the broad national objectives in school education and formulate programmes of action appropriate to their realisation. In doing this NCERT will have to keep in view the advances taking place at the global level and the special characteristics or needs of particular States. A closer partnership with the States in programme formulation in a consulting role would be beneficial both to the State and NCERT, by way of sharing of the expertise already built up. (90)

29. NCERT should have a role even in *formulation* of policies/programmes and its advice should be available to State Education Departments. (112)

30. NCERT should advise and assist (on request) the States about updating and upgrading their academic inputs, development programme for school and teacher education.

NCERT has to develop a partnership role with each State, more especially with the educationally backward States, and collaborate in the study and identification of unique problems, features and needs of a state (or pockets within a state) and in the formulation of plans and programmes appropriate to its special circumstances. (91)

31. Linkages with the States can be most effective only if State-level counterpart organisations develop. It could be a function of NCERT to promote the development of such organisations with the help of RCE, and in consultation with the State concerned.

Special Central financial assistance should be available to speed up this development. (115)

32. The need for professionalisation in the process of educational development and reconstruction calls for proper development of State-level institutions like SCERTs/SIEs. NCERT's role in this context is that of institution building, not so much with money, as with resource development, which can be done by :

- (a) networking of NCERT with SCERT/SIE and RCEs;
- (b) loan of NCERT personnel to SCERT/SIE;
- (c) secondment of State Government personnel to NCERT;
- (d) training of State personnel through course work, workshop, seminar, etc;
- (e) collaborative research studies;
- (f) collaboration in the training function of the SCERT/SIE. (92)

33. NCERT's research function must find a concordance with its objectives. Therefore, it should concentrate on action research, evaluative research, application-oriented research and policy research.

NCERT's in-house research should be limited and highly selective. It should in fact be consistent with its role to promote research outside of NCERT, to increasingly "farm out" research, fund sponsored research, to commission research studies, and undertake collaborative research. (93)

34. NCERT, in its training role, must concentrate on such activities as would effectively contribute to the continuous improvement of teacher competence and quality. It must also take adequate care of the emerging training needs of a new kind, like training for educational surveys and their organisation, training for application of educational technology, etc. It should develop its training function mainly through activities of an innovative, experimental, research or extension character.

The objectives of NCERT's training function should comprise :

- (a) developing (and proving for adoption) innovative teacher training programme;
- (b) developing and institutionalising (including funding)

continuing education programmes for teachers in the State;

- (c) training of teacher educators in the States;
- (d) training of key personnel in new methods (applications of educational technology);
- (e) involving in the direct training programmes for teachers in special circumstances in the case of States critically deficient in training resources ;
- (f) developing training methodology (including distance learning systems), materials and manuals;
- (g) developing suitable mechanisms of "quality control" of teacher education at the elementary level. (UGC is concerned with teacher education for the secondary level). (94)

35. Only innovative pre-service training programmes should continue, but even these should be evaluated for wider adoption after adequate trial. However, in-service training and extension education must necessarily preponderate. (118)

The 4-year integrated courses also must stand on the same footing as other innovative programmes in the sense that these should be evaluated in due course for wider adoption.

(119)

36. NCERT should play an important part in developing models for monitoring and evaluation of different educational programmes, designing tools or indicators for measurement of progress or change, bring out in a disseminable form some of the more relevant and notable experiences of other countries. (95)

37. NCERT must provide expert service to the States for monitoring and evaluation, diagnostic studies, strategic studies, development of innovative models, etc. (114)

38. NCERT should develop an effective clearing-house in all matters pertaining to development of school education. It should keep abreast of comparable experiences and experiments in the international scene to enrich its "clearing-house" role. It has also to devise suitable mechanism of dissemination of information on matters of professional interest to the teacher in the field and the school directly and effectively. (98)

39. NCERT as an innovator/experimentor/programme consultant/designer, etc., should involve itself in proving the "workability" of the innovation/programme, as the case may be, under actual "field" conditions. (99)

D. Structural Reforms

40. NCERT may be given a legal charter and made into a statutory body. (102)

The legal provisions have to ensure that the powers conferred are in conformity with its objectives and functions and safeguard against factors leading to isolation of the NCERT from other academic system, (including universities), or enabling it to exercise unintended powers of control/ regulation (like accreditation with reference to teacher training and in the process acquiring administrative functions and weakening its academic character. (103)

NCERT should be enabled to award its own degrees by giving it the status of a deemed university. (105)

41. To lend the necessary pride of position to the apex educational research and training organisation, the Union Minister for Education should continue to be the President of the General Council. Likewise, the General Council should continue to provide for representation of the Ministers of Education from States/UTs. Such an arrangement, apart from lending the necessary status to the organisation, will also help in promoting appropriate linkages between NCERT and its State level counterparts. (122-i)

For purposes of speeding up decision-making and implementation of activities it will be desirable to have the Director of the Council as the Chairman of the Executive Committee. The division of responsibility and the delegation of authority between the President and the Director should follow the model of a Chancellor vis-a-vis a Vice Chancellor in a University set-up. To be specific, the Director should have substantial delegated authority as regards formulation/ implementation of programme/projects. Consultations with the President should, as far as possible, be limited to policy issues. In particular, the Director should be vested with full authority for personnel administration. Even in respect of

Professors he should be declared the appointing/disciplinary authority so that he is able to effectively control the faculty/staff of the Council. (122-ii & iii)

With the idea of providing a built-in arrangement for promoting closer contacts between NCERT on the one hand and the States/UTs on the other, it will be desirable to include Education Secretaries/Directors of States/UTs by rotation as members of the Executive Committee.

If NCERT is given a deemed university status for its training and research functions, effective linkage will have to be established between the Executive Committee of NCERT and the academic governing arrangements of the deemed university. (122-iv)

Considering that NCERT will have largely to cater to the requirements of States/UTs, it will be necessary to provide for representation of their interests/views in the Programme Advisory Committee. Accordingly, selected Directors of Education/Directors of SCERT (or SIE) may be included as members of PAC. This may be done, if necessary, by increasing the number of members. In order to keep down the size of PAC, representation of the NCERT faculty could also be on a selective basis. Here again, effective linkages will have to be established between PAC and the academic governing arrangements in the deemed university. (122-v)

42. The basic system of management through committees supplemented by delegation of authority to selected functionaries should continue. It will, however, be necessary to effect some changes in the composition of certain committees. (122)

43. NIE should focus on five major areas :

- (i) Curriculum and Instructional Material Development;
- (ii) Measurement and Evaluation;
- (iii) Training and Extension;
- (iv) Pre-school and Elementary Education; and
- (v) Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation.

Within this framework the departments should be regrouped as follows :

- (i) Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities (will concern itself also with curriculum development and instructional materials);
- (ii) Department of Education in Science and Mathematics (will concern itself with curriculum development and instructional materials);
- (iii) Department of Vocationalisation of Education (will concern itself with curriculum development and instructional materials);
- (iv) Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Evaluation;
- (v) Department of Survey and Data Processing;
- (vi) Department of Teacher Education and Extension;
- (vii) Department of Special Education (including education of the disabled);
- (viii) Department of Pre-School and Elementary Education;
- (ix) Department of Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation;
- (x) Department of Field Coordination;
- (xi) Department of Library, Documentation, and Dissemination of Information. (138-139)

44. The Departments should be delegated with substantial powers, particularly those dealing with programme development and implementation. For instance, instead of the prevailing position, where the authority rests with joint Director/Director, the departmental heads should be given the powers of administrative and financial sanction of programmes once they have been approved by the Programme Advisory Committee and specific budget allocated to them.

(142)

The Joint Director (including the Director of CIET which will be a position equivalent to that of a Joint Director) should in all respects be seen to be the second in command. With that purpose in view, the salary scale of Joint Director should be so adjusted as to be definitely superior to that of Principals/Heads of Departments and of Professors. Likewise, Heads of Departments should also be given a special pay to give them a higher status vis-a-vis Professors. (144)

45. All research, development, and extension work

undertaken by the departments should have clear-cut foci. They should also indicate the linkages among programmes. They should present a composite rather than a disparate view of the departmental activity. Programme development including research activity, should be largely a departmental activity rather than, as at present, an individual affair. Each department should therefore have a departmental advisory committee which should meet frequently to review the position in their spheres of work, evaluate the feedback received from different sources, identify new thrusts, etc. (146)

46. Apart from representation of Field Advisers and Regional Centres on the NIEs Programme Advisory Committee, an annual meeting of the Field Advisers must be held by the Field Coordination Unit. (148)

47. At least two more regional centres should be established. A regrouping of the States should also be undertaken. While it would be for the Government to decide upon the location of new centres, we strongly recommend that one of these be established to cater to the educational needs of the north-eastern region. (153)

48. Regional Colleges of Education should be developed into Regional Centres of NCERT. These Regional Centres should be concerned with the following :

- (a) Policy studies in relation to the conditions obtaining in the States ;
- (b) advise/assist the States in formulation of policies/programmes ;
- (c) support and monitor implementation in States nationally accepted policies/programmes ;
- (d) sponsoring of research which helps in identifying and solving educational problems of the States ;
- (e) in-service training to meet the specific requirements of the States, particularly for teacher educators of elementary teacher training institution by employing, if necessary, course personnel from the region to overcome language difficulties ;
- (f) collaboration with State-level institutions for educational development of the States ;

- (g) innovative programmes in pre-service training and in emerging areas like software development for radio/television transmission ; education of the disabled, etc. ;
- (h) consultancy services to State-level institutions ;
- (i) documentation and dissemination of educational information ;
- (j) interaction with university education departments.

Considering the priority attached and required to be given to it, universalisation of elementary education should provide the major focus for the activities of the regional centres.

(152 & 155)

49. Each Regional Centre should have two main committees viz. the Academic Council which will be concerned with the pre-service training and research programmes and the Programme Advisory Committee which will deal with those activities which are of immediate relevance to the States — curriculum development, in-service training, performance evaluation and so on.

50. There should be periodic shifting of the faculty sources from one division to the other. This interchange will be helpful on the one hand in providing academic and research support to States' educational development and, on the other, in identifying field problems for investigation and programme development.

The proposals approved by the two committees of a regional centre should be reported to the Programme Advisory Committee of NCERT so as to ensure that a broadly common framework governs all the activities that NCERT undertakes as a whole.

(157)

51. The expanded role of the regional centre would require that it be headed by an academically competent professional. With a view to ensuring that she/he is able to provide the necessary leadership and command in respect of the staff, it is recommended that the head be given a status above that of a professor. This could be achieved, among other things, by giving him/her a necessary scale above that of the professor.

(158)

In order to provide for a permanent mechanism coordinating activities of the field offices and receiving feedback on the programmes/activities that the centre organises, each Centre should have a field coordination unit.

52. The main functions of the field office should include :
- (i) liaison with the State department of education and university education department ;
 - (ii) collaboration with SCERT and other institutions in undertaking status studies of educational progress and needs of the State ;
 - (iii) assistance to the State in policy formulation and programmes development ;
 - (iv) communication to the Regional Centre and NIE the problems confronted by the State for which specific programmes would require to be developed ;
 - (v) identification of the States' needs, if necessary, by undertaking special studies ;
 - (vi) dissemination on behalf of NIE and Regional Centres, of information and educational trends ;
 - (vii) feedback to NIE/RCE on the programme conducted by the NIE departments and regional centres ;
 - (viii) organisation or getting organised in-service training programmes for State personnel ;
 - (ix) supervision of the Centres of Continuing Education ;
 - (x) compilation of information on educational developments in the State as well as on the implementation of nationally accepted policies and programmes. (161)

53. In the context of the role visualised for it, the field offices need substantial strengthening. Each field office should be headed by a senior level faculty member (Reader or Professor). He/She should be supported by 3-4 academic (Readers and Lecturers) and supporting staff. The size of the field office may vary with reference to problems and area of the operation. (162)

54. Each field office should have an advisory committee for assisting it in programme formulation. Representation on this committee should be drawn from State Education Departments, SCERTs, training institutions, schools, the

Regional Centre of Education, NIE and university departments of education. The representation of field offices on committees of Regional Centres and NIE should be ensured to facilitate two-way communication. (163)

55. Every State should have a field office so that NCERT is able to provide assistance to the States on a continuous basis. The field office, if possible, may be located on the premises of the SCERT/SIE of the State so that there is constant interaction between the two in the development of programmes. (164)

56. The reorganisation proposed should not require large-scale creation of new posts. It should, as far as possible, be undertaken by suitable redeployment of existing staff.

There should be constant interchange of staff between NCERT, the university departments and State-level organisations. Similarly, there should also be regular exchange of staff between the NIE, the Regional Centres and the field offices. (165 & 166)

E. Other Recommendations

57. The Central Institute of Educational Technology while having substantial functional autonomy, should function under the umbrella of NCERT.

The servicing role of CIET needs highlighting. While production of educational programmes for television and radio can be taken up by it independently, in respect of other audio-visual materials that it develops/produces, the principal objective should be to support and enrich the activities of the various departments/units of NCERT. (149-ii)

58. We understand that maintenance and control of standards in teacher education are being brought under the purview of the University Grants Commission. This should have a substantial influence on improvement of teacher education in the country.

However, NCERT should continue to provide the NCTE an institutional mechanism for indepth studies and for extension of its academic functions. From this point of view, NCERT should continue to be its academic arm. (149-v)

59. NCERT should establish formal linkages with other related organisations under the Ministry of Education, collaborate with the States, enter into bilateral agreements with ICSSR/NIPCCD/Universities, promote participation by other organisations in its seminars, and widely disseminate its publications. However, linkages with KVS, CBSE, and the States should be singled out for special consideration. (121)

60. The volume of administrative work in the holding of National Talent Search Scholarship (NTSS) examinations and the administration of the award of scholarships is a burden which needs to be taken away from NCERT. If and when a National Testing Service comes up, it would be appropriate to entrust the administration of the NTSS examination to that body.

If, however, the National Testing Service is not to be set up in the foreseeable future, NCERT may retain the responsibility for designing the tests for the talent search scheme but the holding of examinations and administration of the scholarship scheme may be transferred to CBSE. (117)

61. Mass production of textbooks should not be NCERT's direct responsibility. The Publication Department should be delinked and organised as a functionally autonomous, self-administering and self-financing organisation. While in the short run it may continue to function under NCERT's umbrella, ultimately it should be developed as an independent establishment. During the transitional phase, it should have its own managing committee with the Director of NCERT as the ex-officio Chairman. (149-i)

Mass production and supply of science kits should not be NCERT's function. A separate organisation as in the case of publication of textbooks, should take over this responsibility. The existing functions of designing and development of science equipment should be entrusted to the Department of Education in Science and Mathematics. (149-iii)

The Ministry of Education and Culture should make alternative arrangements for large-scale production of these educational materials. One possible method would be the

setting up of a national corporation of educational materials, as an autonomous commercial organisation. (150)

62. NCERT should develop an appropriate institutional mechanism within itself to periodically “look within”, as it were, and reassess its role/functions/activities in the changing flux of educational development, and initiate processes of finding timely readjustments. (97)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was set up in 1961 as an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Education by amalgamating the various specific purpose institutions that the Ministry of Education had set up earlier. The establishment of these institutions—the Bureau of Textbooks Research and Educational and Vocational Guidance, National Institutes of Basic Education and Audio-Visual Education etc.—had followed the acceptance, by the Government, of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953. The main purpose of establishing these institutions was to provide academic inputs to the school system with a view to improving its quality. The desirability of an all purpose institution like NCERT followed from the need for developing a comprehensive and integrated plan of improving the quality of school education.

2. The Memorandum of Association of the Council indicates, in broad terms, the role that the Council is expected to play in the educational development of the country. The Memorandum lays down the primary function of the Council to be “to assist and advise the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in the implementation of its policies and major programmes in the field of education, particularly school education”. For the realization of these objectives, the Council is expected to :

- (a) Conduct, aid, promote and coordinate research in a ll branches of school education ;

- (b) Organise pre-service and in-service training, mainly at an advanced level ;
- (c) Organise extension services for institutions, organisations and agencies engaged in educational reconstruction ;
- (d) Develop and experiment with improved educational techniques, practices and innovations ;
- (e) Collect, compile, process and disseminate educational information ;
- (f) Assist State-level institutions, organisations and agencies in developing and implementing programmes for qualitative improvement of school education ;
- (g) Collaborate with international organisations like the UNICEF, UNESCO, etc., and with national-level educational institutions of other countries ;
- (h) Extend facilities for training and study to educational personnel from other countries ; and
- (i) Function as the academic secretariat for the National Council for Teacher Education.

3. The Memorandum also provides for periodic reviews of the organization and functions of NCERT so as to make it more effective. There have been many reviews either of NCERT as a whole or of some of its parts/activities, the notable ones being the review by the Nag Chaudhuri Committee in 1968, the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) in 1977, and Shri P. Sabanayagam (formerly Education Secretary) in 1979.

4. While considering the annual plan proposals of the Ministry of Education in 1978 the Planning Commission suggested that the structure and programmes of NCERT should be critically reviewed by an independent committee with a view to highlighting the role which it should play in providing necessary academic and technical support to make school education functional and purposeful.

5. All this came to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee in 1981 when it took up for examination various aspects of NCERT's work. In its 48th Report, the Public Accounts Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) made several

recommendations about the work and progress of NCERT. Para 6.16 of their report reads as follows :

“The Committee have earlier in this Report drawn attention to some of the constraints and inhibiting factors that impede the proper function of the NCERT as a catalytic agent in the field of education. And this, despite the fact that over the years, its working had been subjected to a series of reviews. The Committee find that a number of important recommendations made in the reports have still not reached the important and critical stage of implementation. The Committee, therefore, suggest that a Task Force consisting of the representatives of the Ministry, the NCERT, and some eminent educationists, should be set up expeditiously to consider within a stipulated period of time the urgent problem of restructuring of the NCERT to restore to it the dynamic, creative, and nationally useful role of effectively helping the educational system of our federal democratic republic. Naturally such a Task Force would draw guidance and help from the several valid recommendations and suggestions made in the reports of the various Committees referred to in the preceding paragraphs”.

6. In pursuance of this recommendation, the Government of India in the Ministry of Education decided to set up this Task Force with the following terms of reference :

- (i) To make a critical assessment of the role performed by NCERT in terms of the long and short term objectives laid down for it in its Memorandum of Association.
- (ii) To review the recommendations made by earlier Committees, notably the ones named by the Public Accounts Committee, with a view to determine their relevance and significance for the Council's future development.
- (iii) To suggest an optimal organisational structure for the Council with a view to enabling it to meet the emerging challenges of future educational development in school education, particularly from the point of view of improving its efficiency and productivity.

(iv) In the light of the above, to suggest the overall management and decision making structures and processes for the Council.

7. A copy of the Government Resolution setting up the Task Force is attached as *Annexure 1*.

8. Within this framework, we adopted a positive approach in a futuristic perspective. The lookback was limited to trace the developments in the right context and was not undertaken for purposes of fault-finding. The emphasis was on identification of the areas of emerging concern so that NCERT's role could be suitably delineated. Bearing in mind the fact that in the field of school education, particularly elementary education, State Governments are the major users of the facilities and services offered by NCERT, care was taken to ascertain their views in detail. This consultation was wide-ranging to cover policies, priorities, programmes, organisational structure, staffing, etc. Since NCERT's effort has been to encourage establishment of State-level counterpart organizations so as to institutionalise the facilities and services, consultations were also held about and with SCERTs/SIEs. The Task Force had also the benefit of the views of eminent educationists and the employees of NCERT, particularly the RCEs.

A list of the States visited and the persons met with is attached as *Annexure 2*.

9. To cover the chartered ground, we had the benefit of the rich experience of its members. Also, background papers containing useful information on the following topics were prepared on the request of the Task Force :

- (i) Work done with reference to the Council's role and functions ;
- (ii) Problems, weaknesses and irrelevancies ;
- (iii) Interest groups that make demands on NCERT ;
- (iv) Note on the offices of Field Advisers ;
- (v) A note on emerging trends and priorities ;
- (vi) A note on counterpart organisations.

In addition to these, the Report on the Regional Colleges of Education by Prof. V.G. Kulkarni and Prof. P.K. Bose

submitted to the Executive Committee of the Council was also considered. Besides, we visited States on a selective basis to gather evidence : The spectrum covered forward States which had taken advantage of NCERT's facilities and services, backward States which had been dependent upon NCERT for almost everything and States which, for some reason, had not been receptive to NCERT's advice. There was also a visit to a Regional College of Education to meet the faculty-members and to get acquainted with the facilities available.

10. Based on all these a questionnaire was drawn up to elicit response from eminent educationists, State departments of Education, State directorates of Education, SCERTs/SIEs, university departments of education, officers/employees of NCERT, academicians of NIE, RCEs, and FAs. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as *Annexure 3*. A tabular statement indicating the range of consultation through and the extent of response to the questionnaire is attached as *Annexure 4*. We would like to refer here in particular to the decision to draft and issue the questionnaire, after the visits to States and wide-ranging consultation. In our opinion, this approach made the questionnaire more pointed and purposeful.

11. We were specifically required to review the recommendations made by earlier committees. This review was confined to three earlier studies. The details are given in Chapter 5 of this report. We refer to this exercise at this stage only to cite the analysis that was available to us while formulating our recommendations.

12. We held 21 sittings. Based on the points emerging from its deliberations in the various sittings and guided by the information gathered, the emerging concerns have been described in Chapter 3. The role of NCERT was then visualised in the context of the emerging concerns. Bearing in mind the response to the questionnaire and the evidence otherwise gathered, with reference to the role envisaged for NCERT, organisational reforms have been suggested in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

Work Done with Reference to the Council's Role and Functions

13. As an apex academic institution, NCERT has played an important role in educational reconstruction through its programmes of educational research, development, training, extension, publication and dissemination of information. During the more than twenty years of its existence, NCERT has built up academic and technical expertise, both at the headquarters and in the four Regional Colleges of Education and the field offices, which has been and can be utilised for drawing up and implementing a systematic plan of quality improvement in school education. A significant point to note is the effort that it has made, through mutually beneficial collaborative arrangements with state level institutions to promote the development of trained cadres at levels where wider adoption of innovative ideas and practices has to be undertaken.

14. NCERT's intervention in improving the quality of school education has generally been in the following areas :

- (i) Curriculum Development ;
- (ii) Instructional Materials ;
- (iii) Teacher Competencies ;
- (iv) Evaluation and Examination Reform ;
- (v) Teaching Aids and Educational Technology ;
- (vi) Research, Innovation and Experimentation ;
- (vii) Dissemination of Information.

In the context of the broad classification of these inputs, NCERT has been primarily concerned with innovations,

research, experimentation, development, extension and training. It has also liaised with State Departments of Education and State level institutions to determine the educational requirements of the States and develop appropriate programmes.

Curriculum Development

15. The effort of NCERT in curriculum development has been multidimensional. While, on the one hand, it has developed curriculum blueprints for bringing about a much-needed uniformity in school syllabi prescribed by various departments of education and school boards, it has, on the other, encouraged and experimented with decentralized approaches to syllabus development. In the wake of the adoption of the 10+2 pattern of school education, NCERT prepared, with the assistance of experts drawn from various walks of life, a framework for the 10-year school curriculum and later for the +2 stage. Through UNICEF-aided projects on Primary Education Curriculum Renewal (PECR) and Comprehensive Access to Primary Education (CAPE), it has initiated programmes which aim at development of syllabi in relation to the life needs of specific communities and of the out-of-school children.

16. NCERT has developed the Minimum Learning Continuum in an effort to integrate the two seemingly contradictory approaches of bringing about uniformity in curricula and syllabi while at the same time, promoting their decentralised formulation. The Continuum, while providing flexibility for reaching higher levels of attainment, specifies the minimum educational achievement for five years of schooling.

17. The upgradation of content in the wake of explosion of knowledge that has taken place and the requirements of the country for high level scientific and technical manpower has been attempted by associating specialists from different fields of science, social sciences and technology with syllabus formulation. Similarly, the emerging concerns in environment, population growth, nutrition and health have been reflected in syllabus prescribed for schools.

Instructional Materials

18. Consequent upon the revision and upgrading of syllabus, NCERT has undertaken the preparation of textbooks to suit the needs of the new pattern of school education. Much of the work of textbook preparation was undertaken either through the constitution of panels or by commissioning scientists and social scientists of repute.

19. Local specific instructional materials have been prepared by involving teachers, teacher educators and the expertise available in the State level institutions. For non-formal education, instructional materials and 'learning episodes' have been prepared which are based on the needs of out-of-school children. It has assisted States in conducting surveys and developing curricular and instructional materials for the programme of vocationalization of school education.

20. Under the UNICEF assisted Children's Media Laboratory Project, NCERT brought out instructional materials with a view to developing among young children the concepts of colour, form, texture etc. The instructional materials have been in a variety of forms—textbooks and supplementary reading materials, games, audio-tapes etc. The approach in developing them has been that of making available a package, comprising a textbook, a workbook and a teachers' guide.

Teacher Education

21. Through its four Regional Colleges of Education (Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Mysore), it organises four-year and two-year advanced level and innovative pre-service training of school teachers. Among the significant characteristics of these training courses are the attempt to integrate content with the methodology of teaching, long internship for student-teachers, training in community work and the organisation of socially useful productive work, with a view to demonstrating how the curriculum framework recommended by the National Council for Teacher Education can be implemented. The Regional Colleges also provide for one year courses leading to B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees. NCERT has worked with teacher training institutions and the education departments of universities to bring about changes in teacher education curricula.

22. As an innovative approach to in-service training of teachers, NCERT has established, with the collaboration of State Governments, Centres for Continuing Education which, apart from organising evening, week-end and short duration refresher courses, work as resource centres where teachers from the nearby schools can have access to reading materials and consultancy services. NCERT has also brought out instructional materials for the use of teachers and teacher educators. With a view to meeting the needs of schools for guidance and counselling services, NCERT has been organising a nine-month advanced diploma course in educational and vocational guidance. So far, 22 courses have been organised and about 600 guidance workers trained.

23. To ensure a multiplier effect, it has attempted to train key persons of State level institutions who can undertake on their own a much larger programme of training.

Evaluation Examination Reform

24. The improvement of evaluation practices has been one of the major concerns of NCERT. It has worked with State level institutions, particularly the Boards of School Education, in improving public examination practices. It has trained paper setters in setting questions which aim not only at recalling facts and figures but also encouraging analytical thinking on the part of students. It has developed item/question banks on various subjects and encouraged State level institutions to also develop repository of discriminating items. Because of its advocacy, many of the Boards have adopted internal assessment as part of the final public examination. Through its publications on various aspects of evaluation, it has encouraged the use of techniques of evaluation not only for measuring students' achievement but also for the improvement of teaching-learning processes.

Educational Technology and Teaching Aids

25. To reach the large population which continues to remain outside the reach of the existing institutional arrangements and to support educational effort for improving the quality of schooling, NCERT has experimented with low, medium and high cost educational technology. The Depart-

ment of Teaching Aids, Centre for Educational Technology and Science Workshop design and develop materials which help in making teaching-learning process more effective. The Centre for Educational Technology has prepared educational films, video-cassettes and audio-tapes to strengthen educational activity in the classroom and to facilitate learning. The Department of Teaching Aids has been concerned with the training of teachers and other personnel in the preparation of teaching aids from locally available materials. The Science Workshop designs, develops and manufactures, on States' requests, low-cost science kits. NCERT has been given the responsibility to produce educational programmes for radio and television broadcast through the Indian National Setellite. It maintains a Central Film Library for loaning educational films to schools.

Research and Surveys

26. Research and innovations in the field of education are actively encouraged and supported by NCERT through its Educational Research and Innovations Committee (ERIC). Significant amount of research is undertaken by NCERT's departments. It also provides financial assistance to individuals and institutions for undertaking research relevant to educational needs and priorities. It also operates a scheme of research fellowships to attract and promote research talent.

27. To assist in plan and programme formulation, NCERT has undertaken comprehensive all-India Education Surveys. Out of the four such surveys conducted so far, NCERT has conducted three. In addition, sample surveys concerned with poor enrolment of girls, wastage and stagnation, impact of mid-day meals, etc., have also been undertaken from time to time.

Dissemination of Information

28. The dissemination of information is another major function of the NCERT. As part of this activity, it publishes four journals, covering different content areas and catering to different levels of readers. These journals include "Indian Educational Review", "The Journal of Indian Education", "School Science", "The Primary Teacher" (in English and Hindi).

29. NCERT also maintains a well stocked specialized library on education. The library provides, through its documentation unit, assistance to research scholars and others in the form of research abstracts, bibliographical service, etc.

Support to Professional Organisations

30. Besides directly taking up programmes for the improvement of school education, NCERT also assists professional educational organisations in the country which undertake innovative programmes which have implications for the improvement of school education and for enhancing its relevance.

International Collaboration

31. NCERT is one of the Associated Centres under the Asian Programme of Educational Innovations for Development (APEID) sponsored by the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok. Over the years, it has offered training facilities, usually through attachments and participation in workshops, to educational workers of other countries, more particularly of the Asian and the South-East Asian regions.

32. NCERT is one of the major implementing agencies for bilateral cultural exchange agreements entered into by the Government of India with governments of other countries. It maintains a two-way flow of educational ideas and materials with other countries by sending delegations to study specific educational problems relevant to our requirements and by arranging training and study visits of foreign nationals. This is also done under the sponsorship of the UNESCO and other international agencies. NCERT deposes its officers to various international seminars/conferences and receives foreign visitors.

Other Functions

33. In the absence of alternative institutional/organisational arrangements, a number of functions have been entrusted to or taken over by NCERT which, although not directly contributing to the improvement of the quality of education, are nevertheless important for implementation of educational programmes. Some of these are discussed briefly :

(i) *Commercial Production of Textbooks* : Beginning with the development of a few model textbooks, the number of titles and the number of copies published by NCERT has increased very considerably. Textbooks developed and published by the NCERT are prescribed by the Central Board of Secondary Education for the schools affiliated to it and by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan for the schools that it maintains. The NCERT's textbooks are also being prescribed in other schools. The preparation and publication of textbooks has two dimensions—the academic and the commercial. The former involves setting up of panels for the preparation of textbooks and/ or the development of textual materials by NCERT faculty with the collaboration of experts drawn from university departments and experienced teachers. The commercial aspect involves large scale production and distribution of textbooks, which is taken care of by the Publication Department of the NCERT.

(ii) *Production of Science Kits* : The production of science kits involves (a) the design, development and try-out and (b) actual manufacture of kits. Although initially NCERT was to confine itself with the former it has undertaken the large scale manufacture of these kits at the request of certain State Governments like Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir etc. This was done because the experience of handing over the manufacture of these kits to private parties did not prove to be a happy one.

(iii) *Conduct of the National Talent Scholarship Examination* : The conduct of examination for the selection of scholars for National Talent Scholarships, beginning on a modest scale, has assumed large proportions. At present, nearly 90,000 students take this examination in 450 centres in different parts of the country. As in the case of textbooks, the National Talent Scholarship Scheme has academic and managerial dimensions. The former requires the development of tests and testing procedures for identification of talent and follow-up studies to determine the extent to which these procedures are reliable and valid. The managerial aspects include printing of information brochures and of application forms, determining the location of centres and their supervisors,

actual conduct of the examination, tabulation of marks, organisation of interviews and disbursement of scholarship funds.

(iv) *Prize Competition for Children's Literature* : The scheme for the promotion of children's literature originally launched by the Ministry of Education was handed over to NCERT. The work involved includes inviting entries, evaluating them and awarding prizes.

(v) *National Integration Camps* : The National Integration Camps, where school children and teachers from different parts of the country are brought together, are organised with NCERT's financial assistance by collaborating institutions/organisations. NCERT provides guidelines and the norms of expenditure. Most of the work connected with the organisation of the camp is generally administrative in nature ; NCERT has, however, brought out some publications on the basis of the experience of organising these camps.

(vi) *Organisation of Training of Office Bearers of Teachers' Organisations* : NCERT has been entrusted with the responsibility of orientation training of office bearers of teachers' organisations through training workshops. The tasks involved are generally managerial.

(vii) *Traditional Programmes of Teacher Education* : Besides organising pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes, RCEs offer one-year training courses leading to the award of B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees. These courses are intended to demonstrate other training institutions the extent to which the curriculum framework recommended by the National Council of Teacher Education can be adopted. The Regional Colleges of Education have also been organising correspondence-cum-contact programmes for untrained teachers of elementary and secondary schools.

CHAPTER 3

Emerging Concerns in Educational Development

34. In this chapter we present some of the major concerns in educational development which have emerged in recent times particularly in the present decade. Many of the problems of educational development are not new, but the thrusts that have emerged are recent. In considering the challenges which NCERT will have to face in future, we have to take into view the major thrusts and issues that have emerged in the eighties and those that are likely to remain with us for the present decade. Since we are reporting on concerns which are relevant to NCERT's activity, we are considering major issues only in the development of school education, although we recognise that many of these issues are equally relevant to other sectors of education. School education should be taken to cover within its ambit all the educational structures and processes that are meant for educating the child from 0-18 years, whether in school or out of school. We may have to touch upon other fields and stages of education during our discussion of the issues in this chapter, but these are marginal to NCERT's functions.

Universalisation of Education : Equal Access

35. With Independence, the long-standing demand for education found an expression in the constitutional directive for free, compulsory and universal education up to the age of 14 years. In order to fulfil this aim, it was obvious that rapid expansion of schooling facilities all over the country was

needed. Schooling facilities include many things : buildings, teachers, minimum teaching equipment and furniture, textbooks, exercise books and other writing materials. The cost of all these things was not small, considering the backlog that we started with at Independence and pressure of a rapidly increasing population. In view of the growing numbers for whom educational facilities had to be provided and the needs of other development sectors, it was not possible to provide the financial resources which could fully meet the needs of the programme of universalisation. However, in spite of financial constraints, rapid expansion of schooling facilities that has taken place all over the country is noteworthy. According to the Fourth All India Education Survey there was, in 1978, a primary school/section within the walking distance of almost every child. Despite the progress made, intra- and inter-State disparities continue. Similarly, the participation of girls and other disadvantaged sections is not as adequate as is warranted by their proportion in the population.

36. We would like to highlight the fact of uneven development of education in various States. Some States have been identified as 'educationally backward', as a national strategy of planned educational development, so that they receive extra attention as well as resources, and planned projects are mounted so as to close the gap between them and the relatively better placed States. There is a concern over the provision of resources by the Centre for the purpose which the States feel should be larger. We must also note that even in other States and not just in those States which are identified as 'educationally backward', there are differences among districts, and the State administration is concerned over closing the gap between the districts, which, in many cases, is not very easy. Thus, in some States, the terrain itself may be so difficult that schools cannot be opened. Even if schools are opened, it is difficult to find qualified teachers for schools located in far-flung areas and in difficult terrain. There are nomadic tribes in some States and to provide educational facilities for them is a problem.

37. We may as well mention in this context some difficult problems in expanding educational facilities so as to meet the challenge of equal access to all. One major concern is the high percentage of single teacher schools (roughly 35 per cent) at the primary stage. It appears to us that it is not easy to add more teachers to these schools; we have to live with this problem till such time as additional resources become available. It is, therefore, necessary to devise ways and means of improving the quality of education in such schools, NCERT should engage itself in innovative work including preparation of materials, development of methods to strengthen teacher competence, etc. This is a major concern with the States. Similarly, changing the hours as well as the duration of a school day should be another major area of experimentation and innovation, where the States should work in close collaboration with NCERT.

38. The availability of a school is, however, only one aspect of access to education. It was realized quite early that, as in many other spheres, educational facilities had developed during the pre-Independence period certain parts of the country more than in others. Universalization of education emerged as an important aspect of educational policy, because of the overriding concern for equalisation of educational opportunity, as a part of the major political thrust towards an egalitarian social order. It was, therefore, necessary, that as a first step States establish schools with the objective of reducing imbalance within the country, within a State and even within a district.

39. The problem of equalisation of educational opportunity in our society is complicated by hierarchies of caste, wealth, etc. The children of backward sections of our society, be they backward in terms of caste or wealth, have been denied the benefits of education for centuries. By mere opening of schools, one cannot ensure that they will indeed receive the benefits. Hence, the constitutional directive was to make education free and compulsory. While compulsion could not be enforced for various reasons, elementary education is now free in practically all parts of the country. Thus, access to education, physically as well as economically, has

been made as equal as possible for all children. Ideally, one would like to see that access is indeed equal in all aspects, thereby fulfilling the dream of our constitution-makers and national leaders. It would go a long way in meeting the birth right of every child to have equal opportunity to learn, thereby paving the way to a faith in a just and egalitarian social order.

40. In spite of the effort at expansion and development, education system does not seem to have gained in credibility. An alarmingly large drop-out rate in the first few years of schooling is coming in the way of universalisation of elementary education. Equality of educational opportunities seems to have been confined to 'throwing the gates open', and perhaps to minimising malpractices in an unfair race loaded in favour of the traditional learners. While an infrastructure has been built, the desired effects seem to be eluding us. It is our contention that the system needs a phase change. Extensions of old ideas, marginal redistribution of resources or copying educational technologies generated and often discarded in other countries, will not do the job. Having created an infrastructure, it is now urgently necessary to identify socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and pedagogic factors that impede universalisation of education and to take appropriate and bold measures to overcome them.

Target Groups for Universalisation : Girls and the Disadvantaged

41. Girls, in many parts of the country, are still left out of education for various reasons, including poverty and social prejudice. Their poor enrolment at all stages of school education stands out strikingly. Some States have an appallingly low rate of enrolment of girls, although schooling facilities, including incentives, are available. Considering the fact that, demographically, the female sex constitutes nearly half the population, one can hardly expect universalisation of education will be achieved in the near future unless girls are identified as a specific target group for special attention and planning. The importance of girls' education does not need any reiteration. As educated mothers, they can create a

home atmosphere and culture which stimulates children to develop not only physically, but more importantly mentally and socially. The adoption of improved practices—of health and hygiene, of limiting family size, of nutrition—has been found to be positively correlated with women's literacy and level of their education.

42. It may be necessary to develop educational facilities and not just schools, in a manner which will suit the requirements of girls in relation to the economy and the society where they live. Girls who do not come to school are not all rural, although most of them are ; urban girls living in slums, or in dire poverty, also do not avail themselves of the facilities of education. Free distribution of dress and free mid-day meals apparently are not attractive enough for the girls to be retained in schools. There is considerable scope for discovering and developing the kind of education that will attract them.

43. A practical problem in promoting girls' education is the difficulty in recruitment and posting of women teachers. Urban areas do not pose that much of a problem in this regard as do rural and remote areas of a State. Women teachers do not want to be posted in relatively inaccessible and backward areas. But the problem of girls' education is particularly acute in these areas. Some States have been trying, without success, to recruit women from villages where they would be required to serve. But local recruitment poses problems arising out of the rules which govern recruitment of teachers. It may be necessary to change such rules, for which studies need to be made both at the national and State levels.

44. Tribal children, children in urban slums, children of immigrant and landless labour and generally children of the poor, whether rural or urban, are some other identifiable groups, who should receive specific attention because these children do not enrol or, after enrolling drop out. Their number is not small, because a large proportion of our people fall below the officially demarcated poverty line. These children do not come because they find schooling irrelevant and also because they have to earn their living or help their families in earning their living. The dichotomy between

learning and earning has been a characteristic of most societies, and India is no exception. Some innovation in the education system needs to be undertaken in order to break this dichotomy. Again, target oriented planning needs to be developed, backed by research support, in order to make education accessible and meaningful for these groups of children. It may require suitable changes in school hours, curriculum, methods of teaching and evaluation.

45. Children suffer from various kinds of disabilities, blindness, deafness, physical, orthopaedic or mental. Educating a disabled child in a normal school setting depends upon the degree of his or her disability. While for the severely disabled and mentally retarded, specialized institutional care is required, for those whose disability is not severe, it should be possible to provide education in ordinary schools along with other children.

46. The normal schooling facilities are inadequate as well as, in many cases, inappropriate for the disabled. The number of such children is by no means negligible and no educational arrangement made for normal children can possibly bypass these groups of vulnerable children. While special schools for such handicapped children need to be established, it is hardly a feasible proposition for a vast country like ours to be able to set up such special schools in large numbers, particularly in view of the resource constraints which generally impede the rate of expansion of schooling facilities. It is necessary to devise appropriate strategies of making education available to the handicapped children in ordinary schools through the special training of teachers, production of special books and accessories etc. There is vast scope for innovations in this field.

47. In brief, the emerging challenges in universalisation of elementary education deal with the lifting of cultural barriers that prevent universalisation. Similarly, education of girls and the disabled, training teachers to adopt teaching strategies capable of making up (at least partly) for socio-economic deprivation, and increasing the sensitivity of people to these issues are real challenges.

Strategies of Universalisation : Structure, Modalities

48. Universalisation requires flexibility in approach to education, because the rigidities of the formal school system do not allow the accommodation of pupils' diverse needs, demands, aspirations, abilities and backgrounds. Non-formal education has, therefore, emerged in recent times as a response to the challenge of non-enrolment, low attendance and high drop-out rates. It provides an alternate structural arrangement in the education system which should be characterised by flexibilities with regard to location, timing, curricula, instructional arrangements, process of learning and evaluation, and by relevance with regard to individuals' needs, aspirations, social-cultural background and abilities. It is not an easy task to develop a non-formal education model with such characteristics. Some attempts have been made and a good deal of innovative and experimental work has been undertaken in the country.

49. If a suitable non-formal education model develops as an alternate structure to the formal school, it will be an asset to the country in meeting the target of universalisation of education. The magnitude of the task in developing non-formal education throughout the country is, however, formidable, because it will require training of teachers on a large scale, development of appropriate instructional materials, proper supervision and administration of the learning centres (not schools which focus on teaching) and developing of relevant curricula in relation to the various groups of learners with diverse occupational, economic, social and cultural backgrounds and handicaps. Much research and experimentation will be required as well as firm support from the State because not only do habits die hard but also anything new is viewed with reservation.

Early Childhood Education

50. Many educational thinkers in our country as well as abroad have noted that the period of early childhood, *i.e.*, the years 3 to 6, is crucial for later growth and development of a child in all aspects—physical, intellectual, social, mental

and moral. Research evidence shows that the rate of development is faster in early childhood than in later years. It would, therefore, be indeed a pity not to utilize these early formative years for laying down the foundations of later growth and development. It has also been noted that a child should be prepared for learning in a school situation. School readiness, as it is called, is not something which comes naturally to children. Even in upper class homes, where children have all the facilities for developing school readiness, many children do not develop it, while many others are unable to profit from learning in school.

51. In our society and culture, particularly in a rural area, older boys and girls have to take care of the young ones, and because of this responsibility, which they share with the mothers, girls particularly are unable to attend school, although they may be very keen to do so. Much of the later drop-out could be prevented if children get ready to learn from school, in whatever form the learning situation is contrived for them. If they can develop an intrinsic motivation for learning, without the help of educated parents, which most children do not have in the poorer sections of our society, they will not leave school easily, unless compelled by circumstances beyond their control. Hence, the importance of early childhood education is highlighted on all counts—for its significance for learning, development of the child and as a strategy for promoting equalisation of educational opportunity.

52. One notices that in the Sixth Five Year Plan, the State has accepted some responsibility for early childhood education ; particularly the training of teachers. Anganwadi, Balwadi, Grama Lakshmi, Mobile Creche, and other innovations in this area are well known. A pre-school class is being attached to the primary school in many places, which will facilitate school readiness as well as the attendance of girls. The development of appropriate instructional materials and the training of early childhood education workers are the two major challenges which have to be met.

Education Technology : Use of Media

53. One of the strategies of universalisation of education is apparently the use of modern educational technology, particularly the use of mass media of communication and development of distance learning systems which will enable a learner to learn on his own to a certain extent and to learn with the help of a facilitator to a great extent, without the compulsion of attending school or going through a prescribed curriculum in a specified duration. A non-formal education system could encompass all these and bring education to the child instead of the other way round as is the case with the formal system. The remarkable developments in the field of communication (and one can predict that soon many more will arrive on the scene without waiting for the demand to emanate from the education sector) have made the line between education and communication thin. The problem is one of establishing appropriate structural arrangements, building linkages, developing flexible curricular arrangements, and establishing innovative management practices.

54. In the eighties, however, with India occupying an enviable position in science and technology among the few developed countries of the world, it should be possible for the education sector to utilise the new developments in communication and learning to build new thrusts towards universalisation of education and speed up the process. The new technology would also enhance the productivity and efficiency of the existing formal system by providing media support to it. The assimilation and exploitation of the advances in communication technology in supporting, facilitating and accelerating learning and the pace of educational progress are thus major emerging concerns.

Quality and Orientation of School Education

55. A formidable task for education in the country since achievement of independence has been its total transformation from a colonial system to a system which will not only reflect the needs and aspirations of the people of an independent, secular, democratic state, but will also contribute towards its development through increasing productivity. This objective was enunciated clearly in the Report of the Educa-

tion Commission, 1964-66, and stated succinctly in the Government of India's Policy Resolution, 1968. The question of transformation is a question of quality and orientation of education at all levels, requiring changes in structure, curriculum, processes of teaching and learning, teacher preparation, textbooks and other instructional materials, system of evaluation, supervision, establishment of linkages with agriculture, industry and social services, etc. The need for quality improvement and value orientation is not specific to school but common to the entire educational system.

Standard of Education and Curriculum

56. The question of quality at the school education stage boils down, in the ultimate analysis, to one of standard of education. Not that one does not hear of complaints about low standard of education at the elementary stage (drop-out rates, absenteeism and lack of competent teachers are instances of low standard) but, for various reasons, the complaints regarding low standard are more persistent, loud and more serious at the secondary stage. Firstly, secondary education is costly. Secondly, young people leave school at the end of this stage to enter life, which means that they should be able to prove their competence in productive work, in family, and in society at large as citizens of a democracy. The large percentage of failures in examination at the end of Class 10 is an evidence of the wastage that occurs at this stage, apart from causing considerable worry to parents and guardians, who do not think that the entire blame for failure lies with their children or wards.

57. The Education Commission had commented on the low standards and had emphasized the need for raising them to comparable international levels. The Commission had argued that standards at the college and university level have to be improved not only to reach international standards, but also to improve the quality of scientific and technical manpower of the country which is necessary for India to achieve higher rates of productivity and economic self-sufficiency.

58. Although they depend on various inputs in the education system, one of the important factors responsible

for low standards, as indicated by the Education Commission, was the outdated curricula at all stages of education. The Education Commission pointed out that there was considerable dead wood in the curriculum. Because curriculum at the school stage, particularly at the secondary stage, was crucial for its implications for other stages of education, its upgrading became the focus of attention for all those who were concerned with the raising of standards. Knowledge in the field of sciences, it was pointed out, doubled itself in ten years, and, therefore, for a modernising and industrialising economy like that of India, it was necessary to upgrade science and mathematics curriculum not only once, but on a continuous basis so that obsolescence does not overcome school curriculum again, as it had in the colonial past of the country. Thus, updating of science and mathematics curriculum became one of the main concerns in the matter of standards.

59. The concern for upgrading of curriculum has not only been in the seventies, but will continue with us in view of the scientific and technological developments that are taking place. At the same time the attempts at upgrading have become controversial. The curriculum is being criticized for its heaviness, and lack of relevance for a large number of school students who leave school at the end of Class 10 in order to enter life. Inter-disciplinary approach in science has emerged as a pressing need in order to make the curriculum more relevant to the contemporary needs of higher productivity, better health and nutrition, control of environmental pollution, conservation of resources, and control of the high rate of growth of population. Thus, while on the one hand, there is considerable concern over 'heavy load' on school children, on the other, [there is strong demand from sectors, other than education, that school curriculum should include many more things in the life around than the pure knowledge of disciplines.

60. Thus standards have boiled down to the question of updating school curriculum for both groups of students, viz. those who would terminate school education at the end of Class 10, as well as for those who would pursue higher levels of education, at the higher secondary stage, and beyond.

There was a time when science and mathematics were not compulsory subjects of study for all at the secondary stage, and even when these subjects became compulsory, they remained optional for girls in many parts of the country. The argument has since lost its edge, and science and mathematics are now compulsory in most parts of the country because people realise that in this age of science and technology and in India, which is the sixth industrialised country in the world and a secular democracy, knowledge of these subjects is a must for every child. But how often should the curriculum be revised and updated, what principles, besides knowledge explosion, should prevail in curriculum revision and how the total 'load' on the child can be kept within reasonable limits without sacrificing standards and relevance, are the burning issues of the day. They are likely to remain so for a long time.

Vocationalisation

61. A major issue in school curriculum that has been debated for four decades, if not more, is that of linking education with employment. Even the 1917 Calcutta University Education Commission had commented on the theoretical nature of discipline-based curriculum and had argued for vocationalisation of a part of the curriculum in schools so that pressures on higher education could be reduced. Since then, most other committees and commissions have expressed concern over the growing numbers of the educated unemployed and have commented on the lack of relevance of the curriculum for a large majority of the young people from the point of view of their employment. That school curriculum should make a person employable, was always assumed rather than explicitly provided for. With the economic development of the country since Independence and with the high rate of growth of population, it became apparent that the 'waiting room' function of the college and the university has become maladaptive, because the room is too small for the rapidly increasing numbers and the waiting time has become indefinite. The dysfunctional nature of education based on the model of general liberal education to produce gentlemen and clerks (at the cost of sex discrimination) became clear and the need for

vocationalization was strongly felt. The linkage between the school and the economy, in other words, started receiving much greater attention.

62. The question of vocationalization, apart from other important things, is basically related to the development of a functional curriculum, incorporating in it a multi-disciplinary approach to knowledge as well as emphasising the learning of practical skills. Vocationalised curriculum is a response to the need for greater economic, social and personal relevance of the school curriculum. At the same time, standards cannot be sacrificed, because employers want employable persons, that is, those who have acquired the relevant knowledge and skill for specific vocations up to a certain point.

63. India, however, has a highly developed technical and vocational education system, covering IITs, engineering colleges, polytechnics, industrial training institutes and the like. The problem is to develop curricula and facilities in school of general education without duplicating what exists and without escalating the costs of school education at a rapid rate in view of the well-known resource constraints. We wish to emphasise that a major concern of educational development now as well as for the next two decades will be vocationalisation of the higher secondary stage, with its implications for work experience as part of the curriculum at the elementary stage of education. If a bridge has to be built between the world of knowledge and the world of work, as it must, and has been emphasised by the International Education Commission Report LEARNING TO BE, it is surely a major concern in educational development in India, and a major effort has to be made for bridging the gap as early as possible. It will give a new orientation to Indian education and may usher in rapidly the process of transformation of a colonial system of white collar education to more vibrant and socially relevant education system.

64. The concern in vocationalisation should not be, as it has hitherto been, only with the preparation of middle level manpower for occupations—in urban or rural settings—for which demand has crystallized through local surveys. A more challenging task for vocationalisation is to think of skills

which will diversify our economy, particularly the rural economy. In this sense, vocationalisation does not only supply manpower in response to demand for it but also provides manpower of a type which contributes to the generation of new occupations and employment opportunities.

65. We wish to highlight the other major concerns in vocationalisation, viz., terminality of the +2 stage and self-employment. Vocationalisation at the end of the +2 stage should be terminal for most of the higher secondary school students opting for vocational courses. Otherwise these courses will be utilized as alternative channels for entry into higher education by those who could not initially be admitted on the basis of their scholastic performance. The insistence on terminality will mean that students completing the +2 level vocational courses should attain the standard of knowledge and skills required for vocations. In other words, students must be employable immediately after completion of +2 vocational courses and that they should not be required to spend further time in reaching the competence level required by employers.

66. Considering that employment opportunities in terms of jobs will not be enough to take care of all those who complete vocational courses, vocationalisation of education must increasingly aim at providing knowledge, skills and information and developing traits which are necessary for self-employment. If terminality of the +2 vocational courses has to remain, it is necessary to accept the idea of self-employment of students after completion of +2 vocational courses. However, there are several issues related to self-employment, and unless these are resolved successfully, self-employment as a goal of vocationalisation can only be for very few resourceful persons. Education being a sub-system of the wider socio-economic system, solutions to some of these issues will be outside the sphere of education.

Value Orientation

67. The transformation of education in independent India to suit its needs and aspirations requires a new orientation, a change in the values towards which our education should move. This has been voiced time and again, during our

freedom struggle as well as afterwards by various committees and commissions. Quality of education means, apart from standards and relevance, competence and character. Whereas the standards and relevance aspects of education refer mainly to curriculum and the process of education, competence and character refer to the products of education—the educands who come out of the portals of our schools and enter either life or higher education institutions. There has been a great deal of concern over the gradual deterioration in the character of our young people, just as there has been concern over deterioration of standards. If our schools cannot generate a strong drive in the young people towards the values of competence and character, they have failed in their primary function as the conservators of the values of a society, and modifiers of the values to a higher order of social change. The characterisation of schools as ‘teaching shops’ indicates the low esteem in which they are held in public eye and also a judgement about their failure in helping to develop competence and character. The aim of education is, among other things, to help an individual to develop his or her potentialities. Thus, competence and character are important for all education.

68. The major concern over the erosion of values in public life has led various committees and commissions to examine in depth various facets of value education which touch curriculum, instructional materials, teaching methods, school organisation and climate etc. If a new orientation has to be given to education, values of humanism, rationalism, socialism, as well as ethical and moral values will have to enlighten the entire curriculum and work in our schools. One important consideration should be the promotion of values of national integration, civic sense and democracy.

Teacher Education

69. Teacher education has emerged as a critical area of education and it has an overriding importance over all other concern. About three million teachers are at present working in our schools; their number is likely to increase in the near future as the strategies of planned development in education acquire more speed and greater thrust. Be it universalisation

or quality and value orientation of education, the teacher is the kingpin of any movement for reform and improvement. There has been a good deal of discussion and debate over the existing training system for teachers. The National Council for Teacher Education has been set up as a response to the widespread disaffection and concern for teacher education. There is need for transformation of the pre-service teacher education structures and processes at all levels, if the strategies to meet the challenges in school education are to succeed. The instructional arrangement at the elementary and secondary stages of school education will have to improve considerably in order to optimise the benefits of school education for children. Unless, however, teachers take the responsibility and unless their efforts are adequately reinforced by the supervisory, inspecting and administrative staff, improved curriculum design, better textbooks, teaching aids, educational technology and evaluation schemes will not succeed in bringing about the desirable changes. Simultaneously, there is need for societal recognition of the significant work that teachers do.

70. Increasingly, over the years, it is the quality, effectiveness, competence and character which are going to receive emphasis. The demand will shift to human inputs on which will depend quality and equalisation. Hence, a teacher is likely to receive much greater attention than before and the appointment of two national commissions on teachers only reflects our thinking in this regard.

71. Whereas pre-service teacher education in the one thousand five hundred institutions at the elementary school and secondary school stages needs immediate attention, we must emphasize the need for wider and better facilities for in-service education of teachers at all level. The three million teachers who are already in the system need to upgrade their knowledge and skills, improve their competence and develop proper value orientation in order to match the efforts that are being made by others in the system to improve education. Although various efforts have been made, starting with extension service centres in the fifties, no system has yet emerged as an effective mechanism for in-service education of teachers.

72. In-service education cannot be, although in unfortunately is, a one-short affair; it should aim at continuing and further education of teachers. The resources of universities and colleges have to be fully utilized. There is need for networking, where universities and colleges take up the responsibility of upgrading the knowledge and professional competence of secondary school teachers and they in turn those of elementary school teachers. It is necessary to utilise mass media of communication like radio and television, to reach out to teachers wherever, they are, because one of the constraints in organising on-campus in-service education is the cost of travel and board and lodging. Distance learning systems have to be developed for teachers as much as for students of which correspondence may be a part but of which the more important part should be to develop self-instructional materials, multi-media packages and the like to cater to the diversity of background, knowledge, skill and status of teachers.

73. One of the earliest concerns to emerge soon after Independence was the reform of secondary school examinations. The overriding importance of the public examination in the school system is recognised by all concerned as an undesirable influence on the entire educational atmosphere. It is the public examination at the end of secondary education which dominates everything else concerned with the process of education; the syllabus, the textbooks and the instructional method, all are geared to the public examination and neither students nor teachers care for anything else except to prepare for the final examination and somehow get through it, without any consideration whatsoever for the means adopted to obtain the certificate of passing. Private tuition, coaching classes, guide books, question and answer books, all flourish because of the over-valuation of the public examination. One hears of corruption of all sorts in this context, which makes a mockery of values, processes of teaching and learning and other aspects of curriculum. Rote learning is encouraged at the cost of all other kinds of learning. Many committees and commissions have gone into the imbalance created by the public examination system. It needs to be noted that although examination reform has received so much attention and has emerged as a

major concern, there is considerable scope for improvement in this regard.

74. In modern times, one talks of evaluation rather than of examination. The objectives of education, learning experiences and learning outcomes are integrally related to each other in the process of education. Evaluation is a process of testing the outcomes of learning in relation to learning experiences and objectives with a view to improving their interrelationship and give a feedback to act as a motivator. Evaluation helps the teacher to identify the pupil's weaknesses in terms of the objectives of instruction, learning processes and the materials for learning. The teacher gets a feedback, in other words, for improving his instructional strategy and method. In order that evaluation can do this effectively, it is necessary to have periodic evaluation as well as final evaluation. A distinction is made between formative evaluation which helps the on-going process of education and summative evaluation which helps in planning curricular changes so as to optimise learning gains on the part of pupils.

75. This is not the place for a detailed exposition of the theory and techniques of evaluation and its relationship with curriculum, learning processes, teaching methods and the like. We wish to point out that in order to counter the evils of one public examination dominating entire schooling, making it appear as an exercise in fraud, as the author of *Deschooling Society* would like us to believe, the major concern that has emerged is with the development of continuous assessment of pupils, unit-wise testing, cumulative record of pupil achievement, periodic achievement tests and improvement of the final summative evaluation procedures and management. Considerable work needs to be done in order to develop viable alternate systems of evaluation.

Measurement of Educational Progress

76. We have already referred to the public criticism of standards of education at all levels, including that at the primary school stage although, considering its importance, we have focussed attention on the secondary stage. In order to have enlightened public opinion, it is necessary to have a data base against which rise or fall in standards of education can

be measured. This requires the development and use of carefully prepared tests of educational progress; tests which will measure fairly accurately those learning outcomes which are not merely specific to curricular topics but are more general in nature and cut across topics and over the years. This is a recent development and merits further attention. The results of such tests, conducted periodically and on a sample basis, should help in evaluating the effectiveness or otherwise of the educational enterprise. Otherwise, some will claim, like Rolt, that children do not learn anything in school while others will claim that there are children and children and schools and schools, and learning takes place in spite of educational institutions.

77. We have elsewhere referred to the disparities that prevail among and within States in educational development. Imbalance in the provision of facilities or access to them is only one aspect of the disparity. A more important dimension is the varying standards of education and student attainment. These variations have created problems of equating, for admission to higher education institutions, the products of different school systems. Laxity in standards of facilities and in the measurement of students' academic performance is more harmful to the future of a generation on whose initiative, creativity, competence and resourcefulness the future of the nation ultimately depends. A major concern in education would, therefore, seem to be the designing of a nationwide system of testing students' knowledge, skills and aptitudes. Admission to institutions of higher learning, particularly those offering facilities for advanced scientific and technological education, on the basis of the testing done by the National Testing Service would in our view require urgent attention.

Education of the Gifted

78. Any system of public education of the size that we have in this country is open to the criticism that it neglects a vital, though small, segment of children who have the potential to contribute to the country's development but are unable to do so because their talents lie hidden, not identified early enough, and no special effort is made to provide challeng-

ing curricular experiences in order to nurture their talents to the highest level. No country can afford to neglect its talented children, no matter what their background. This is an area which requires considerable work to develop a programme of testing in order to identify talents as early as possible at all stages of education and even more importantly from all sections of society. It is essential to devise institutional arrangements, and not just award merit scholarships, in order to help each talented child to realise in fullest measure his or her potentialities. Although the concern has not been voiced as loudly as it should have been but parents of talented children have often expressed their dissatisfaction over the neglect of talent. Scientists have expressed more forcefully the need for identifying science talent and developing special programmes of nurturing such talent.

Planning and Administration

79. For any programme of educational development, it is necessary to formulate operational plans, monitor the progress and evaluate results. Although education is on the concurrent list, education at the school stage is more a responsibility of the States than of the Centre. In order to improve the system and tackle the major issues that we have discussed, it is necessary to carry the States with the Centre. This requires adequate infrastructure at the State level as well as an efficient use of the planning and administrative machinery already available. It is important to develop an information system which will give the necessary feedback from time to time to planners and administrators at all levels to correct their courses of action undertaken in developmental programmes. Proper orientation of the planners and administrators is necessary in order to facilitate operations at the field level. The importance of back-up support cannot be over-emphasized and this is a concern which has been expressed by field level workers more directly concerned with the implementation of developmental programmes.

80. Administration in education, as in other sectors, shall also encompass personnel administration. Unfortunately, over the years, this has been a neglected part of educational administration. Personnel matters, like staffing policies,

job-descriptions, span of control, career management, etc., have received little or no attention. Consequently, the quality of staff-support available is not adequate to meet either the emerging or even the existing challenges.

81. What with the enormity of tasks ahead and the complexity of problems to be tackled, administration will have to be systematised and institutionalised. Personalised administration, however, competent the personnel, cannot be efficient. A network of institutions has to be created to give continuous attention to research and training, planning and administration, monitoring and evaluation, etc. NCERT, with its regional colleges and field offices, does in a sense provide a framework. It will, however, not be possible for one national organisation to meet the variegated requirements of a large nation. State-level counterpart organisations like State Councils of Educational Research and Training will have to come up. Only such a development can promote a closer linkage between NCERT and the States/UTs, which has repeatedly been recognised as an essential prerequisite for uniform educational development in our country.

82. In a developing country, more than in developed countries, education is a dynamic process. It has to keep developing to cater to fast changing requirements. Educational policies will have to be well informed to facilitate such a process. If that is to be so, arrangements should be available for promoting policy-research to influence policies.

CHAPTER 4

Role of NCERT with Reference to the Emerging Concerns

83. In the second chapter we have taken note of the important work done by NCERT in the last two decades or so. In the third chapter we appraised the progress of the educational development at the school stage in a national perspective and have given an account of the issues and problems of the contemporary scene. Keeping in view the national policy in regard to the further development of school education in particular, an attempt has been made to identify the emerging major concerns, some of which are also of pressing urgency. We proceed to look at the role of NCERT in the background of what we have stated in the preceding two chapters.

84. The role of NCERT cannot remain static. It has to find readjustments from time to time. NCERT is essentially an academic body of professionals in the field of education, researchers and teachers. The characteristic of its function is 'service', 'advice and assistance', 'extension'. It does not carry the clout of executive power of a government department. It is not essentially a grant disbursing agency. It is, however, widely recognised and accepted as a national institution playing a leadership role in the field of school education.

85. Over the years, NCERT has grappled with a variety of problems and issues encountered in the course of the development of school education. In the early years after Independence, when national objectives for the development

of school education were formulated, there was the handicap of lack of expertise and trained manpower to translate the objective into programmes of action. There was also the need to work towards fundamental reforms in school education to improve its content and quality and to free it from the image of the erstwhile rulers. The State governments also largely looked to the Central government for leadership and guidance. The birth of NCERT and its role in the early years are to be seen in this background. As years rolled by, new problems and new concerns surfaced. The report of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the announcement of the National Policy of Education (1968) brought into prominent relief the new directions for the work of NCERT viz., working for a common 10+2 pattern of education, a school curriculum with compulsory teaching of mathematics and science, facilitating the adoption of three language formula, and so on. Later developments included review of the school curriculum (load factor and place of modern mathematics), introduction of work based education (SUPW), vocational streams at +2 stage, alternative approaches including non-formal education, use of media with special reference to radio/TV (educational technology), etc. The substantial growth of school education and the rapid pace at which content and curricular reforms were taking place brought in their wake critical problems of teacher training and retraining. There were also problems of reaching education to the traditionally weaker groups of the population (including girls) and reducing wastages. Thus over the years there was the emergence of new problems, new stresses and strains in the system, the need for new solutions.

86. NCERT grew and evolved in the midst of all these developments, both in experience and expertise. It made notable contribution in many areas ; and also found itself ill-prepared and inadequately equipped sometimes. It cannot be, however, denied that during all these years, NCERT has been increasingly noticed, both for its "good" work and achievements as well as for its "failures", by the States, the school community and the public. This is a pointer to the high expectation of the leadership role of NCERT in bringing

about significant improvements in the sphere of school education in the national perspective.

87. Considering that educational development is a dynamic process, that the future perspective needs a continuous review taking social, economic, political and educational factors into account, and that policy formulation and planning activity must be harmoniously integrated with the perspective of future development, there is a pressing need for NCERT to perform the leadership role with greater authenticity and credibility. This role underscores the need for NCERT to develop and sustain a capability to think ahead, to peep into future. It should not remain satisfied with or overwhelmingly preoccupied with looking into the past and with attempting analysis and solution of the complex and numerous problems of the contemporary scene only. What is stated in the succeeding paragraphs is an elaboration and detailing, so to speak, of the basic point made above.

88. In the preceding chapter we have noted that universalisation of elementary education is now a matter of urgent, national concern and that the national effort is sought to be directed to achieving this goal in a specified time frame. The programme and activities of NCERT in the performance of its role has necessarily to reflect this concern ; and, a distinct and deliberate bias towards the problems of development of elementary education must inform its role performance.

89. NCERT has to develop capabilities to play the role of a national think tank in the area of school education. This role is important to its being able to "advise and assist" the Central and State governments in policy and programme formulation. For the effective performance of this role, NCERT has to be enabled to realise, in an increasing measure, the true character of autonomous functioning, particularly in the professional and operational spheres. Some of the structural changes recommended later are intended to improve and strengthen the autonomous character of its functioning. NCERT will need to develop the culture and capability to promote organised and purposeful debates and discussions in a professional way, about the problems, concerns, issues etc., which afflict and hamper sound educational development.

In other words, it should gradually become and be acknowledged as a national forum for such interactions. Creating in an over-increasing degree awareness of concerns and problems would also be an integral part of this role. It would also be necessary to build up a Policy Research Group in NCERT which would work towards strengthening data bases as well as the research bases for policy studies, promoting and coordinating policy research not only in NCERT but also in the SCERTs/SIEs and university departments of social sciences/education and other institutions of social science research. In so far as the States are concerned, it will be useful in the long run to promote collaborative research or funded research so that the initiative and capability of the States and of NCERT are also improved in the process.

90. NCERT is uniquely situated to identify, from time to time, the broad national objectives in school education and its development and formulate programmes of action appropriate to the realisation of such objectives. The universalisation of elementary education, which involves successful tackling of myriad, complex problems in regard to access and wastage, the development and adoption of alternative structures and modalities for supplementing and complementing the formal school system, the complete adoption of the 10+2 pattern of education, the transformation of education to give it a truly national character and purpose involving a transformation of its quality and orientation as well as improving standards and relevance of the curriculum, incorporation of work education in the school curriculum and vocationalisation of the +2 stage, giving proper value orientation in education, the increasing and effective use of advances in educational technology and communication technology, the necessary improvements in and reforms of teacher education without which it will be impossible to achieve anything worthwhile, etc., to list some, are important national objectives in the contemporary scene.

91. NCERT will have to keep in view the advances taking place at the global level and the special characteristics or needs of particular States, in the performance of this role. A closer partnership with States in programme formulation in a con-

sultative role would be beneficial both to States and NCERT—by way of sharing of the expertise already built up in NCERT and enriching the professional content of NCERT. NCERT can help in no small measure by advising (on request) the States about updating and upgrading their academic inputs in school education and teacher education development programmes in this context. Though there has been considerable advancement of school education in the States, the stage and the quality of development vary widely among them. It has become increasingly difficult to formulate and recommend for adoption a single model or programme to all States. NCERT, in this context, has to develop a partnership role with each State as it were, and more specially with the educationally backward States, and collaborate in the study and identification of unique problems and features and needs of a State (or even pockets within a State) and in formulation of action plans and programmes appropriate to the special circumstances of the State without in any way minimising the State's responsibility but making available to the State, the professionalism and expertise of NCERT.

92. Almost all States have established SCERTs/SIEs in the last decade or so. Some are relatively better equipped and more developed than others. The coming into being of these institutions is an acknowledgement of the rationale of and the need for professionalism in the process of educational development and reconstruction ; and a vindication of the role and contribution of NCERT thus far. NCERT owes it to the cause of educational development to give professional nurturing in the growth of these institutions at the State level ; and to help the States build them into authentic, academically sound, research-oriented institutions. This would shorten the gestation time of proper growth of these institutions ; and NCERT will have competent, professional partners in their national network. NCERT's role in this context is a kind of "institution building", not with money but with human resource development. This can be done by multiple ways like :

- (a) networking of NCERT with SCERTs/SIEs and RCEs;
- (b) loan of NCERT personnel to SCERTs/SIEs ;

- (c) secondment of State Government personnel to NCERT ;
- (d) training of State personnel through course work, workshop, seminar etc. ;
- (e) collaborative research studies ;
- (f) collaboration in the training functions of the SCERTs/ SIEs.

93. One of the basic functions of NCERT is research. There is a general impression, held both inside and outside NCERT, that the research activity, though substantial in volume, is diffused and sometimes not quite relevant to critical needs and priority concerns of NCERT. The role of NCERT in its research function must find a concordance with its objectives ; there has to be a greater measure of scrutiny, and selection, and appraisal of research projects, from the point of view of relevance. In the nature of NCERT's objectives, one would expect a greater share (a dominant share) of action research, evaluative research, application-oriented research and, as we have stated earlier, policy research. NCERT should also periodically undertake and bring out research studies evaluating the status and progress of educational development at the State as well as the national level. The above statements should not be taken to mean that we are advocating a substantial increase in the volume of the "in-house" research in NCERT. On the contrary, we feel that NCERT's in-house research should be limited and highly selective. It should in fact be consistent with its role to promote research outside of NCERT, to increasingly, "farm out" research, fund sponsored research, to commission research studies, and undertake collaborative research. This approach would have the advantage of drawing upon a wide net of available research expertise outside NCERT and would also promote a climate of research. Almost as a corollary, it is necessary to ensure a good "documenting and disseminating" service to be able to effectively coordinate the research work and to avoid wasteful duplication. A valuable outcome of this approach could be the development of a more intimate rapport with education departments of universities, a rapport which would be mutually beneficial to both but is sadly lacking at present. A well-

directed research activity of this kind would enable NCERT, *inter alia*, to develop sound models and norms applicable to various aspects of education and to play an effective role in policy formulation.

94. The other important function of NCERT is training. The needs of the country for teacher training (both pre-service and in-service) are immensely large and the brunt of this responsibility has to be essentially borne by the States. It is neither practical nor possible for NCERT to replace or substitute the teacher training function in the States. NCERT, in its training role, has to concentrate on such activities as would effectively contribute to the continuous improvement of teacher competence and quality. It has also to take adequate care of the emerging needs of a new kind like, training for educational surveys and its organisation, training for applications of educational technology, etc. NCERT has to develop its training function mainly through activities of an innovative, experimental, research or extension character, not for the purpose of building up capacity for the primary training function. In short, the role of NCERT in its training function has to be delineated selectively and imaginatively. The choice of objectives may comprise :

- (a) developing (and proving for adoption) innovative teacher training programmes ;
- (b) developing and institutionalising (including funding) continuing education programmes for teachers in the States ;
- (c) training of teacher educators in the States ;
- (d) training of key personnel in new methods (application of educational technology) ;
- (e) involving in direct training programme for teacher in special circumstances in the case of States critically deficient in training resources ;
- (f) developing training methodology (including distance learning systems), materials and manuals ;
- (g) developing suitable mechanisms of "quality control" of teacher education at the elementary level (UGC is concerned with teacher education for the secondary level).

The training function of NCERT in its promotional aspect is of great importance particularly because of the fact that at present we have no prescriptive or regulatory mechanism to ensure teacher quality.

95. A major handicap in the management of educational development has been the weaknesses in, or the total absence of, appropriate and effective methods of monitoring (and evaluation). NCERT has the capability to play an important part in developing models for monitoring and evaluation of different educational programmes, designing tools of indicators for measurement of progress or change, bring out in a disseminable form some of the more relevant and notable experiences of other countries, integrate its work with that of NIEPS in so far as the subject is of common interest to educationists and the educational administrators.

96. A ceaseless striving to find methods of enriching the teaching-learning process-methods which will mean a lot to the future of the child and therefore the future well-being of the nation, methods which are both feasible in practice and within reach of available human and other resources of the present—is the dream image of NCERT. It also ought to be its sub-conscious will. Such an image cannot come by the wave of magic wand. It has to emerge as a result of years of assiduous and dedicated effort. Innovative approaches to education, innovations in educational process, such are the expectations from a leader on the scene of education, not merely, a monitor of an on-going process. There is an implicit challenge for a creative role, an idea-generating function.

97. We started by saying that the role of NCERT is not static. It must change with the environment, the stage and character of the educational development, and with its own growth. The roles that we have delineated above are in the context of the present environment, the current national concerns, and emerging trends, the present perceptions of the future, the existing organisational and other resources of NCERT. It is not sound practice for an academic institution of the standing of NCERT to await pronouncement on its roles from outside. NCERT should develop an appropriate institutional mechanism within itself to periodically "look

within", as it were, and reassess its role/functions/activities in the changing flux of educational development and initiate its own processes of finding timely readjustments. It may take the help of eminent experts from outside for this purpose ; but "introspection" is a necessary role function for growth in the right sense and direction.

98. We have, while discussing about the research function, referred to documentation and dissemination. NCERT was expected to develop an effective clearing house function in all matters pertaining to development of school education. It has not been possible to do much in this regard so far. The fast pace of growth in the last two decades and the lack of systematic collection and documenting of information have been no doubt bottlenecks in the past. But over the years, there has been considerable improvement and it is time that NCERT gave serious attention to giving a concrete shape to fulfilling its expected role of a clearing-house. NCERT is in a position to promote and actively undertake "cross fertilisation" among States, by dissemination of information, ideas, experiences of one State to the other States. It should also keep abreast of comparable experiences and experiments in the international scene to enrich its "clearing-house" role. It has also to devise suitable mechanism of dissemination of information on matters of professional interest to the teacher in the field and the school directly and effectively.

99. Two small points need mention here more by way of clarification than as a role idea. The functions of NCERT include "assistance in implementation". The idea is not that NCERT should, or will be able to, assume even partial responsibility for implementation of any educational development programme administered by the Central or State government. The administrative aspects of implementation have to be wholly with the respective government department or agency. There have often been on the other hand a number of innovative ideas and experiments which seemed to work under controlled experimental conditions, but posed problems when taken up for adoption under normal field conditions. NCERT as an innovator/experimentor/programme consultant/designer etc. should involve itself in proving the "workability"

of the innovation/programme as the case may be under actual "field" conditions. NCERT should have a duty in this sense to assist in implementation, not for other purposes. We considered it proper to refer to this point here since we felt that due to inadequate appreciation of the role of NCERT in this regard, some items of work have been undertaken by or entrusted to NCERT which did not strictly flow from its research and training function ; and over the years, tended to claim a disproportionate share of the time and energy of NCERT without contributing to the enrichment of the professional content of its basic work.

100. NCERT's consulting and advisory services need not be confined to governments and government departments of education only, as would be the impression given by the preceding paragraphs. In suitable cases, it can help voluntary and non-government organisations provided the support is consistent with the priorities and concerns of NCERT and such support is extended without detriment to its work.

101. The role of NCERT, as discussed above, can be performed and expectations in regard to its functions can be realised only through the willing cooperation, commitment and dedicated work of all its constituents. NCERT has to grow further in stature by "orchestrated" working towards pre-set goals/by generating greater interest in State governments, universities, and other institutions in regard to its functions, purpose and activities, by forging closer and more intimate links with the fields and by nurturing the growth of "expertise" most appropriate to its area and nature of work.

102. While a lot depends upon the character of the organisation and the style and quality of its functioning, we have to consider the structural arrangements most conducive to the realisation of its objectives. We are convinced that these arrangements should achieve the twin purposes of strengthening the autonomy of NCERT as well as decentralising powers and functions to the regional level, thus making a closer partnership with the States possible. We feel that the time has come to give NCERT a legal charter and make it into a statutory body. It will thus be possible to define (and protect) its autonomy, to prescribe *inter alia* the powers/

functions/duties of NCERT and RCEs, the structural arrangements at headquarters and at regional level and the relationships between the two levels, the linkages between NCERT (and RCEs) with university system and the State Governments, the linkage with the Ministry of Education, the scope and nature of accountability, and so on.

103. The legal provisions have to ensure that the powers conferred are in conformity with its objectives and functions, and safeguard against factors leading to isolation of NCERT from other academic systems, (including universities), or enabling it to exercise unintended powers of control/regulation (like accreditation with reference to teacher training) and in the process acquiring administrative functions and weakening its academic character. Giving a statutory character to NCERT will incidentally confer a better status on it as compared to its present status of a registered society and this would help its interaction with the States. The statutory provisions will need to be designed in such a way that NCERT will have considerable freedom and flexibility in managing its academic and professional growth.

104. We have also given thought to the specific question whether NCERT's degree-giving function should also be governed by the proposed law to give a statutory charter to it. We feel that it may not be wise to do so. NCERT, in our opinion, should not become an academic enclave with no links with or acknowledgements from university system. We have already stressed that the structural arrangements of NCERT should not lead to isolation. The present arrangements by which each RCE is affiliated to a different university and NCERT headquarters has no academic affiliation to any university is not an ideal arrangement either for "academic freedom and flexibility" or for directing and promoting research of the special type and character most relevant to the requirements of NCERT.

105. We think that the solution lies in giving a deemed university status to NCERT for its training and research function. One central arrangement of academic governance set up at NCERT headquarters, functioning under the direction and control of the Executive Council of the NCERT, may

provide the nucleus of the deemed university system. This academic governing arrangement will be common to the training and research functions at the headquarters as well as similar functions carried out at the regional levels. It is possible to provide decentralised academic governing bodies in each Regional Centre, with representation from NCERT headquarters and holding a mandate from the headquarters. This would permit decentralised and flexible arrangement for the Regional Centres to initiate and support innovation with a certain amount of freedom. The necessary and appropriate structural arrangements, satisfactory to meet the essential requirements for the grant of such a status can be worked out within the existing organisation of NCERT, without waiting for the law governing NCERT to be made. The arrangements so worked out can in course of time be integrated into the law governing NCERT, as and when it comes into being. without disturbing the status of the deemed university.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of Earlier Recommendations

106. The terms of reference given to us required us to analyse the relevance of earlier recommendations. The Public Accounts Committee had referred to the recommendations particularly of those committees cited in its proceedings. Keeping all this in view we analysed the major recommendations of three earlier reviews—(i) by the Nag Chaudhuri Committee (1968), (ii) by the Administrative Staff College of India (1978), and, (iii) by Shri P. Sabanayagam, former Education Secretary (1979).

107. For purposes of analysis, the recommendations were grouped under four headings—objectives, functions, internal structures/systems, and relationship with stateS.

Objectives

108. Of the three earlier reviews only the first two had commented on this subject. ASCI had even suggested a formal amendment of Article 3.1 of the Memorandum of Association to define NCERT's role more explicitly. We have also felt this need. We suggest below the text of the amended article :

“The main objective of NCERT must be to advise and assist the Ministry of Education and State Education Departments *in formulation* and implementation of their policies and programmes.”

109. There have been two sets of opinion on the precise role of NCERT : ASCI was of the opinion that NCERT shall give attention to all stages of school education and adult education. As against that the Nag Chaudhuri review wanted

NCERT to confine attention to improvement of school education. In fact, the Nag Chaudhuri Committee singled out primary education for specific attention.

110. We are inclined to agree that NCERT must confine attention to school education. In our opinion, "elementary education", and not just "primary education", should receive specific attention. (Incidentally, elementary education shall be defined to cover Classes 1-8). Also, "school education" must include nonformal education for out-of-school children. If possible, NCERT's resources must be reasonably distributed between different stages of school education, with elementary education getting a major share of its effort.

111. In our opinion NCERT should not be saddled with work relating to adult education. Considerable expertise has been built up in NCERT in respect of school education. Adding responsibilities for adult education will dilute the role of NCERT in school education. Separate supports and expertise have been built up in adult education with the establishment of the Directorate of Adult Education and resource centres. There is need, however, for coordination in operational terms between programmes in school education and adult education.

Functions

112. The primary function of NCERT has so far remained restricted to assisting and advising the Ministry of Education in the implementation of its policies and programmes. In line with the spirit of the various recommendations made by the earlier reviews, we feel that NCERT should have a role even *in formulation* of policies/programmes and that its advice should be available also to State Education Departments. The amendment proposed in Article 3 (in para 97) above has been suggested with this end in view.

113. The recommendation of ASCI that there should be continuous sharing of experience between NCERT and the States and that NCERT should base its programmes' activities on States' needs and requirements is still valid. Again, as advised by ASCI, NCERT should help the States, through the Regional Centres, to go in for decentralised planning with

district or block as the unit. Our observations in Chapter 4 are in line with and reinforce these recommendations. We are of the view that the existing role of the Regional Colleges of Education will need a proper redefinition and more regional centres will have to be established to enable NCERT to perform these functions effectively.

114. We agree with the ASCI recommendation that NCERT must provide expert services to States for monitoring and evaluation, diagnostic studies, strategic studies, development of innovative models, etc. Only, we would like to stress the collaborative aspect in all this. Evaluation of programmes is no doubt a desirable function. In our view, the emphasis should be more on development of tools for monitoring and evaluation. Our views on this issue have been set out more explicitly in paragraphs 81 and 84.

115. We endorse the ASCI view point that linkages with States can be most effective only if State-level counterpart organisations develop. In our view, this should be a function of NCERT to be carried out with the help of RCE and in consultation with the State concerned. Special financial assistance from the Centre should be available to speed up this development.

116. ASCI had rightly stressed that NCERT should be concerned only with curriculum development, preparation of models, teacher training methodologies, and limited training operations. This observation was in the context of their view that mass production and sale of textbooks and large-scale teacher training should not be NCERT's direct responsibility. We agree with the substance of these observations. Development of textbooks should continue to be a major function of NCERT. As regards production/sale of textbooks and teacher training we have made detailed recommendations elsewhere.

117. The Sabanayagam review has recommended that work relating to the conduct of examinations like the one for National Talent Search Scholarships must be transferred to CBSE. This recommendation is in line with our thinking that NCERT must not be saddled with such work. The volume

of administrative work in the holding of such examination and the administration of the award of scholarship is a burden which needs to be taken away from NCERT. We understand that some consideration is being given to the need and the possibility of setting up of a National Testing Service. If and when such a development takes place, it would be appropriate to entrust the administration of the National Talent Search Examination to that body. In our opinion, there is a definite need of such a service. The incomparability of assessments between different Boards of Secondary Education and the importance, from the national integration angle, of promoting inter-State mobility of students are some of the forceful reasons in favour of the proposition. If, however, the National Testing Service is not to be set up in the foreseeable future, we recommend that NCERT may retain the responsibility for designing the tests for the Talent Search Scheme but the holding of examinations and administration of scholarships may be transferred to the CBSE.

118. ASCI had recommended that pre-service training programmes should be discontinued. We support this view only to a limited extent. We feel that only innovative programmes should continue and that they should be evaluated for wider adoption after adequate trial. We fully endorse the Nag Chaudhuri recommendation that RCEs should emphasise in-service programmes. In-service training and extension education must necessarily preponderate. In conformity with the stated objective and the primary function, the focus should be on elementary education.

119. The Nag Chaudhuri Committee had recommended that the 4-year integrated teacher training programmes conducted at the RCEs should be altogether discontinued. There have been subsequent indepth examinations of the merit and logic of these courses by different Committees, like the Kapur Committee, and very recently by the Kulkarni-Bose Committee. We need not go into the details of these studies. We would only wish to emphasise that the 4-year courses also must stand on the same footing as other innovative programmes, namely that they should be evaluated in due course for wider adoption.

120. Divergent views were expressed in earlier reviews about structural arrangements that were needed. The Nag Chaudhuri review wanted RCEs to be the campuses of NIE. The Sabanayagam review wanted RCEs to grow into regional centres, delinked from universities. While all the three had voiced a valid concern, none of the three recommendations would meet the requirements today. As earlier indicated, RCEs have to grow into regional centres. But, at the same time, they will have to continue with certain (academic) functions which will necessitate an academic-institution status. It is this combination that will call for special arrangements. We have already discussed this issue at length in Chapter 4 and have made our recommendations in this regard.

121. We agree with the ASCI that NCERT should establish formal linkages with other related organisations under the Ministry of Education, collaborate with States, enter into bilateral agreements with ICSSR/NIPCED/universities, promote participation by other organisations in its seminars, and widely disseminate its publications. However, we would like to single out for special consideration linkages with KVS, CBSE, and the States.

Internal Structures/Systems

122. The Nag Chaudhuri Committee recommended that constitution of the General Council and the Governing Body should be amended. ASCI had also recommended that some changes were needed in the various committees in operation. We are not in favour of changing the basic system of management in NCERT. While the basic system of management through committees supplemented by delegation of authority to selected functionaries should continue, in our opinion it will be necessary to effect some changes in the composition of certain committees. Our views in this regard are as follows :

- (i) In order to lend the necessary pride of position to the apex educational research and training organisation, the Union Minister for Education should continue to be the President of the General Council.

Likewise, the General Council should continue to provide for representation of the Ministers for Education from States/UTs. Such an arrangement, apart from lending the necessary status to the organisation, will also help in promoting appropriate linkages between NCERT and its State level counterparts. Incidentally, this will also provide a built-in arrangement for developing a consensus on major educational policies, priorities, and programmes which, in turn, will have significance for speedy acceptance and implementation of programmes/projects sponsored by NCERT.

- (ii) For purposes of speeding up decision-making and implementation of activities it will be desirable to have the Director as the Chairman of the Executive Committee.
- (iii) The division of responsibility and the delegation of authority between the President and the Director should follow the model of the Chancellor vis-a-vis a Vice-Chancellor in a University set up. To be specific, the Director should have substantial delegated authority as regards formulation/implementation of programmes/projects. Consultation with the President should, as far as possible, be limited to policy issues. In particular, the Director should be vested with full authority for personnel administration. Even in respect of professors he should be made the appointing/disciplinary authority so that he is able to effectively control the faculty/staff of the Council.
- (iv) With the idea of providing a built-in arrangement for promoting closer contacts between NCERT, on the one hand, and the States/UTs, on the other, it will be desirable to include Education Secretaries/Directors of Education of States/UTs by rotation as members of the Executive Committee. This, again, will reinforce the possibility of NCERT largely undertaking programmes which directly meet the educational needs of the States.

We have envisaged a deemed university status to NCERT for its training and research functions. If that is to be so, effective linkages will have to be established between the Executive Committee of NCERT and the academic governing arrangements in the deemed university.

- (v) The Nag Chaudhuri Committee had called for the constitution of an Academic Council to look into programmes. If our recommendation about deemed university status is accepted, such a body will automatically be set up to look into the training and research functions. The Programme Advisory Committee will take care of the other academic functions.

States are already represented on the Programme Advisory Committee. In our opinion, their representation is not adequate. Considering that NCERT will have largely to cater to the requirements of States/UTs, it will be necessary to provide for representation of their interests/views in the Programme Advisory Committee. Accordingly, selected Directors of Education/Directors of SCERT (or, SIE) may be included as members of PAC. This may be done, if necessary, by increasing the number of members. We would, however, prefer to keep down the size of PAC, one way of doing this could be to provide for representation of the faculty also on a selective basis.

Here, again, effective linkages will have to be established between the Programme Advisory Committee and the academic governing arrangements in the deemed university.

123. The Nag Chaudhuri recommendation that for more effective and coordinate functioning the Departments of NCERT should be reorganised is unexceptionable. But, in our opinion, it is more important to promote :

- (i) closer coordination between the Director and the Heads of Departments.
- (ii) coordination between Departments ; and
- (iii) coordination between activities.

We have recommended a pattern of reorganisation in Chapter 6. In the same Chapter some more ideas have been given to enable the Director to effectively coordinate and control the activities of NCERT.

124. The ASCI recommendation that NCERT should have a programme based planning/budgeting and a system of monitoring is worthy of attention. But, on a point of fact, this has improved considerably in recent years. This improvement, however, will be an unending process.

125. The ASCI study had recommended the setting up of an educational perspective group and an environmental research group to promote quality research on a continuing basis to determine future perspectives/needs. The Nag Chaudhuri recommendation that NCERT should become an institution of national importance or a deemed university can also be referred to at this stage. We have comprehensively dealt with these issues in Chapter 4.

126. Closely allied to reorganisation of and coordination between departments is the issue of optional utilisation of the existing staff. This was noticed by Shri P. Sabanayagam also. He had observed that scattering of energies should be avoided and the staff available deployed suitably to ensure optimal use in the existing spheres of work as well as new areas of curriculum development and textbooks and to rectify deficiencies observed. These are unexceptionable observations. It will require continuous and sustained effort to achieve this.

127. Perhaps, we should also refer here to the ASCI recommendation that NCERT's structure shall be project-based. In our opinion, it may not be possible to have the whole structure to be project-based. While optimal utilisation of existing staff can be achieved by redeployment as suggested above, the project-based approach should be adopted to the extent possible in future recruitments.

128. We have already discussed our views on recommendations about RCEs developing as Regional Centres. We would, in this context, also like to endorse the ASCI recommendation that the field set up should be strengthened and coordinated by the Regional Centres. Field offices should

be strengthened and brought closer to SCERTs/SIEs. They shall be the extension units of the Regional Centres.

129. On the issue of linkages between NCERT and the Ministry of Education ASCI had gone to the extent of suggesting that the Ministry's interventions through representatives on Committees should be reduced. We have also made recommendations for strengthening NCERT's autonomy. In our opinion, even at present NCERT enjoys considerable internal autonomy. But, at the same time, we cannot forget that NCERT functions within an overall governmental policy and system and receives funding from the Government. Consequently, it has to remain accountable to government. Our recommendation that the Director should be the Chairman of the Executive Committee is in consonance with our thinking about strengthening of autonomy and increasing accountability. We have stressed the autonomy aspect. We have also indicated the essentials of accountability. Consistent with all this we have suggested a structural arrangement in Chapter 6.

Linkages with States

130. The Nag Chaudhuri recommendation that NCERT should build a closer relationship with States and universities is valid even today. Linkages are necessary with State Education Departments, State Directorates of Education, SCERTs/SIEs, other State-level institutions concerned with school education and, university education departments. These linkages can succeed only if SCERTs/SIEs are properly structured and staffed. We have suggested that NCERT has a role to play in strengthening SCERTs. If necessary, the Central Government must take the initiative to provide special central financial assistance also for the purpose.

131. ASCI had recommended that, for purposes of increasing contacts between the two sides, representatives of States/UTs should be included in different committees of NCERT/RCE/FA and that NCERT personnel should be represented in State committees. This is already obtaining in some measure. We have made some further recommendations in this regard also.

132. While recommending greater collaboration with State-level institutions, ASCI had suggested that there should be exchange of personnel between NCERT and State-level institutions. We agree with this suggestion. In fact, we emphasise exchange of personnel with reference to strengthening RCEs and FAs. We are happy to note that the Conference of Education Ministers (1981) also accepted the ideas of 'secondments' of staff between NCERT and States.

133. While institutions can certainly provide the facility for promoting linkages it is only through actual involvement in formulation of policies and development of programmes to suit local requirements that this objective can be effectively realised. We have already commented on the desirability of greater collaboration with State-level institutions for regional planning/programming.

CHAPTER 6

Organisational Reforms

134. In earlier chapters we have discussed at length the emerging concerns of educational development and the implications for NCERT's role. The role is in many ways similar to that which it has been performing, being that of a nature for which this apex national-level organization was created more than twenty years ago. What is, however, important to note is our view that, in its programmes, NCERT should increasingly concern itself with problems of educational development faced in this country. These problems are essentially of micro-level dimensions concerned with the educational situation prevailing in States and within States at district and block levels. They are also specific to certain segments of the population. Educational development has reached a stage where it should be considered essentially in terms of the needs of specific areas and communities within a broad national perspective.

135. This role perception of NCERT requires, in our view, a change in its exercises at programme development. While "fundamental" research will remain an important activity, NCERT's research, development and extension programmes must emerge, if not completely at least substantially from actual problems faced in increasing access to education and making education more meaningful and relevant. NCERT will require substantial amount of freedom and autonomy to effectively perform its functions of "assisting and advising" in policy and programme formulation. We have reflected on this elsewhere in the report.

136. For an effective performance of its role of "assisting

and advising” Central and State Governments, important prerequisites are a constant flow of information to NCERT and its close interaction with different institutions and organizations. The flow of information will have to be both upward and downward—upward from the field to the central level organisation and downward from the headquarters to the field. The institutional mechanism for ensuring the flow of information has been established in the form of the National Institute of Education, the Regional Colleges of Education and the Field Advisers Offices. Interaction among them and with State-level institutions available at various tiers needs substantial strengthening. In this chapter, we propose an administrative restructuring which in our view will enable NCERT to play its role effectively and efficiently.

National Institute of Education

137. As at present constituted, National Institute of Education has 26 departments/units/cells/groups concerned with various academic functions. This departmental proliferation has tended to diffuse its effort and has made it difficult to coordinate work. The various units have tended to go their own way and have often concerned themselves with activities of marginal importance. It has also been difficult to provide, on an optimal basis, supporting staff to each one of these units and departments.

138. We feel that diffusion of effort will be much less, if reorganisation of NIE focusses on five major functional areas :

- (i) Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development ;
- (ii) Measurement and Evaluation ;
- (iii) Training and Extension ;
- (iv) Pre-school and Elementary Education ;
- (v) Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation.

By a process of amalgamation under each of these areas, which should be taken up without much loss of time, the number of departments/units/cells would be considerably reduced.

139. We suggest the following reorganization :

Existing Departments/Units	Proposed Reorganisation
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Area I. Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development

- | | |
|--|--|
| (i) Curriculum Group | (i) Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities (will concern itself also with curriculum development and instructional materials) |
| (ii) Department of Education in Social Sciences and Humanities | |
| (iii) Population Education Unit | |
| (iv) Department of Education in Science and Mathematics | (ii) Department of Education in Science and Mathematics (will concern itself with curriculum development and instructional materials) |
| (v) Socially Useful Productive Work Unit | |
| (vi) Vocationalisation of Education Unit | (iii) Vocationalisation of Education Department (will concern itself with curriculum development and instructional material) |

Area II. Measurement and Evaluation

- | | |
|--|--|
| (vii) Department of Measurement and Evaluation | (iv) Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Evaluation |
| (viii) National Talent Search Unit | |

(ix) Educational Psychology Unit

(x) Educational Vocational Guidance Unit

(xi) Survey and Data Processing Unit

(v) Department of Survey and Data Processing

Area III. Training and Extension

(xii) Department of Teacher Education

(vi) Department of Teacher Education and Extension

(xiii) Extension Unit

Area IV Pre-school and Elementary Education

(xiv) Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Education Unit

(vii) Department of Special Education (including education of the disabled)

(xv) Women's Education Unit

(xvi) UNICEF Projects

(a) Early Childhood Education Unit

(viii) Department of Pre-school and Elementary Education

(b) Primary Education Curriculum Renewal Unit

(c) Comprehensive Access to Primary Education

(d) Development Activities in Community Education and Participation

(e) Nutrition, Health Education and Environmental Sanitation

(xvii) Non-formal Education Group

Area V. Policy Research, Planning and Co-ordination

(xviii) Planning, Coordination and Evaluation Unit

(ix) Department of Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation

(xix) Programme Section

- (xx) International Relation Unit
- (xxi) Educational Research and Innovations Committee
- (x) Department of Field Coordination
- (xxii) Library and Documentation Unit
- (xi) Department of Library Documentation and Dissemination of Information
- (xxiii) Journal Cell

140. A word about the newly visualised Department of Field Coordination and the expanded Department of Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation. The former is expected to be the nodal point for receiving information from the Regional Centres and the Field Offices, process it and pass it on to other department for necessary action. It will also communicate to the Regional Centres and the Field Offices, information about activities being undertaken in NIE Departments. The Department of Policy Research, Planning, Coordination and Evaluation would be concerned, apart from coordinating and monitoring various programmes of the Council, with undertaking and sponsoring research the findings of which can provide inputs for policy formulation. In order to keep track of various activities, the existing Programmes Section, which is concerned with issue of financial sanction, will be part of this department. The Department will also undertake/sponsor impact studies of Council's activities.

141. The proposed restructure is not to build new boundary walls. On the contrary, by reducing the number of departments, it will promote coordination, mutual interaction and assistance, reduce diffusion of effort and increase sharper focus of programmes. Although a department may be shown under one functional area, it does not mean that it will not have other functions. But its focus should be in the functional area under which it is shown.

142. The departments should be delegated with substantial powers, particularly those dealing with programme

development and implementation. For instance, instead of the prevailing position, where the authority rests with Joint Director/Director, the departmental heads should be given the powers of administrative and financial sanction of programmes once they have been approved by the Programme Advisory Committee and specific budget allocated to them.

143. Coordination of academic/administrative work is at present being done by Joint Director/Director. With the reduction of the number of departments, it should be possible to coordinate this work more effectively with the assistance of the Coordination Committees.

144. The Joint Director (including the Director of CIET which will be a position equivalent to that of the Joint Director, NCERT) should in all respect be seen to be the second in command. With that purpose in view the salary scale of Joint Director shall be so adjusted as to be definitely superior to that of Principals/Heads of Departments and of Professors. Head of Departments should also be given a special pay to give them a higher status vis-a-vis Professors.

145. It is difficult to propose on organisational structure where there will be no overlap in functions. Much less in the case of an organisation like NCERT, where the concern is with a diversity of operations which have a bearing on the quality of school education. More than one department is likely to be concerned with an aspect of NCERT's role. Take, for instance, curriculum development where two departments of Science and Mathematics and Social Sciences and Humanities would be intimately involved. At the same time the Department of Pre-school and Elementary Education would be doing a lot of innovative work in developing meaningful and relevant curriculum and syllabi. So will be the case with the Departments of Special Education and Vocationalisation. In cases where considerable overlap of functions is likely to take place and where basic framework guiding the work in that area needs to be developed, it would be desirable to set up inter-departmental groups. These groups will prepare the basic framework which should provide a focus to activities of all the departments and also lay down, as precisely as possible, the specific contribution that each of them should make.

146. Interaction among the faculty within the department is of great significance. This has generally been lacking, with the result that programmes proposed by the departments lack coherence ; they do not indicate how they contribute to the fulfilment of the main objectives of the department as a whole. All research, development and extension work undertaken by the department should have clear-cut foci. They should also indicate the linkages among programmes. They should present a composite rather than a disparate view of the departmental activity. In our view, programme development including research activity, should be largely a departmental activity rather than, as at present, an individual affair. It is, therefore, suggested that each department should have a departmental advisory committee which should meet frequently to review the position in their spheres of work, evaluate the feed-back received from different sources, identify new thrusts, etc.

Coordination Committees

147. We were informed that, for avoiding overlap and duplication, critically evaluating the feedback and projecting future needs, five Coordination Committees have been set up in the NIE. We think that even in the new organizational set up these Committees will perform a useful role. The departments will continue to perform a variety of functions-- research, curriculum development, personnel training, extension, preparation of instructional materials, etc. Coordination Committee will help to formulate the basic strategy that should govern the performance of these functions.

148. Interaction among field-level organisations and between them and the departments of the NIE is of great significance in ensuring that programme development at headquarters reflects the requirements of the State and State-level institutions. Apart from representation of Field Advisers and Regional Centres on NIE's Programme Advisory Committee, an annual meeting of the Field Advisers must be held by the Field Coordination Unit.

149. The departmental organisation suggested by us leaves out some of the units/departments which exist at present.

These include the Publication Department, Centre for Educational Technology, Department of Teaching Aids and Science Workshop. In regard to these, we have to make the following observations:

(i) *Publication Department* : In our view, NCERT should concern itself with the development of model textbooks and other textual materials which can be adopted/adapted by State Education Departments, State Boards of School Education, Central Board of Secondary Education, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and other governmental agencies. This activity would fall under the general area of Curriculum and Instructional Materials. Mass production of textbooks should not, as earlier stated, be the Council's direct responsibility. The Publication Department should be delinked and organised as a functionally autonomous, self-administering and self-financing organisation. While in the short run it may continue to function under NCERT's umbrella, ultimately it should be developed as an independent establishment. During the transitional phase, it should have its own managing committee with Director, NCERT, as the ex-officio chairman.

(ii) *Centre for Educational Technology and Department of Teaching Aids* : We have noted the decision taken by the Government to establish a Central Institute of Educational Technology by merging the Centre for Educational Technology and the Department of Teaching Aids. We feel the CIET, while having substantial functional autonomy, should function under the umbrella of NCERT. Under this arrangements, the CIET will be in a position to obtain the academic expertise—which software development and evaluation require—available in different departments. Otherwise, the CIET would have to unnecessarily duplicate the infrastructural facilities, which are already available in plenty. The servicing role of CIET needs highlighting. While production of educational programmes for television and radio can be taken up by it independently, in respect of other audiovisual materials, that it develops/produces the principal objective should be to support and enrich the activities of the various departments and units of NCERT.

(iii) *Science Workshop* : Mass production and supply of science kits should not, as earlier stated, be NCERT's function. A separate organisation, as in the case of publication of textbooks, should take over this responsibility. This activity should be undertaken by an autonomous and self-financing unit on the basis of orders received from State/other organisations. The existing functions of designing and development of science equipment should be entrusted to the Department of Education in Science and Mathematics.

(iv) *National Talent Search Unit* : The Unit performs at present three functions : preparation of tools, conduct of examination and disbursement of scholarships. Of these, the last two involve primarily administrative tasks. As already stated, these functions should be taken over by a separate organisation (National Testing Service), recommended earlier. In this context, we welcome the decision to decentralise the first stage selection of awardees ; this is likely to help in casting the net wider.

(v) *National Council of Teacher Education* : NCERT functions as the Secretariat to the National Council for Teacher Education. We understand that maintenance and control of standards in teacher education is being brought under the purview of the University Grants Commission. This should have substantial influence on the improvement of teacher education in the country. However, NCERT should continue to provide the NCTE an institutional mechanism for indepth studies and for extension of its academic functions. From this point of view, NCERT should continue to be its academic arm.

150. We have suggested a delinking of mass production of textbooks and science kits from NCERT. These activities are nevertheless important and require alternative organisational arrangements. In addition to textbooks and science kits, NCERT develops a variety of other materials—print and others—for use in the school system. These include, among others, supplementary readers, play materials for children, charts and maps, audio-tapes, film strips, video-cassettes, educational films, etc. For various reasons, NCERT

has developed them either in limited quantities or in prototype form with the result that the school system has been denied the opportunity to use materials which are educationally effective while at the same time affordable. The Ministry of Education and Culture should make alternative arrangements for large-scale production of these educational materials. One possible method would be the setting up of a national corporation of educational materials, as an autonomous commercial organisation. While NCERT would continue to develop models/prototypes, the Corporation would produce them commercially.

151. Considering that the requirements of science equipment of the school system would be large, States would have to establish their own production facilities. We understand that proposals in this regard are under consideration.

Regional Centre of Education

152. Given the premise that NCERT's programming would have to reflect in a substantial way the State requirements, it would be necessary to strengthen the Regional Colleges of Education and to redefine their roles and structure. They should be regarded as a vital link in a chain. In this context, and this we have stressed earlier, the Regional Colleges would have to shed many of the traditional training functions. While continuing with innovative training programmes, at least till their large-scale multiplication is taken over by appropriate organisations at the State level, the colleges will have to give prominence to their role of assisting and advising States in policy formulation and programme development and implementation. In our view, they should be developed as major regional centres of education.

153. In our view, the number of Regional Colleges is insufficient to meet the needs of the States effectively. Given the size of the educational systems that the States support, we recommend that at least two more such institutions be established. While it would be for the Government to decide upon the location of new centres, we would like to strongly recommend that one such centre be established to cater to the educational needs of the north-eastern region. This

is important because the States and Union Territories of this region lack infrastructure and expertise to undertake educational development and transformation which is urgently needed.

154. A regrouping of the States/Union Territories in relation to the jurisdiction of the Regional Centres should be undertaken. We visualise the following regrouping of the States :

- (a) *Regional Centre (Northern zone)*
 - (i) Jammu and Kashmir
 - (ii) Punjab
 - (iii) Haryana
 - (iv) Himachal Pradesh
 - (v) Chandigarh
 - (vi) Delhi
- (b) *Regional Centre (north-eastern zone)*
 - (vii) Meghalaya
 - (viii) Nagaland
 - (ix) Mizoram
 - (x) Tripura
 - (xi) Manipur
 - (xii) Arunachal Pradesh
 - (xiii) Sikkim
- (c) *Regional Centre (eastern zone)*
 - (xiv) Orissa
 - (xv) West Bengal
 - (xvi) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
 - (xvii) Assam
- (d) *Regional Centre (western zone)*
 - (xviii) Rajasthan
 - (xix) Maharashtra
 - (xx) Gujarat
 - (xxi) Goa, Daman and Diu
 - (xxii) Dadra and Nagar Haveli
- (e) *Regional Centre (southern zone)*
 - (xxiii) Andhra Pradesh
 - (xxiv) Tamil Nadu

- (xxv) Karnataka
- (xxvi) Kerala
- (xxvii) Pondicherry
- (xxviii) Lakshadweep
- (f) *Regional Centre (central zone)*
- (xxix) Bihar
- (xxx) Madhya Pradesh
- (xxxi) Uttar Pradesh

155. As regional centres, they will be concerned with a number of functions ; illustratively these functions would include :

- (a) policy studies in relation to the conditions obtaining in the States.
 - (b) advise/assist the States in formulation of policies/programmes
 - (c) support and monitor the implementation of nationally accepted policies and programmes
 - (d) sponsor research which helps in identifying and solving educational problems of the States
 - (e) in-service training to meet the specific requirements of State, particularly for teacher educators of elementary teacher training institutions by employing, if necessary, course personnel from the region to overcome language difficulties
 - (f) collaboration with State-level institutions for educational development of States
 - (g) innovative programmes in pre-service training and in emerging area like software development for radio/television transmission, education of the disabled, etc. etc.
 - (h) consultancy services to State level institutions
 - (i) documentation and dissemination of educational information
 - (j) interaction with university education departments.
- *Considering the priority attached and required to be given to it, universalisation of elementary education should provide the major focus for the activities of the regional centres.

156. Broadly speaking, the functions visualised for the regional centres fall into two categories :

- (a) research and training
- (b) development and extension.

In the former category will fall activities which lead to award of degrees ; the latter will include functions which are of direct relevance to educational needs of the region. In all its activities, the regional centre should get feedback from field offices. We have visualised for NCERT a statutory status and degree-giving powers. If this development takes place, regional centre will be able to organise pre-service training and introduce research programmes leading to degrees which will be awarded by NCERT. With NCERT having a deemed university status, the regional centres will be its regional campuses.

157. Each regional centre should have two main committees, viz. the Academic Council which will be concerned with the pre-service training and research programmes and the Programme Advisory Committee which will deal with those activities which are of immediate relevance to the State-curriculum development, in-service training, performance evaluation and so on. Representation on these committees should be from RCE, State-level institutions, State Departments and Directorates of Education, universities of the region, field offices and NIE departments. There should be periodic shifting of the faculty resources, from one division to the other. This interchange will be helpful in providing, on the one hand, academic and research support to States' educational development and on the other, help in identifying field problems for investigation and programme development. The coordination between the two committees should be ensured. The Head of the regional centre, who would be the chairman of both these committees, would be able to effect this. The proposals approved by the two committees of the regional centre should be reported to the Programme Advisory Committee of NCERT so as to ensure that a broadly common framework governs all the activities that NCERT undertakes as a whole.

158. The expanded role of the regional centre would require that it be headed by an academically competent professional. With a view to ensuring that she/he is able to provide the necessary leadership and command respect of the staff, it is recommended that the head be given a status above that of the Professor. This could be achieved, among other things, by giving him/her a salary scale above that of the Professor.

159. It is visualised that the work of the Field Advisers located in region will be coordinated by the regional centre. In order to provide for a permanent mechanism for coordinating activities of the field offices and receiving feedback on the programmes/activities that the centre organises, each centre should have a field coordination unit.

Field Advisers' Offices

160. NCERT has set up field offices in State capitals for liaising with State Education Departments and State-level institutions. They are expected, on the one hand, to inform the State Departments of the activities that various units of NCERT, including Regional Colleges of Education, undertake, from which the former can take benefit and, on the other, to communicate to NCERT specific requirements of the States for meeting which its departments can develop programmes. The field offices also provide financial support for small-scale action research projects undertaken by school teachers and, at times, organise in-service training activity at the request of the State departments. The academic and financial resources available with them are too meagre to allow them to function meaningfully. As at present constituted, field offices are unable to function very effectively.

161. If, as has been the tenor of our recommendations, NCERT has to be concerned more and more with State problems, the field office assumes critical importance. It can perform the functions of the man-on-the-spot and can work as the eyes and ears of the regional centres as well as of the headquarters. The main functions of the field office should include :

- (i) liaison with State departments of education and State-

- level institutions and university education departments ;
- (ii) collaboration with SCERTs and other institutions in undertaking status studies of educational progress and needs of the State ;
 - (iii) assistance to States in policy formulation and programmes development ;
 - (iv) communication to the regional centre and NIE the problems confronted by State for which specific programmes would require to be developed ;
 - (v) identification of States' needs, if necessary, by undertaking special studies ;
 - (vi) dissemination, on behalf of NIE and regional centres, of information on educational trends ;
 - (vii) feedback to NIE/RCE on the programmes conducted by the NIE departments and regional centres ;
 - (viii) organising or getting organised in-service training programmes for State personnel ;
 - (ix) supervision of the centres of Continuing Education ;
 - (x) compilation of information on educational developments in the States as well as on the implementation of the nationally-accepted policies/programmes.

162. In the context of the role visualised for it, we feel that the field office needs substantial strengthening. Each field office should be headed by a senior-level faculty member (Reader or Professor). He/she should be supported by 3-4 academic (Readers and Lecturers) and supporting staff. The size of the field office may vary with reference to problems and area of operation.

163. Each field office should have an advisory committee for assisting it in programme formulation. Representation to this committee should be drawn from State Education Department, SCERTs, training institutions, schools, the regional centres of education and NIE and university departments of education. The representation of field offices on committees of regional centres and NIE should be ensured to facilitate two-way communication.

164. We are of the view that every State should have a

field office so that NCERT is able to provide assistance to the States on a continuous basis. The field office, if possible, may be located on the premises of the SCERT/SIE of the State so that there is constant interaction between the two in the development of programmes. A view was advocated by some that the Field Adviser should necessarily be drawn from the State concerned. While such an arrangement may help, we feel, it need not always be so. No matter how and wherefrom he/she is recruited, it is imperative that he is familiar with the approaches and work of NCERT.

Staffing Policy

165. The reorganisation proposed should not, in our view, require any large-scale creation of new faculty posts. NCERT's faculty resources are more than adequate to allow establishment of new regional centres, development of existing regional colleges into regional centres and strengthening of the field offices. The proposed reorganisation can and should be undertaken by suitable redeployment of existing staff. Only in areas which have emerged as major concerns and where existing staff resources are either lacking or inadequate would NCERT require additional staff resources. Illustrative of these are the education of the disabled and media support to education. Even here, it should be possible to minimise fresh recruitment by training of existing academics.

166. We would like to emphasize the need for constant interchange of staff between NCERT, the university departments and State-level organisations. Such an interchange would be beneficial in two major ways. It would lead to the availability, at different vantage-points of the education system, of personnel aware of NCERT's philosophy and approaches. This would constitute a resource on which NCERT would be able to draw upon. It would at the same time acquaint NCERT's Professors, Readers and Lecturers with the conditions in the field and develop in them an appreciation of the constraints within which educational change has to be brought about. There should also be regular exchange of staff between the NIE, the regional centres and the field offices.

167. As indicated above, we do not see the need for any

large-scale creation of permanent academic positions. Even where staff resources are required, we suggest that NCERT should fill up these positions through deputation from other institutions, by offering short-term contractual appointments and by recruiting competent persons for projects for a specific duration. Support to other institutions/agencies for undertaking research and development work on behalf of NCERT, as we have advocated, will also obviate the need for appointing additional academic staff.

ANNEXURE 1

No. F. 1-73/81/School. 4
Government of India
Ministry of Education and Culture
(Department of Education)

New Delhi, dated 30th January, 1982

RESOLUTION

Sub : Setting up of a Task Force to Consider Restructuring of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi

The Public Accounts Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha), in their 48th Report, have recommended that a Task Force, consisting of the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and some eminent educationists, should be set up expeditiously to consider within a stipulated period of time, the urgent problem of restructuring of the NCERT to restore to it the dynamic, creative and nationally useful role of effectively helping the educational system of our federal democratic republic.

2. In pursuance of this recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee, the Government of India in the Ministry of Education and Culture have decided to set up a Task Force with the following terms of reference :

- (i) A critical assessment of the role performed by NCERT in terms of the long and short-term objectives laid down for it in its Memorandum of Association.
- (ii) To review the recommendations made by earlier committees, notably the ones named by the Public Accounts Committee, with a view to determine their relevance and significance for the Council's further development.

- (iii) To suggest an optimal organisational structure for the Council with a view to enabling it to meet the emerging challenges of future educational development in school education, particularly from the point of view of improving its efficiency and productivity.
- (iv) In the light of the above, to suggest the overall management and decision-making structures and processes.

3. The composition of the Task Force will be as under :

- (i) Dr. (Smt.) Madhuri R. Shah *Chairman*
Chairman
University Grants Commission
- (ii) Dr. V.G. Kulkarni *Member*
Project Director
Tata Institute of Fundamental
Research, Homi Bhabha Centre
for Science Education
Bombay
- (iii) Prof. Satya Bhushan *Member*
Vice-Chancellor
Jammu University
Jammu Tawi
- (iv) Prof. P.K. Umashankar *Member*
Education Commissioner
Government of Kerala
Trivandrum
- (v) Dr. Shib K. Mitra *Member*
Director
NCERT
- (vi) Joint Secretary (Schools) *Member*
Ministry of Education and Culture
(Department of Education)

4. The Task Force will devise its own procedures of work. The Task Force will be required to submit its report within six months from the date it commences its work.

5. The NCERT will provide the Secretariat to the Task Force. Expenditure incurred in connection with the Task Force's work will also be met out of NCERT's budget.

Sd/-

(S. SATHYAM)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

ORDER

Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be sent to all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations and all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.

Ordered also that the Resolution be published in the Gazette of India for general information.

Sd/-

(S. SATHYAM)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

To

The Manager
Government of India Press
(Bharat Sarkar Mudranalaya)
Faridabad

Copy to :—

1. All members of the Task Force (by name).
2. All members of the Council.
3. Secretary, NCERT (with 10 spare copies)
4. Lok Sabha Secretariat (PAC Branch)
5. Director of Audit, Central Revenues,
New Delhi

Sd/-

(RENUKA MEHRA) (SMT.)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

PART OF ANNEXURE 1

No. F. 1-73/81-Sch. 4
Government of India
Ministry of Education and Culture
(Department of Education)

New Delhi, dated the 19 April, 1982

RESOLUTION

Sub : Setting up of a Task Force to consider restructuring of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) New Delhi

Government of India have set up a Task Force to consider restructuring of the NCERT vide Resolution No. F. 1-73/81/Sch. 4 dated the 30th January, 1982. It has now been decided to add to its membership indicated in para 3 of the said Resolution as below :

(vi) Shri J.A. Kalyanakrishnan *Member*
Financial Adviser
Ministry of Education and Culture

The existing entry No. (vi) in para 3 will be renumbered as (vii)

Sd/-
(S. SATHYAM)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

ORDER

Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be sent to all State Governments and Union Territory Administrations and all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.

Ordered also that the Resolution be published in the Gazette of India for general information.

Sd/-

(S. SATHYAM)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

To

The Manager
Government of India Press
(Bharat Sarkar Mudranalaya)
Faridabad

Copy to :

1. All members of the Task Force (by name)
2. Secretary, NCERT (with 10 spare copies)
3. Lok Sabha Secretariat (PAC Branch)
4. Director of Audit, Central Revenues,
New Delhi.

Sd/-

(RENUKA MEHRA) (SMT.)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

List of Places Visited and Persons Met with

1. Madras (Date 28.4.1982 and 29.4.1982) :

- (i) Shri Aranganayagam *Minister of Education
Government of
Tamil Nadu*
- (ii) Shri C. Ramdas *Education Secretary
Government of
Tamil Nadu*
- (iii) Professor Ram Shastri
- (iv) Shri Kanakasabai *Education Officer
Madras Corporation
Government of
Tamil Nadu*
- (v) SCERT Officers
Professor Ramanathan
Professor Rajeshwari
Professor Lalitha
Professor Rani
Professor Ram Singh
- (vi) Smt. Anjani Dayanand *IAS, Formerly Secretary
NCERT*
- (vii) Dr. K. Venkatasubramanian *Director of Education:*
- (viii) Smt. Parthasarathy
- (ix) Dr. (Smt.) Indiresan
- (x) Smt. Pottachy
- (xi) Shri Manthiram
- (xii) Shri Ponnusamy
- (xiii) Professor Sonjivi

2. Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad) (Date 30.4.1982)

- (i) Shri B. Venkataram *Chief Minister of
Andhra Pradesh*

- (ii) Shri Kesava Rao *Education Minister of Andhra Pradesh*
- (iii) Shri Alwar Das *Minister of State*
- (iv) Dr. Ramesh Mohan *Director of CIEFL*
- (v) M. Gopala Krishnan *IAS, Formerly Education Secretary Osmania University*
- (vi) Professor Eswara Reddy *Osmania University*
- 3. Gauhati (Date 24.5.1982 and 25.5.1982)**
- Meeting with Officers of the Government of Assam*
- (i) Shri V.C. Sarania *Education Secretary*
- (ii) Director of SIE, Jorhat
- (iii) Shri Bharati *DPI, Gauhati*
- Meeting with Officers of the Government of Meghalaya*
- (iv) Shri Wolflang *Director, SCERT*
- Meeting with Officers of the Government of Manipur*
- (v) Education Secretary
- (vi) Vice-Chancellor and *Gauhati University*
Head of Department
of Education
- (vii) Dr. Das *NEHU*
- 4. Srinagar (J & K) (Date 14.6.1982 to 16.6.1982)**
- (i) Shri Shafi Mohammad *Education Minister of Srinagar*
- (ii) *Meeting with officials*
Education Secretary
Additional Secretary
Director (Kashmir)
Director (Jammu)
Director of SIE (Kashmir)
Director of SIE (Jammu)
- (iii) *State Board of Secondary Education*
Smt. Salma Firdous *School Principal*
Shri Qureshi
Dr. Agha Ashraf
Vice-Chancellor *Srinagar University*
Dean *-do-*
- 5. Mysore (Date 12.9.1982 and 13.9.1982)**
- (i) Dr. Hegdo *Vice-Chancellor Mysore University*

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| (ii) Shri S.N. Dutt | <i>RCE Faculty (Physics)</i> |
| (iii) Shri Duraiswamy | <i>Coordinator</i> |
| (iv) Professor Sharma | |
| (v) Professor Maheshwari | |
| (vi) Dr. Gupta | <i>Commerce</i> |
| (vii) Dr. Banerjee | <i>President, Federation
of Academic Staff
Associations</i> |
| (viii) Shri Satyanarayana Rao | <i>Telugu</i> |
| (ix) Dr. Seshadri | |
| (x) Dr. Dutta | <i>RCE, Ajmer</i> |
| (xi) Dr. Kanungo | <i>RCE, Bhubaneswar</i> |
| (xii) Dr. (Smt.) K.T. Singh | |

Questionnaire Issued by the Task Force

Role/Objectives

1. The objectives of NCERT as listed in its Memorandum of Association are set out in Annexure 1.

To what extent do you think these objectives have been realised? Do you think the objectives need reframing? If so, please specify the changes necessary.

2. (a) According to Article 3.1 of its Memorandum of Association, NCERT has "to assist and advise the Ministry of Education in the implementation of its policies...". This, it has been suggested, reduces NCERT to a service organisation. If it has to acquire a national character, its advisory role should preponderate and it should advise on *formulation* of policies and not just their *implementation*. It has further been suggested that NCERT should be concerned more with the national policy and objectives and not those of the Ministry of Education.

Please give your comments on these observations and specifically state whether you would like Article 3.1 to be reframed.

2. (b) Do you think that the wide charter of NCERT which today includes every subject in education, is likely to dilute the focus on priority areas? Do you think that the priority areas listed below be specifically mentioned as such that the main thrust for the next two decades would be on these areas?

(i) Universalisation of Elementary Education

(ii) Vocationalisation of Secondary Education

(iii) Teacher Training.

3. Several innovative educational programmes are being undertaken in India today. However, in the absence of a coordinated information processing centre the country does not reap full benefit from these efforts. It has been suggested that the NCERT be given the responsibility of compiling an inventory of these projects and for carrying out assessment of these programmes with a view to disseminating the relevant information on a country-wise basis. It has also been suggested that NCERT should have the capability of assessing the overall educational progress in the country so that it can advise more effectively the Centre and the States on policy matters. Do you recommend that NCERT should make special effort to develop the tools and the expertise for meeting these demands ?

4. During the past few years a national framework and a national pattern for school education is emerging. In this context it has been necessary for many States to align their policies and infrastructure so as to derive full benefit from these educational reforms. It has been suggested that this situation has necessitated NCERT to take up an advisory role in helping the States to identify their needs and in advising them to create the infrastructure designed to meet the needs.

Research and Evaluation

5. Whether the focus, methodology for identification of topics and extent of coverage is adequate? The relevance of research work undertaken so far to national policies and priority may be commented upon in particular.

6. There is a complaint that educational research in NCERT, Universities, Teacher Training Institutions and other research bodies is not coordinated. Do you agree? If you do, what steps would you suggest to remedy the situation?

7. Is there clarity of objectives and adequacy of attention paid in research projects by NCERT for policy research?

8. In an organisation like NCERT research work has to be viewed as a part of professional development of staff and

of preparation of researchers of higher calibre. Also, there should be more of inter-disciplinary research. The existing system of promoting doctoral and post-doctoral research through fellowships, it is felt, is not adequate to meet these requirements. There have been proposals to set up separate institutional arrangements. It has been suggested that it is not necessary to set up a separate institution for this sake; the purpose can be served by establishing a separate division within NCERT to which staff could be seconded for research work. What is important is that staff should not be required to take up such research in addition to their regular duties.

What are your views ?

9. Is there adequate appreciation and timely launching of projects for development of perspectives ?

10. Whether the administrative arrangements including the management structure and decision-making processes are adequate to promote, aid and follow-up research activities ?

11. The Demonstration Multipurpose Schools are meant to provide demonstration and research facilities to RCEs. A question has been raised : why should such facilities be available only in four schools and not in others ? It has accordingly been suggested that RCEs need not *limit* their field by running Demonstration Multipurpose Schools and may have access to wider variety of schools.

What are your views ?

Training and Extension

12. Should training programmes be taken up at the headquarters level at all or should it be left to be handled only at RCEs ?

13. (a) It has been suggested that in order to be of greater use to States RCE should shed pre-service training programmes and go in for more in-service training programmes. Do you agree ? Is this a correct view ?

13. (b) If you agree with the above suggestion, please indicate whether you like the in-service training programme to concentrate on teacher educators to the exclusion of teachers.

13. (c) If you do not agree with the suggestion give

(a) above, what are your views about refinement of the existing pre-service training programmes ? (In this connection it will be relevant to recognise that there are different types of pre-service programmes of different duration, viz., one-year B. Ed., four-year integrated courses and two-year integrated postgraduate courses).

13. (d) (i) RCEs, as part of NCERT do not mean to supplant the teacher education system in the States. It is not possible for four RCEs to take up training responsibilities for three million teachers. Apart from the enormity of the task, intractable language problems will have to be reckoned with. RCEs only seek to provide leadership in teacher education and innovate. Besides, on a regional basis they organise some programmes for teacher-trainers. The bulk of the teacher education work is left to be handled by the States' own Teacher Training Institutions and the Centres of Continuing Education set up with NCERT collaboration.

What are your views about this arrangement ? Do you think this is adequate to meet the requirements ?

13. (d) (ii) It has been suggested by some that RCEs should organise State-wise programmes and not regional programmes; there should be more programmes for elementary school teachers ; and, some programmes can be organised in the States by the RCE staff. Do you think this is feasible ? What are the administrative and personnel implications ? How could RCE develop the language capabilities required to discharge such responsibilities ?

14. RCEs are at present affiliated to the Universities within whose jurisdiction they are located. Experience shows that the regulations of the Universities hinder innovations by RCEs. Also, because of its 'regional' status, affiliation to one University in one State creates administrative problems of equivalence, recognition, etc. It has, therefore, been suggested that RCEs may be deemed to be Universities themselves for the purpose of teacher education.

Do you agree with this suggestion ? If you do, please indicate whether each RCE should be deemed to be a separate University or whether all the four RCEs together with

the Research Division in NIE should be grouped for deeming as one University.

15. (a) In the present set-up NCERT uses RCEs only for teacher education. RCEs have the capabilities to be self-reliant on this item of work. RCEs also have limited capabilities in other items of NCERT's activities. They may be able to organise programmes even in those by drawing on NCERT's resources.

Keeping this position in mind please state whether RCEs should only deal with training or whether they should be a part of the network of institutions with added responsibilities.

15. (b) Will being part of a network of institutions hinder academic work in any way ?

15. (c) If so, what safeguards will you suggest ?

16. (a) What should be the role of RCEs to strengthen the centres of continuing education ?

(Please indicate the academic inputs required for RCEs.)

16. (b) In this context, please state what is the optimum coverage for a centre of continuing education.

17. Whether the present strategy of extension service is satisfactory ?

18. Should RCEs be assigned more responsibilities/function to enable them to play more effectively the extension role ?

19. In line with the questions raised under role/objectives and research/evaluation, what steps should be taken by RCEs to increase sensitivity to survey data, assessment of educational needs/programmes/progress ?

20. (a) With reference to the training and extension activities envisaged, please indicate whether the division of geographical jurisdiction between the four RCEs is appropriate. (Please see Annexure 2).

20. (b) It has been pointed out that the [North-Eastern region has not been adequately serviced by the NCERT network. Please indicate specifically what remedial measures can be undertaken.

Other Programmes

21. With reference to the questions relating to defining

NCERT's objectives in sharper focus, what should be the consequential adjustments in its 'Other Activities' ?

22. In any case,

- (a) Should NCERT develop only textual material for development of textbooks as such ?
- (b) Should NCERT have direct responsibility for mass production and distribution of textbooks ?
- (c) Should NCERT have the direct responsibility for mass production and distribution of science kits ?
- (d) Should NCERT have the responsibility for identification of talent at the end of school level and nurturing talent at the collegiate level ? (If this responsibility is to continue, it may please be indicated whether any amendments should be made to the role/objectives).
- (e) Every State has a Board of Secondary Education. These Boards conduct different examinations for Class 10 and Class 12. As a result, different standards have to be reckoned with. One way of dealing with this problem is to equalise the marks through a percentile formula. But, it has been suggested that a National Testing Service should be introduced. Do you agree ? Can this be legitimately entrusted to NCERT ?

Strengthening Linkages with the States

23. It has been alleged that NCERT's linkage with the States is not adequate. Do you agree ? What remedial measures would you suggest ?

24. In the light of changes in role/objectives and programmes contemplated, what changes are necessary to improve contacts with the States ?

25. (a) What should be the structure at the regional level ? Is the Management Committee system adequate or is any other system necessary ?

26. (a) What should be the structure at the State-level ?

26. (b) What should be the role of FAs in improving contacts with the States ?

27. What should be the functional link between NCERT and SCERT ?

Communication Support

28. It has been alleged that communication links between NCERT and the States and, between RCEs and the States are not adequate. Do you agree ? What are your suggestions for improvement ?

29. With specific reference to the additional responsibilities contemplated, what new communication links would you suggest ?

30. (a) Various alternatives are possible for establishing communication links between NCERT, RCEs and the States like meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, newsletters, journals, etc. It should also be possible to get reservation of space in the newsletter/journals of one for the other. Bearing all this in mind what strategy would you suggest ?

30. (b) Please also indicate your views particularly about communicating with the primary teachers in all parts of the country.

31. What is the scope for utilising the Satellite technology for this purpose ?

32. Whether the existing departmental structure at HQ conducive for effective formulation/implementation of programmes ? Should the NCERT have departments attending to research, training and extension in a self-contained manner within each of them or there should be divisions for each of the major functions, viz. research etc., with the subject expertise built in ?

33. There is a feeling that the unduly large number of departments causes isolated functioning, often at cross purposes. Is a reduction in the number of departments needed ? What are your suggestions for promoting coordination between departments ?

34. Is the contact between NCERT and the Ministry of Education adequate/satisfactory ? What mechanism is needed to improve this contact ?

35. Whether the existing structure is convenient to the States for effective collaboration ?

- 36 (a).** What should be the structure at the regional level ?
36 (b). Is it necessary or desirable to organise RCEs as regional centres ?
37 (a). What should be the structure at the State-level ?
37 (b). What should be the role of FAs ?

Staffing

- 38 (a).** It has been suggested that the project-based approach should be adopted for staffing. In one of the management-studies earlier also it was recommended that deployment of staff should be project-based. What are your views on the subject ?
38 (b). Should the project-based approach govern only deployment of staff or should recruitment itself be made accordingly ?
38 (c). What kind of recruitment policy would you recommend ? Should one encourage a minimum core staff supported by people employed specifically for a given project for a limited period ? Project appointments could also be made from individuals deputed by other institutions for fixed period. Would you like the core staff to be deployed on a project basis ?
38 (d). What administrative and personnel problems do you envisage with reference to project-based, short-term recruitments ? Have you any particular suggestions about staff policies to overcome them and make such a system workable ?
39 (a). Secondments between NCERT and State-level counterpart organisations have been suggested to promote a healthy exchange of experience and expertise. What are your views on the subject ?
39 (b). What staffing policies relating to secondments would you recommend ?
40. How to promote mobility of staff between NCERT, Universities and the States ?
41. It is considered desirable to have a closer and continuous contact between NCERT and actual classroom situations. What staffing policy is warranted by this requirement ?

42. What shifts in staffing policy are necessary if,
- (a) RCEs have to assume additional responsibilities ; and
 - (b) RCEs have to organise more training programmes for elementary school teachers State-wise ?
43. What are the implications if FA is to be an effective link between RCEs and the States :
- (a) Should he be from the same State or region ?
 - (b) What language competencies are required ?
 - (c) What additional staff support is required ?

Management Systems/Decision-making Process

44. Whether any change is required in the existing composition of the General Council and the Executive Committee ?

45 (a). The Memorandum of Association prescribes that the Minister for Education will be the ex-officio President of NCERT. Do you think this a satisfactory arrangement ?

45 (b). A view has been expressed that Ministers are very busy and it will always be difficult for them to find time for such responsibilities. To overcome this difficulty it has been suggested that in addition to the ex-officio President there should be a full-time 'Working President'. Do you agree with this suggestion ? What will be his role ?

45 (c). Bearing all this in mind, please also indicate your views on the extent of involvement of the Ministry of Education.

46. There is a feeling that management of NCERT is handicapped by inadequate accountability in respect of its academic functions. Do you agree ? Would you make any recommendations about the monitoring/control systems to improve matters in this regard ?

47. What changes would be required if RCEs have to assume additional responsibilities ?

48. What organisational linkages are possible/desirable between NCERT, CBSE and KVS ?

General

49. What, in your opinion, are the weaknesses in the system and what are your suggestions to overcome them ?

ANNEXURE I OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Extracts from the Memorandum of Association of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

3.1 The objects of the Council shall be to assist and advise the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare in the implementation of its policies and major programmes in the field of education, particularly school education.

3.2 For the realisation of these objectives, the Council may undertake any or all of the following programmes and activities :

- (a) To undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research in all branches of education ;
- (b) To organise pre-service and in-service training, mainly at an advanced level ;
- (c) To organise extension services for such institutions as are engaged in educational research, training of teachers or provision of extension services to schools ;
- (d) To develop and/or to disseminate improved educational techniques and practices in schools ;
- (e) To cooperate with, collaborate and assist the State Education Departments, universities and other educational institutions for the furtherance of its objects ;
- (f) To establish and conduct, in any part of the country, such institutions as may be necessary to realise its objectives ;
- (g) To act as a clearing-house for ideas and information on all matters relating to school education ;
- (h) To advise the State Governments and other educa-

tional organisations and institutions on matters relating to school education ;

- (i) To undertake the preparation and/or the publication of such books, materials, periodicals and other literature as may be necessary for the furtherance of its objects ;
- (j) To acquire by gift, purchase, lease or otherwise any property, movable or immovable, which may be necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Council and to construct, alter and maintain any building or buildings for the purposes of the Council ;
- (k) To draw, make, accept, endorse, discount and negotiate the Government of India and other promissory notes, bills of exchange, cheques or other negotiable instruments ;
- (l) To invest the funds of the Council in such securities or in such manner as may from time to time be determined by the Executive Committee and from time to time, to sell or transfer such investments ;
- (m) To sell, transfer, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any property of the Council ; and
- (n) To do all such things as the Council may consider necessary, incidental or conducive to its primary objects of promoting educational research, advance professional training of educational personnel, and the provision of extension services to educational institutions.

ANNEXURE 2 OF QUESTIONNAIRE

**Division of Geographical Jurisdiction of the
Regional College of Education (RCE)**

I. RCE, Ajmer

- (1) Rajasthan
- (2) Uttar Pradesh
- (3) Himachal Pradesh
- (4) Punjab
- (5) Haryana
- (6) Jammu and Kashmir
- (7) Delhi (Union Territory)
- (8) Chandigarh

II. RCE, Bhubaneswar

- (1) Orissa
- (2) West Bengal
- (3) Bihar
- (4) Assam
- (5) Meghalaya
- (6) Sikkim
- (7) Arunachal Pradesh
- (8) Mizoram
- (9) Nagaland
- (10) Tripura
- (11) Manipur
- (12) A & N Islands

III. RCE, Bhopal

- (1) Madhya Pradesh
- (2) Gujarat
- (3) Maharashtra
- (4) Goa, Daman, Diu

(5) Dadra and Nagar Haveli

IV. RCE, Mysore

- (1) Karnataka
- (2) Andhra Pradesh
- (3) Kerala
- (4) Tamil Nadu
- (5) Pondicherry
- (6) Lakshadweep

ANNEXURE 4

**The Range of Consultation through and the
Extent of Response to the Questionnaire Issued by
the Task Force**

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Number Issued</i>	<i>Response Received</i>
1.	States/UTs	22+9	5
2.	SIE/SCERT	31	6
3.	University/Department of Education	44	6
4.	Eminent Educationists	28	8
5.	NCERT/Headquarters*		14
6.	RCEs	4	4
7.	Field Advisers	16	10
8.	National Institution of Education Academic Staff Association (NASA) and other Associations*		
9.	Individuals*		3**

The NCERT circulated the questionnaire to all of its constituent units with the indication that the response be sent to the Member-Secretary, directly.

NASA and PUTSA submitted their response to the Questionnaire.