THE EDUCATION COMMISSION AND AFTER
The Education Commission
and After

J.P. NAIK

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Foreword

The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) published under the title Education and National Development was a turning point in India’s educational life. Over the decade and a half since its publication the educational profile of this country has undergone significant changes. Action on the Report taken or avoided will make the history of Indian education in the years ahead. The document therefore calls for rigorous analysis and scrutiny, more so at the present juncture of our development. That is precisely what J.P. Naik attempts to do in this book.

The educational life of any country is a continuum which gathers its past history into a living stream, flowing through the present into the future. Education and National Development set forth this reality clearly and highlighted the fact that steps into the future have a dialectical relation with events of the past. To evaluate the Report, it is essential therefore to understand the educational developments that preceded it and that intervening process which carries the past along with the present into the realm of the future. It is this continuum focussed around the Education Commission (1964-66) and its sequel—a difficult task handled with competence—that is being presented in this extraordinary work which is as illuminating for its informativeness as for the deep perception it exhibits of the meshing process of educational, economic and political decision-making.

Educational decisions in India are political decisions and certainly not the decisions of the technical experts in education. The political economy of education has remained a dominating factor in determining educational programmes. The Education Commission presented a model based on sound technical, pedagogical and ethical principles. However, the decisions on the model were made by the political leaders of the country. But that is how ultimately the country’s educational system derives its political legitimacy. The author’s statement: “No political party had really applied its mind to the education problem in depth and formulated well-conceived long-
term policies of its own. . . . The average politician did not also have an adequate ‘education literacy’ because there has been so little of a dialogue between politicians and educationists,” is indicative of the reality of the educational policy-making in the country. It is a rare combination when, like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania or Leopold Senghor of Senegal, educationists have become political leaders. More often than not educational propositions are turned into grist for the political mill from which emanates ultimate power. There have been instances when the political economy of education has caused deadlocks in the reshuffling of the portfolios in State cabinets. At times ministers have found education portfolios no longer lucrative, politically speaking, because of the ‘most profitable transaction’, the sanctioning of new schools, having been completed and there being little further chance of its contributing to the concerned minister’s political power. More often than not the weakest among the ministers is given the charge of the education portfolio.

Though, like all educational reviews, the Report of the Education Commission was in danger of falling between the normative and positive positions, it perhaps deliberately chose the normative path in relying on the eight premises set forth in Chapter III: “(1) strong Central and State governments that would be committed to educational development, (2) stable political conditions, (3) declining birth rate, (4) a growth of national income at 6 per cent per annum, (5) a lessening of social tensions due to effective development, (6) a strengthened and revitalised bureaucracy, (7) a committed and competent body of teachers, and (8) a community of students dedicated to the pursuit of learning.” As a result, the positive state of economic and social relations—the unequal assets distribution, and the unjust spread of social, economic and political power—were noted by the Commission as “basic problems” which have to be “squarely faced and resolutely tackled.” An analysis of their correlation to the educational system, their impact on its functioning, reveals the unequal struggle between education and political economy. Consider, for instance the reactions to the proposals for establishing neighbourhood schools, abolishing public schools and evolving a common school system, or for that matter recommendations on the selective development of educational institutions and the priority to elementary and adult education as a first essential step in the educational transformation. All of these were envisaged as vital aspects of the much-needed educational revolution in the country, but became eventually either non-issues or non-starters. The basic truth that a democratic and egalitarian educational system is impossible in an inegalitarian and unjust society has come to the surface time and again.

Does one learn from history or does one despairingly confess that one never learns from history? This question is posed in the concluding chapter of this publication where after an exhaustive review and analysis of the Report of the Education Commission, the author derives a series of Educational Don’ts and Do’s. The Don’ts include the current division of the individual life into the ghetto of the school followed by the ghetto of work, the time and space dominance of education, teaching as against learning, etc. The Do’s are probably the most illuminating though none is new in the sense that each one is derived from the Commission’s findings or non-findings and from the manner in which the findings were ignored, distorted or carried out half-heartedly during the decade and a half that has elapsed since it was given to us. Perhaps the most decisive part of the publication is its concluding implementation desiderata. It tells us that without the integrated action of the four “political” groups no educational blueprint can be put on the ground in anything like its wholeness and integrity.

This rather unusual analysis is frank to the point of certain leaders finding it fearsome. In some respects the review amounts to a confession in the form of nea culpa. Yet, the multi-faceted prism of the innovations, continuity, political dominance, socio-economic realities and some glimpses of the alternative futures which has gone into the impressive make up of the Report of the Education Commission and all that has happened since, are set forth with authority, clarity and integrity which its author J.P. Naik brings to this publication. He writes on the Report and its sequel with an authority derived from his being at the centre of the Commission’s functioning and the lead agent in the Government—both Central and States—during the years that followed. He writes with clarity because in his person he is the quintessence of educational India, a colossus astride over half a century of its events, its ups and downs which he dominated and fashioned. He carries in his head not only the facts and their history but also the whys and wherefores of each educational event which he is able to conceptualise and build into a systematic and integrated theory. He writes with integrity because he sees the educational panorama unfolding in its true character,
Foreword

acknowledging failures and attributing them fearlessly to their authors including himself, as he does successes and 'leaps-forward' which he equally faithfully traces to their proud originators. This integrity flows from his personal qualities of courage, compassion and charity. The result is a rather unusual publication which is of value to the historian and researcher, and a challenging guide to the educational policy-maker and administrator.

MALCOM S. ADISESHIAH

Madras
1 July 1979

Preface

The Indian Institute of Education decided, in 1976, to take up a Research Project on Development of Education in India (1981-2000). It consists of fifteen studies, each of which will deal with a different aspect of the educational situation in the country. The final report, after which the project is named, will indicate the broad outline of a plan of educational development in India during the last two decades of the present century.

The present study, which is the first in the series, examines the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the steps taken to give effect to its recommendations during the last twelve years. It was felt that such a study could provide some valuable insights for planning education over the next two decades or so.

I am indebted to several institutions and friends for liberal assistance to the project. First and foremost, I must thank Dr. A.M. M'Bow, Director-General of UNESCO, who took keen interest in the project and provided a grant of $5,000 from his organization. I am also indebted to Dr. Boris Kluchnikov and Mr. Asher Deleon for valuable suggestions and facilities but for which the study would not have been completed at all. I circulated a draft of this document to a large number of Indian friends of whom many were kind enough to make very useful comments and also to discuss the issues involved. I have no words to describe my gratitude to them. I do not, however, mention their names here, partly because of their large number, but mainly because I would like to assume personal responsibility for the views stated and the conclusions drawn. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah for kindly agreeing to write a Foreword to this book.

J.P. NAIRK

Pune
31 July 1979
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CHAPTER I

The Education Commission (1964-66)

The Education Commission (1964-66) was unique in several respects and had a number of special features. Of these, two deserve special notice here, viz. (1) its comprehensive approach to educational reconstruction; and (2) its attempt to project a blueprint of a national system of education for India.

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Let us begin with the first aspect, viz. a comprehensive approach. It may be recalled that the Education Commission (1964-66) was the sixth commission appointed by the Government of India. The first was the Indian Education Commission (1882) which dealt mainly with school education. It reviewed the progress of education in the country since the Education Despatch of 1854 and laid down broad guidelines of policy for the development of education over the next two decades. The second was the Indian Universities Commission (1902) which reviewed the development of higher education since the establishment of the first three universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857 and made recommendations for the reorganization of Indian universities. The third was the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) which reviewed the development of secondary and higher education in Bengal and made suggestions for the reorganization of the Calcutta University and the establishment of a new university at Dacca. The fourth commission, and first to be appointed in the post-independence period, was the University Education Commission (1948-49) which reviewed the development of higher education in the country and made proposals for its future expansion and improvement. A similar function for secondary education was performed by the Secondary Education Commission (1952) which was the fifth in the series. It will thus be seen that the policy, whether in the pre-independence period or later, was to look at education in a compartmentalized fashion and that no commission had ever been appointed for primary and adult education. A strong demand was, therefore, being made, in the late fifties and early sixties, that the
Government of India should appoint an education commission to look at education as a whole, including primary and adult education. It was in response to this demand that the Central Government appointed the Education Commission (1964-66) at the initiative of Mr. M.C. Chagla, then Minister of Education at the Centre, and entrusted it with the task of looking at the entire spectrum of education, except medical and legal education. This is, therefore, the first commission in our educational history to look comprehensively at almost all aspects of education.

THE SEARCH FOR A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The second aspect of the Education Commission (1964-66) is of even greater significance, viz. it was the first commission to be charged with the responsibility for suggesting how a national system of education should be created. As is well known to the students of Indian educational history, dissatisfaction with the modern educational system created by the British administrators began to grow towards the close of the nineteenth century and a strong demand for the creation of a national system of education was put forward as an integral part of the national struggle for freedom. For instance, a resolution of the Indian National Congress adopted in 1906 said that the time had arrived "for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for boys and girls, and organize a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines, and under national control, and directed towards the realization of the national destiny". This search for a national system of education took two distinct forms in the pre-independence period: (1) to attempt a conceptual clarification of the objectives, content, organization and other related aspects of the national education system; and (2) to try out some experiments outside the official system based on this vision of national education.

(1) Basic Concepts of National Education: The first attempt to define national education led to a nationwide and sustained debate which threw up, by 1947, the following main concepts on the subject.

(a) The British looked upon India, not as a great country with an independent status of her own, but as a satellite of England whose main function was to supply raw materials to British industry and to buy its finished products. The broad objective of the official efforts was, therefore, to create an educational system in India which would, by and large, be a pale imitation of that in England. The nationalist view, on the contrary, was that our efforts should be directed to create, not a lesser England but a greater India and that we should evolve a national system of education based on our own traditions and suited to the life, needs and aspirations of our people. This was neither a chauvinist nor a revivalist posture. It merely reiterated the position taken by Mahatma Gandhi, that while we welcome breezes from all corners of the world to blow into our house, we would not like to be blown off our feet by any.

(b) The national system of education should emphasize education of the people, i.e., liquidation of illiteracy and universalization of elementary education. Dadabhai Naoroji pleaded before the Indian Education Commission that steps should be taken to provide primary education to all children (1882). Gokhale moved a resolution and a bill to the same effect in the Central Legislature (1910-12) but his efforts did not succeed. Mahatma Gandhi was even more categorical and emphatic; he desired every child to receive compulsory education of seven years whose content would be equal to that of the matriculation minus English plus a craft.

(c) The over-dominant, imperialist position of the English language should go. While it will continue to be studied for its academic value of providing direct access to the growing knowledge in the world, it should be replaced by the regional languages in the transaction of official business, in the courts, and as medium of instruction at all stages of education. Moreover, Hindi (or Hindustani) should be developed as a link language for all-India purposes and should also be used as the official language of the Union.

(d) The alienation that arises between the individuals educated in the modern educational system and the masses of the people should be eliminated by the adoption of several measures. For instance, as Mahatma Gandhi advocated in the scheme of basic education, socially useful productive work should be made the centre of the educational process to inculcate the dignity of manual labour. It is our common experience that the modern system of education creates two distinct social groups, viz. (i) the educated persons who refuse to work with their hands and live a parasitic life; and (ii) the masses who work with their hands and produce wealth but are deprived of all opportunities of formal education. The national system of education should, on the other hand, produce individuals who would avoid this dichotomy between work and education and train individuals who would all be educated, productive workers.
(e) Science education and education for technology should be emphasized for purposes of modernization and removal of poverty.

(f) Education should inculcate a spirit of patriotism and a sense of proper pride in our cultural heritage. It should also instil an urge to build the greater India of our dreams and to wage a relentless war against the evils of poverty, inequality, ignorance and ill-health that afflict our society.

(g) Moral and aesthetic education should receive adequate emphasis.

In order to work out these and other concepts into a regular system of national education, the National Planning Committee created by the Indian National Congress under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru appointed two Sub-committees. But their work could not be pursued satisfactorily due to disturbed political conditions and no specific plans of a national education system emerged. In the meantime, the Government of India produced its own official version of a national system of education under the title Post-War Educational Development in India (1944-84). The main objective of this programme was to create in India, by 1984, a system of education which would be somewhat comparable to that in England in 1939. It proposed liquidation of illiteracy in a period of 25 years, the provision of universal basic education for all children in the age-group 6-14, a highly selective system of secondary and higher education and a limited provision for technical and vocational education at an estimated cost of Rs.2,500 million or so per annum. But the people rejected the plan outright because of its narrow objectives, the long time involved and the highly selective (and therefore unacceptable) approach to all post-elementary education. In spite of the national preoccupations with the concept for over four decades, the country did not thus have any accepted plan for a national system of education even in 1947 when it became free.

(2) Experiments in National Education: The second attempt of the pre-independence period was to establish institutions of national education, mainly as pilot projects to gain experience and train workers. The present Jadavpur University arose out of one such earliest attempts. The educational institutions set up by Rabindranath Tagore – Shantiniketan, Shantiniketan and Vishva Bharati – belonged to this category of institutions of national education and had distinctive features of their own. The movement progressed slowly at first but got a great fillip at the time of the non-cooperation movement (1921)

when thousands of students left schools and colleges and had to be provided with some alternative forms of education. It was at this time that institutions like the Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Jamia Millia Islamia were founded. They refused to receive aid from government and maintained themselves partly through public contributions but mainly through the sacrifice of their few dedicated workers. They did not become popular because of the lack of official support and were not able to evolve high academic standards. But they did play the significant role of keeping the torch alive through the difficult days of foreign rule and train a large number of individuals who provided leadership in the struggle for freedom.

APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSION

In 1947, when the country achieved independence, there was no accepted plan of a national system of education and the institutions of national education evolved earlier formed only a microscopic minority. Three definite steps were, therefore, expected from the national government that now came to power, viz. (i) it would take immediate steps to prepare a blueprint of a national system of education; (ii) it would extend financial support to the institutions of national education and enable them to make an impact on the education system as a whole; and (iii) it would transform the entire educational system so that all educational institutions become national schools. Unfortunately, the first was never attempted and, as stated earlier, the Central Government continued to look at education in a fragmentary fashion and appointed only a Commission for University Education and later for Secondary Education. The second was the easiest to do and most institutions of national education were now assisted financially and brought within the official system. Contrary to expectations, however, they became the weaker rather than the stronger elements of the formal system and were therefore unable to exert any effective reforming influence on the system as a whole. Similarly, the Central and the State Governments made little effort to transform the existing educational system on the basis of the concepts of national education developed earlier and contented themselves merely by securing its linear expansion. Quite obviously, these policies came in for increasing criticism and a demand began to be put forward that Government should take early steps to prepare a blueprint of a national system of education and then put it on the
ground in a carefully prepared and time-bound programme. It was really this aspect of the demand that was mainly responsible for the appointment of the Education Commission (1964-66). Its terms of reference, therefore, requested it “to advise Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all its aspects”. The Commission, therefore, must be seen as the end result of a persistent search for a national system of education, spread over nearly sixty years; and the success or otherwise of its efforts should also be judged mainly with reference to this aspect of its assignment.

THE FOLLOW-UP

For the last twelve years, the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) has been on the anvil. The Government of India circulated it to the State Governments and the universities and held extensive discussions thereon in all parts of the country and with a large variety of interested groups. The Report was also examined by a Committee of Members of Parliament and, historically, it may be said that this is the only report to have had this distinction. The Report was also discussed extensively in both Houses of Parliament. In the light of all these discussions, the Government of India issued a Statement on the National Policy on Education in 1968. This has now been revised in 1979. The educational policies and programmes adopted in the Fourth (1968-73), Fifth (1973-78) and Sixth (1978-83) Five-Year Plans are broadly based on the recommendations of the Education Commission as modified by the two Statements on the National Policy on Education.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The Commission had prepared a blueprint of educational development in India spread over 20 years (1966-86). This was broadly divided into two sub-periods of ten years each – 1966-76 and 1976-86. The actual educational developments in the country between 1966 and 1976 show marked variations with those postulated by the Commission for the same period. There could be several explanations for this: the recommendations of the Education Commission itself were either inadequate or unsound; even if the recommendations were sound, they were often ignored, sometimes rejected outright for one reason or another, and often modified in such a manner as to make them almost useless. And even if some sound recommendations were accepted, they were implemented only imperfectly in practice. Some of the recommendations of the Education Commission have also become outdated by sheer lapse of time and the inevitable rapid changes that take place in modern society. At any rate, it would be worthwhile to review the Report of the Education Commission, the attempts made to implement its recommendations, and results obtained, both positive and negative. Such an evaluative study would be of immense use in the preparation of revised plans for the development of education in the country over the next two decades (1981-2000).

It was from this point of view that the Indian Institute of Education decided to undertake this examination of the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) and the attempts to implement its recommendations over the twelve-year period (1966-78). Its objectives were as follows:

1. What was the national system of education recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66)? How far is this blueprint right and accepted by the nation?
2. What efforts were made, in the past ten years or so, to implement the proposals made by the Commission? To what extent did these efforts succeed or fail and why?
3. What inference can be drawn from this experience for the future development of education in India, say, between 1981 and 2000?

The issues will be discussed seriatim in the chapters that follow.
CHAPTER II

A National System of Education

Model Recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66)

As a first step in our discussion, we shall try to describe briefly the model of the National System of Education recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66). It is all the more necessary to do so because the essential features of the model are not always clearly grasped, due mainly to the length of the Report and the large number of details it examines. For convenience, we shall describe this model under six heads: (1) Basic assumptions; (2) Transformation; (3) Improvement of Standards; (4) Expansion; (5) Organization and Finance; and (6) Implementation.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Quite obviously, the model of a national system of education is based on a number of tacit assumptions of which three are most significant, viz. (1) the type of future society one has in view; (2) the type of educational system one visualizes; and (3) the relationship between society and education which one postulates. On each of these, the Education Commission (1964-66) took up a unique position.

(1) The Future Society: The Commission had a certain vision of the India of tomorrow or of national development, viz. it looked forward to the creation of a democratic, secular and egalitarian society which would be based on science and spiritual values and wherein the evils of poverty, ignorance and ill-health would be eliminated through a humane use of scientific and technical knowledge.

The Commission’s plea for science was based on material and cultural grounds. On the material side, the Commission observed: “The one great lesson of the present age of science is that, with determination and the willingness to put in hard work, prosperity is within the reach of any nation which has a stable and progressive government” (para 1.83). The Commission therefore felt that science and technology would help in relating education to productivity, in making better use of all available material and human resources, and in providing more food, more education, better health and a reasonable standard of living for all. But science also has an important cultural role. The Commission pointed out that it “strengthens the commitment of man to free enquiry and to the quest for truth as his highest duty and obligation. It loosens the bonds of dogmatism and acts as a powerful dispeller of fear and superstition, fatalism and passive resignation. By its emphasis on reason and free enquiry, it even helps to lessen ideological tensions which often arise because of adherence to dogma and fanaticism” (para 1.24). The Commission, therefore, wanted “a scientific outlook” to become “a part of our way of life and culture” (para 1.23).

While agreeing that India should draw upon the great stock of scientific and technological knowledge accumulated by the Western world over the past two hundred years, the Commission emphasized that it was essential for her to develop an indigenous research capability so that she participates in the world intellectual community, not “from the periphery, or as a reproducer or a marginal contributor to what has been discovered or invented elsewhere”, but “as an equal in a process of creating, giving and receiving” (para 11.24).

Recognizing that technology can be put to extremely perverted uses and that a humane use of scientific and technological knowledge is crucial to development, the Commission laid great stress on the policy that India should learn to “harness” science and not be “dominated” by it. This would be possible, said the Commission, if she remembered “her great tradition of duty without self-involvement, unacquisitive temperament, tolerance and innate love of peace and reverence for all things” and developed “a new pride and a deeper faith” in it (para 1.83). The creation of such an age of "science and spirituality", the Commission opined, could be a major contribution of India to the development of man.

The Commission laid an equal stress on national and social integration which implied the creation of an egalitarian, cohesive and integrated society based on a democratic way of life. “The population of India consists of persons who profess different religions, speak different languages, belong to different races, castes, classes and communities. It is precisely in such a situation that democracy can make its most significant contribution. A healthy development of democratic trends will help to soften the impact of this division into social, economic and cultural groups. The task is admittedly difficult; but it
can convert the differences of language, cultural pattern, religion, etc. into the warp and woof of a very rich and rewarding social and cultural life. The problem of national integration is essentially one of harmonizing such differences, of enabling different elements of the population to live peacefully and cooperatively and to utilize their varied gifts for the enrichment of the national life as a whole” (para 1.68).

It should be emphasized that the Commission saw no contradiction between our commitment to science and secularism (which is inescapable in a democratic society having a plurality of religions) on the one hand, and to religion and spiritual values on the other. It held the view that all these converged to enrich human life as a whole. It observed, for instance, that “a vitalized study of science with its emphasis on open-mindedness, tolerance, and objectivity would inevitably lead to the development of a more secular outlook, in the sense in which we use the word, amongst those who profess different religions. This process needs to be carefully and wisely encouraged” (para 1.80). Similarly, the highest pursuits of science seem to get continually closer to those of religion and to enrich one another so that science can help to “secularize” religion just as religion may help to “spiritualize” science. In the same way, “the walls between the secular and the spiritual are tending to break down and what is secular is seen to have spiritual roots” (para 1.80). The Commission therefore recommended that “India should strive to bring science and the values of the spirit together and in harmony, and thereby pave the way for the eventual emergence of a society which would cater to the needs of the whole man and not only to a particular fragment of his personality” (para 1.80).

While the Commission was thus both clear and emphatic about the scientific, technological and spiritual aspects of the problem, it did not show the same awareness about the social, economic and political transformation that is needed to create the new society visualized in the Preamble to the Constitution, viz. a social order based on the values of freedom, justice, equality and dignity of the individual. For this transformation to take place, the proper development of science and technology which places man in an appropriate relationship with Nature and of spiritual values which place man in an appropriate relationship with himself are both essential but not sufficient. It is also necessary to evolve a proper scheme of social, economic and political processes and structures which would place man in an appropriate relationship with society and with the other individuals in it. Unfor-

fortunately, this aspect of the problem was not stressed in the Report of the Commission; and this, as subsequent discussions and developments have shown, has been one of the major weaknesses of the theoretical formulation of the problem as made by the Commission.

(2) The New Education: If this is the new society we desire to create, and if education has to be a powerful instrument for the creation of this society, it goes without saying that the national system of education

- should be based on a deep and widespread study of science and technology;
- should cultivate a capacity and willingness to work hard and be closely related to productivity;
- should strengthen social and national integration and help to create a more just and egalitarian social order;
- should consolidate democracy as a form of government and help us to adopt it as a way of life; and
- should strive to build character by cultivating social, moral and spiritual values.

The Commission was of the view that the existing system of education which was basically designed “to meet the needs of an imperial administration within the limitations set by a feudal and traditional society” (para 1.17) would not be able to help the country to realize its aspirations and that it needed “radical changes if it was to meet the purposes of a modern, democratic and socialist society – changes in objectives, in content, in teaching methods, in programmes, in the size and composition of the student body, in the selection and professional preparation of teachers and in organization” (para 1.17). The Commission described this as the “educational revolution” needed to create a national system of education. It was on the details of this revolution that the Report of the Education Commission concentrated its attention, and rightly so.

(3) Relationship between Educational and Social Transformation: The Commission believed that education was a major instrument for peaceful economic, social and political transformation. Of course, it qualified this statement by saying that education was a double-edged tool and that while wrong education could lead to social disintegration, the right kind of education could bring about effective national development. It also asserted that, if the existing educational system could be replaced by an appropriate national system of education, the socio-economic and political
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revolution we needed would also be automatically triggered off. Even while agreeing therefore that “educational and national development are intimately inter-related and that it may not be possible to make much headway in education unless the basic problems of life are also squarely faced and resolutely tackled”, it still advocated the view that perhaps the “most effective way of breaking the vicious circle in which we find ourselves at present is to begin educational reconstruction in a big way” (para. 19.50). That is why it placed the highest emphasis on the creation of a national system of education through an educational revolution (para. 1.17). It also believed that the national system of education of the type visualized by it could be created even within the existing social, economic and political structure if the Central and State Government:ts provided the necessary political and financial support and if the teachers, students and educational administrators provided the needed academic leadership. Of course, these assumptions have come in for considerable criticism and will certainly need modifications if future attempts at educational reform are to fare better. All the same, it is necessary to state these assumptions categorically at the very outset because it is only against their background that the recommendations of the Commission can be understood and properly evaluated.

Three Types of Programmes

With these introductory observations, let us turn to the main recommendations of the Commission which can be divided into three broad categories:

1. Recommendations whose primary objective is to bring about a transformation of the existing educational system;

2. Recommendations which are essentially meant for improving standards or quality; and

3. Recommendations which are essentially meant for an expansion of educational facilities.

Generally, educational reforms are classified only under two categories: expansion and improvement of standards. The contribution made by the Commission in visualizing a third category of “transformation” is therefore important. Besides, several of the proposals made by the Commission under each of these three categories were original and far-reaching.

A National System of Education

TRANSFORMATION

The Commission recommended that the following programmes should be developed mainly with a view to bringing about a transformation of the education system.

1. Education of the People, i.e., universal elementary education and adult education, including liquidation of adult illiteracy. These are often regarded as programmes of expansion which they undoubtedly are. But their impact is so fundamental and far-reaching that they really deserve to be regarded as programmes of transformation. Our educational system has been geared to the welfare of the upper and middle classes right from the start and they continue to be its principal beneficiaries even to this date. Education has thus become an instrument for the preservation of the status quo and continuation of privilege. The programmes of universal elementary education and liquidation of illiteracy will make a radical change in this situation; they will orient our educational system to the masses instead of to the classes and unleash new social and political forces which will help the people to come into their own. In fact, it would be proper, as we have done here, to accord them a very high priority even among the programmes of educational transformation.

2. Work-experience and Social or National Service: The Commission recommended that these should become integral parts of education at all stages. At present, education gets tied up with leisure and culture which, in their turn, are tied up with privilege — social, economic or political. The educated individuals who form a small privileged minority do not like to work with their hands and live a parasitic life based on the exploitation of the masses. The vast bulk of the people, on the other hand, are workers and producers of wealth; but they do not get any benefit from the educational system, have little leisure and hardly any access to cultural institutions. The entire society thus gets divided into two groups: (i) an educated, leisureed and parasitic small class of the haves; and (ii) large masses of workers who are deprived of education and most other good things of life. The Commission desired to abolish this dichotomy between work and education and enable the products of the educational system to be good workers as well as educated and cultured individuals by making work-experience and social and national service integral parts of education at all stages.

3. Emphasis on Science Education and Research: The Commission emphasized the teaching of science and mathematics compulsori-
ly to all students at the school stage in order to create a scientific temper in the society as a whole and highlighted the need to improve the quality of science teaching. Science would be an optional subject beyond class X but the emphasis on improving the quality of its teaching should continue. Scientific research should be emphasized at the university stage, related closely to problems of development, and increasingly supported with a view to creating an indigenous capability of high level and a large degree of self-reliance.

(4) Relating Education to Productivity: The Commission recommended that education should be related to productivity so that a positive correlation would be established between the expansion of education and economic growth. This could be done through inculcating the dignity of manual labour, promotion of scientific research and technology, creating a work ethic in the society as a whole, vocationalization of secondary education, on-the-job training for workers and promotion of education for agriculture and industry.

(5) Emphasis on Character-formation: The educational system should emphasize character-formation through the inculcation of values. Education is essentially a three-fold process of giving information, developing skills and inculcating values. In the existing system, the first of these is over-emphasized, the second gets meagre attention, and the third is neglected almost totally. In the national system of education this imbalance should be done away with and much greater stress should be laid on the development of skills and character-formation.

(6) A New Language Policy: The regional languages should be used as media of education at all stages (with an overriding priority for the mother tongue at the primary stage), and a specific, well-planned and time-bounded programme should be prepared for the purpose. The study of English which is our main window on the world and the main instrument of our direct access to the growing knowledge of the modern scientific era should be encouraged and emphasized with a stress on reading and comprehension. The study of other international languages such as Russian, French, German or Spanish should also be increasingly cultivated. At the national level, the use of Hindi as a link language should be promoted and the study of Hindi encouraged in non-Hindi-speaking areas. All the national languages of India can also serve as links of a type and, therefore, steps should be taken to promote their study in every linguistic region.

At the school stage, the three-language formula should be adopted at the secondary stage, the second and the third language being studied for six and three years (at least) respectively. Two languages should be studied at the higher secondary stage and as a rule no language study should be compulsory at the university stage unless it is intimately related to the work of the student.

(7) Decentralization, Diversification, Elasticity and Dynamism: The national system of education should be dynamic and should keep abreast of changing social needs; no educational system of yesterday can serve the needs of today, much less those of tomorrow. It should also be flexible, elastic and diversified as against the existing system which tends to be uniform and rigid and which is based on the assumption that either all move or none (the only consequence of which is that none moves). Educational authority should also be largely decentralized. The State should respect the autonomy of universities and they, in their turn, should confer autonomy on departments, colleges and teachers. Even at the school stage, there should be large opportunities to schools and teachers to innovate and experiment.

(8) Three Channels of Education: The existing educational system is based on only one channel of formal education and insists on a single-point entry, sequential annual promotions, full-time attendance by students and teaching by full-time professional teachers. It must be recognized that learning occurs even outside the formal school through organized non-formal and self-study channels. The national system of education therefore should develop all the three channels of full-time, part-time and own-time education and give them equal status. There should be multiple opportunities for entry so that it should be possible for any individual to continue to learn all his life, use any channel that suits his needs from time to time, and step in or step off the educational system according to his plans.

(9) Common School System: The existing educational system reflects the socio-economic differences between the well-to-do classes and the poor masses. It has a system of high quality good institutions at all levels which are used by the children of the rich and socially or politically important groups while the bulk of the educational institutions provided by the State are of poor quality and are the only ones available to the vast bulk of the have-nots or marginal people. This segregation is highly undesirable from the point of view of social and national integration. The national system of education should therefore adopt the common school system which abolishes this segregation and enables all children to avail themselves of a common system of schools which maintains comparable standards. In
particular, it should adopt the neighbourhood school model at the primary stage where all children, irrespective of caste, race, religion, sex or colour, attend the common elementary school established for the locality.

(10) Organizational Pattern for School and College Classes: The Commission was faced with an intense and widespread demand for a uniform pattern of school and college classes. It was convinced that the structure, which may be regarded as the skeleton of the educational system, is of the least importance from the point of view of maintaining or improving standards (para 2.02). But it did concede the point that it may be eventually desirable to have a uniform pattern of school and college classes (10+2+3) and recommended that this pattern should be adopted in all States and Union Territories under a well-planned programme spread over twenty years. By this, it visualized a "flexible" educational structure covering

- a pre-school stage of one to three years;
- a primary stage of seven or eight years divided into two sub-stages - a lower primary stage of four or five years and a higher primary stage of three years;
- a lower secondary or high school stage of three or two years in general education or of one to three years in vocational education;
- a higher secondary stage of two years of general education or one to three years of vocational education;
- a higher education stage having a course of three years or more for the first degree, followed by courses of varying duration for the second or research degrees.

To describe all this structure as 10+2+3 (which is most commonly done) is neither correct nor fair to the Commission. In fact, this numerical expression only means that, in the national system of education, there will be only three public examinations till the first degree is obtained, viz. (i) at the end of class X; (ii) at the end of class XII; and (iii) at the end of the undergraduate stage. It also implies that all these examinations, although conducted by different universities and regional examination boards, would be broadly comparable with one another and officially regarded as "equivalent" for purposes of recruitment or admission to higher courses.

QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT

We may now turn to the recommendations of the Commission in regard to the improvement of standards.

The Commission was of the view that standards should not be narrowly defined in such terms as the student's command over English or the mere information base acquired by him. In fact they should be comprehensively defined in terms of the overall objectives of the educational system and with reference to the quality of young men and women it produced. The Commission also observed that the general picture with regard to standards was one of light and shade: standards had improved in some fields and institutions (which were a minority and were mostly availed of by members of the privileged classes) while they had deteriorated in the vast majority of institutions which were mostly availed of by the common people. It also recommended that standards at every level of the national system of education should be adequate (in terms of the objectives laid down), continually rising (to keep pace with the changing conditions) and internationally comparable, at least in a few key sectors. It was from this point of view that the existing situation was far from satisfactory.

Among the several recommendations made by the Commission to improve the quality of education, the following may be highlighted:

(1) Teachers: Standards in education would depend, first and foremost, on the quality, commitment and competence of teachers and every effort should be made to improve these. From this point of view, the scales of pay for colleges and university teachers which are uniform throughout the country should be improved and efforts should also be made to reduce the gap in the remuneration of university and college teachers. Following this pattern, minimum scales of pay should be laid down for all primary and secondary school teachers throughout the country and the Central Government should give special assistance to the States for the purpose. The existing wide gap between the remuneration of teachers at different stages - primary, secondary and university - should be reduced. Procedure for the selection of teachers should be improved and adequate steps taken to ensure satisfactory conditions of work and service (including security) for them. The programmes of training of teachers should be improved, schools of education should be established in selected centres and the training of primary teachers should be integrated with the university system.

(2) An Integrated System: In the existing educational system, every institution tends to function in isolation from others and is atomized. In the national system of education on the contrary, every effort should be made to link institutions with one another, to promote
cooperative and collaborative efforts, and to create an integrated system. For instance, the universities should work closely with colleges and also assume certain responsibilities for the improvement of school education. Cooperative teaching between the universities and colleges and among the colleges themselves should be encouraged. The colleges should work closely with secondary schools in their neighbourhood and secondary schools should do so with the primary and middle schools in their vicinity. These groups of institutions can share facilities, help professional growth of teachers and develop programmes for identifying and developing talent among students. An integrated system of this type can certainly be very effective in raising standards all round.

(3) A Nation-wide Movement for Improving Standards: If the best results are to be obtained, it is necessary to organize a nation-wide movement for the improvement of standards. The leadership in and responsibility for this programme should be squarely assumed by teachers working closely with the students and the community. A system of institutional planning should be adopted under which every educational institution would strive to optimize the results through better planning and sustained hard work. Such a movement would obviously be assisted by programmes of decentralization and conferment of autonomy as discussed earlier.

(4) Promotion of a New Work Ethic: Education is essentially a stretching process and the quality of education depends not so much on monetary and material inputs as on the creation of a climate of sustained and dedicated hard work. In the existing system, there is often no adequate challenge to students. The national system of education on the other hand should strive to stretch the teachers and students fully. From this point of view, the number of working days would be increased and students should be required to work for 50 to 60 hours per week throughout the year. Vacations may be reduced and preferably utilized for educational purposes. School plants should be used for the longest hours every day and wherever possible, all through the year.

(5) Identification and Development of Talent: It should be a major objective of the national system of education to identify and develop talent. There should be a nation-wide continuous programme of identification of talent at all stages of education and talented students at each stage should be assisted, where necessary, to pursue their studies at the next higher stage, preferably in selected good institutions. For this purpose, there should be an adequate programme of merit scholarships at all stages, and at the university stage there should be a supplementary programme of loan scholarships as well. The selections for scholarships should be done on regional basis or by grouping similar schools together so that “talent” does not get necessarily connected with socio-economic backgrounds of children. Talented students in the top bracket should be regarded as wards of the State which should assume all responsibility for their education. Special attention should be given to the development of talented students through personal guidance and provision of enrichment programmes.

(6) Improved Teaching and Learning Materials: An intensive effort should be made to provide improved teaching and learning materials at all stages. The costs of such materials should be reduced and there should be adequate arrangements to ensure that they are available to all needy students. At the university stage, there should be a very large programme of producing teaching and learning materials in Indian languages and by Indian authors who may work, where necessary, with the academics of other countries.

(7) Improved Methods of Teaching: It is necessary to adopt new and dynamic methods of education which emphasize individual attention and learning rather than rote memorization and teaching which characterize the existing educational system. Emphasis should be placed on the awakening of curiosity and the development of such skills of self-learning or problem-solving. Students should also be involved in teaching. In fact, the rigid polarization between teachers and students should disappear and teachers should be looked upon as senior students and students as junior teachers.

(8) Evaluation: Evaluation itself is a continuous part of teaching and should be promoted as such. External examinations should be reduced to the minimum and improved. The system of declaring candidates as having passed or failed in school examinations should be abandoned and each student given merely a certificate of his performance in a prescribed form. The eligibility of such students to join higher courses or employment could be determined by the authorities concerned on the basis of this performance. There should be an increasing emphasis on internal assessment and all institutions should carry out a regular and comprehensive internal assessment of all students. The results of such assessment should be kept separate and made available along with those of external examinations.

(9) Selective Development of Schools: Finally, the Commission made two major recommendations regarding selective improvement of
schools, colleges and universities. In the existing system, grants-in-aid are given to educational institutions on a basis of mechanical equality so that they get the same aid in spite of large variations in quality and performance. Even in institutions wholly maintained by Government, there is a tendency to treat all institutions alike rather than discriminate between them on the basis of performance. This policy inhibits a competition for excellence which is essential for qualitative improvement. Moreover, we do not have the necessary human and financial resources to improve all schools. But on false grounds of equity we even refuse to improve a few selected institutions although such a programme can be an eminently feasible proposition. The Commission was of the view that a concentration of resources is essential to improve quality and that we should adopt a policy of selective improvement of educational institutions (say, ten per cent of the institutions may be improved in a five-to-ten-year period) rather than continue the existing policy where no improvement worth the name takes place in any institution under the concept of equal treatment for all. The Commission also laid down some criteria for the proper implementation of this policy: the selected institutions should be fairly numerous (say, ten per cent or so), they should be carefully selected and well-distributed over different areas, their costs should be kept within reasonable limits (say, three times or so as compared to an ordinary school) and admissions to them should be open to all sections of the society on an equitable basis. The Commission hoped that such a selective approach should break the stalemate in the present situation and initiate a process of rapid improvement of standards all round. In fact, the Commission described this device as “seed-farm” technology in which excellence is first generated in a few select institutions and then rapidly extended to all the others.

(10) Major Universities: Since standards at the university stage are extremely crucial, the Commission extended the above principle of selective improvement to the university stage also. It suggested that a few universities should be selected for intensive development by concentration of resources, human, material and financial. These “major” universities should be assisted to draw their students and faculty from all parts of the country so that the highest possible standards are maintained. Adequate arrangements should also be made, right from the start, to ensure that the excellence generated in these institutions is extended to the university system as a whole.

A National System of Education

EXPANSION

The main recommendations of the Commission regarding expansion of education facilities can be summarized as follows:

(1) Universal Elementary Education: The Commission emphasized the need to provide universal elementary education of at least seven or eight years to all children on a priority basis. It desired this goal to be reached in all parts of the country by 1986 at the latest. For this purpose, it highlighted the need to provide a primary school within easy walking distance from the house of every child, the establishment of a large number of middle schools, and the organization of a multiple-entry system and non-formal education classes for grown-up children who have to work and learn.

(2) Adult Education: The Commission highlighted the need to liquidate illiteracy quickly and expected that the country should be made fully literate by 1986 at the latest. It visualized a fairly large-scale provision of continuing education for all.

(3) Pre-school Education: The Commission visualized a large expansion of pre-school education, especially in rural areas.

(4) Lower Secondary Education (up to Class X): The Commission did not favour any selective admissions at the lower secondary stage and was of the view that the country should ultimately move in the direction of making a school education of ten years available for all children. It, therefore, recommended a liberal policy of expansion at the lower secondary stage.

(5) Higher Secondary Education: As against the policy of liberal expansion at the lower secondary stage the Commission recommended that selective admissions should be introduced at the higher secondary stage.

(6) University Stage: The Commission recommended the adoption of more rigorous selective admissions at the undergraduate stage, primarily to cut down the growing numbers of the educated unemployed. It was also of the view that admissions at this stage should ordinarily be related to the facilities available. It attached great importance to the postgraduate stage for the maintenance of standards, not only in education but in all walks of life. It, therefore, suggested a large expansion at this stage side by side with an intensive effort at improving standards.

(7) Vocational and Professional Education: The Commission laid great stress on the expansion of vocational and professional education. It expected that about 20 per cent of the enrolments in lower
secondary education, 50 per cent of those in higher secondary education, and about 30 per cent of those in higher education would be in vocational and professional courses of all categories. It also made several important recommendations regarding the organization of these courses and for establishing closer relations between education and industry.

(8) Non-Formal Education: The restrictions visualized by the Commission in the enrolments at the secondary and university stages were meant only for full-time institutions. However, it recommended that there should be large-scale expansion of non-formal (part-time or own-time) education at these levels so that no individual desirous of studying at a post-elementary stage is denied opportunities for the purpose.

(9) Reduction of Regional Imbalances: The Commission drew pointed attention to the glaring imbalances in educational development in the different States (and in different districts in each State) and recommended that effective steps should be taken to see that they are reduced.

(10) Education of Special Groups: The Commission also made a series of recommendations regarding the educational development of special groups such as women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The net effect of these recommendations of the Commission can be seen quantitatively in Table II.1.

PRIORITIES

Finally, attention must be invited to the priorities accorded by the Education Commission to these three categories of educational programmes. It is of course common ground that they will all have to be pursued simultaneously, but such a statement does not determine the relative priorities to be accorded to them, especially in the allocation of resources. The Education Commission found that, throughout the post-independence period, the basic priorities we had actually adopted in practice were as follows:

1. Expansion of facilities, especially in secondary and university education;
2. Improvement of quality, especially in those areas where the benefits went largely to the elite or well-to-do groups; and
3. Transformation of education to suit the life, needs and aspirations of the people.

A National System of Education

Table II.1: Educational expansion visualized by the Education Commission (1966-86)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolments</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adult literacy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>All persons above the age of 10 would be literate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pre-school of one to three years (in '000s)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lower primary (classes I-IV) (in '000s)</td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td>76,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Upper primary (classes V-VII)</td>
<td>(69.2)</td>
<td>(110.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lower secondary (classes VIII-X)</td>
<td>(35.6)</td>
<td>(90.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Higher Secondary (classes XI-XII)</td>
<td>6,127</td>
<td>24,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Undergraduate (all sectors in '000s)</td>
<td>(19.1)</td>
<td>(46.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Postgraduate (all sectors in '000s)</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>6,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total higher education</td>
<td>(7.0)</td>
<td>(20.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or 2.1 per cent of the age group 18-23)</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>4,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or 6.0 per cent of the age group 18-23)</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Figures in parentheses indicate the proportion to the total population of the corresponding age group.
(2) For details see Tables VII.5 and VII.6 in Chapter VII, Tables XII.1 and XII.3 in Chapter XII.

The expansion of facilities, which had been accorded the highest priority and received the largest proportion of funds available, occurred not so much in elementary or adult education where it would have benefited the masses and where it was most needed, as in secondary and university education where it largely benefited the haves and where it tended to create difficult problems of educated unemployment. A much smaller proportion of funds was allocated to the improvement of quality. But in practice, quality usually got linked to privilege; and the benefits of even the limited improvements made went mainly in favour of the haves while in the vast bulk of the institutions which were used by the common man the standards
generally declined. The third and the last priority was accorded to programmes of transformation which were never attempted on any scale worth the name. The resources allocated to this sector were also the least; and even such programmes of transformation as required little investment (e.g., emphasis on character-formation, decentralization of authority and creation of elastic and dynamic structures and processes) and even those which would have led to some economy (e.g., introduction of non-formal channels in a big way) were not attempted. The Commission was of the view that these priorities were entirely wrong. It attached the highest priority to the programme of transformation of the educational system and criticized the "naive belief that all education is necessarily good, both for the individual and for society" and asserted that it is only the right type of education, provided on an adequate scale and at acceptable levels of quality that can lead to national development and that "when these conditions are not satisfied the opposite effect may result" (para 1.16). It also drew pointed attention to the urgency of the programme. "Traditional societies which desire to modernize themselves have to transform their education system before trying to expand it, because the greater the expansion of the traditional system of education, the more difficult and costly it becomes to change its character" (para 1.19). It, therefore, recommended that "no reform is more important or more urgent than to transform education" (para 1.20). In its opinion, programmes of qualitative improvement (and especially those that would benefit the common man) should rank next in priority and the programmes of expansion (again with an emphasis on those which benefit the poor people) would come last (para 1.17).

ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE

In India, the responsibility for administering and financing education must vest in a number of official agencies beginning with the small or big local community (village panchayats and municipalities of all types) at one end and rising through the district school boards and State Governments to the Central Government at the other; even voluntary private enterprise had a limited and minor but useful role to play. In a national system of education, therefore, two important things have to be done: (i) the administrative responsibilities of each of these agencies have to be clearly determined; and (ii) as the educational responsibilities at lower levels are much greater, and the availability of resources is much larger at the higher levels, an adequate system of grant-in-aid or devolution of resources has to be designed so that the educational responsibilities at each level are matched with the resources available.

(1) Central Government: The Commission was of the view that education should continue to be basically a State responsibility as provided in the Constitution. While it was not in favour of including education in the Concurrent List, it was also opposed to State absolutism in education. It, therefore, provided significant roles in education to the Central Government on the one hand, and to the local bodies on the other.

In the opinion of the Commission, the Central Government had the basic responsibility of providing a stimulating and dynamic but non-coercive leadership based on a national, long-term, and integrated view of education which only a federal government can best take. From this point of view, it should issue periodical Statements on the National Policy on Education and strive to see that they are followed by the State Governments. It should have special responsibilities in higher education and research, several programmes of which can only be planned on a national basis. As the Constitution vests it with large and growing resources, it should be held specially responsible for providing adequate financial support to education. This should be done by increasing the Central and Centrally-sponsored sectors in a very substantial way.

(2) State Governments: The State Governments should determine their educational policies within the broad framework of the national policy on education and in response to local conditions and needs. Each State should pass a comprehensive education act to embody and implement these policies. While continuing to be basically responsible for education, the State Government should share authority with the Central Government on the one hand, and with the local authorities, autonomous agencies such as universities and voluntary agencies on the other.

(3) Local Authorities: The Commission recommended the establishment of district school boards and municipal school boards which should have authority to plan, administer and develop all school education in their areas. Within them, certain authority could be decentralized further to still smaller units such as villages or wards in urban areas. There should be adequate devolution of resources to match the responsibilities entrusted to these organizations. In making this devolution, the principle of equalization should be adopted as an overriding criterion.
(4) **Private Enterprise:** The growing educational needs of a modernizing society can only be met by the state and it would be a mistake to show any over-dependence on private enterprise. However, the minorities have certain educational rights guaranteed in the Constitution and these will have to be respected. Private educational enterprise has also a right to exist in a democratic society and, if it does not seek aid, it may generally be left to look after itself, subject to compulsory registration. By and large, steps will have to be taken to merge all private educational institutions which seek financial assistance from the state in the common school system.

(5) **Administration:** The Commission also felt that the administrative structures for education at all levels will have to be considerably revamped. It suggested the creation of an "Indian educational service", the establishment of a "national staff college for educational planners and administrators", and the revamping of Central agencies like the National Council of Educational Research and Training. It also suggested the creation of statutory councils of education in every State, to better methods of coordination between the different agencies that deal with education at the State level, and strengthening and improvement of State Education Departments.

(6) **Finance:** The Commission found that a national system of education will need a much higher level of financial support. It estimated that if due effect were to be given to its proposals, the total educational expenditure would rise (at constant prices) from about Rs.600 crore in 1966 (which implies an expenditure of Rs.12 per head of population or 3.0 per cent of the national income) to about Rs.4,000 crore in 1986 (which implies an expenditure of Rs.54 per head of population or 6 per cent of the national income).

(7) **Sectoral Priorities:** The Commission found that ultimately the total expenditure will have to be divided almost equally between the different sectors, one-third for elementary education, one-third for secondary education (including direction, inspection and scholarship), and one-third for higher education.

(8) **Fees:** The Commission was not in favour of looking on fees as a source of revenue. It proposed that all fees should be abolished till the end of Class X. In higher secondary and university education, every attempt should be made to extend free education to cover all needy and deserving students.

(9) **Economy and Utilization:** In spite of the increased investments suggested, it will not be possible to create a good system of national education unless intensive efforts are made to cut down unit costs, to economize in every way possible, to optimize the utilization of existing facilities, and to raise resources from voluntary and community contributions.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

How are all these recommendations going to be implemented and who are the agents that should be held responsible for implementing them? Unfortunately, these questions are not answered in detail in the Report of the Education Commission. But its overall position on this subject can be summarized as follows:

1. The responsibility for implementing the recommendations is that of Central and State Governments. If they will not accept it, no one else will or can (para 19.51).

2. The teachers, students, and educational administrators are the principal change agents and they are responsible for creating the national system of education and maintaining it in a state of continually increasing efficiency.

We may conclude this brief section with a short quotation from the Report itself:

19.47 **Essentials for Successful Implementation.** A vigorous and sustained implementation of the recommendations made in the Report demands a higher priority than that given so far to education in our national plans for development. A deliberate commitment about the crucial role of education in national development can alone provide the psychological motivation and energy needed for a massive programme of implementation. We realize that such conviction will depend essentially upon the extent to which education is effectively and demonstrably related to the life, needs and aspirations of the country. This is a task mainly for the educators, and it is the urgency of this that we have emphasized in the Report.

19.48 **Equally essential is the need for dedicated hard work.** Today the nation is facing, as never before, the challenge of hunger, unemployment, ill-health and poverty. A vital element which would help the country to meet this challenge is a revitalized education which, in its turn, can only be created if the leaven of idealistic teachers and administrators exists. Idealism is needed, now more than ever, in all walks of life and especially in education. It may not be easy to plan for it; but it is doubtful if anything worth while will be achieved if we cannot generate it in fair measure.

19.49 **Education thus needs and demands, more than anything else, hard work and dedicated service.** In particular, it presents a supreme challenge to the students, teachers and educational administrators who are now called upon to create a system of education related to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and to maintain it at the highest level of efficiency. It is upon their response to this challenge that the future of the country depends.

It is not at all necessary to refer to or discuss all the recommendations of the Education Commission. But reference may
be needed to some recommendations which have not been included in the above summary. It is proposed to refer to them in the appropriate context in the course of the discussion of the implementation of the Report which is contained in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER III

National Policy on Education (1968)

How does the Government of India deal with the report of a commission appointed by it in a field like education which is essentially a State responsibility? An examination of what happened on the reports of the earlier commissions—the University and Secondary Education Commissions—shows that this action is three-fold: (1) the Central Government circulates copies of the report to State Governments, universities and other agencies concerned for information and necessary action, generally without expressing any views of its own; (2) it tries to pursue the implementation of the report through the normal channels such as the Central Advisory Board of Education or Vice-Chancellors’ Conference; and (3) it addresses itself simultaneously to the implementation of those recommendations of the report which are addressed directly to it. If possible, the Centre identifies some key recommendations and implements them on a priority basis—a “key” recommendation being defined as one which, when implemented, will automatically facilitate the implementation of several other recommendations. For instance, the recommendation of the University Education Commission that a University Grants Commission (or the UGC) be created at the federal level was a key recommendation because the creation of the UGC would bring into existence a mechanism which could implement most other recommendations of the Commission. It was therefore decided that action on the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) also should be taken on similar lines.

ACTION ON THE REPORT

The first of these three steps was taken without difficulty. The Report of the Commission was released to the press by the Education Minister, Mr. M.C. Chagla, as soon as it was handed over to him towards the end of June 1966; he held a press conference in which he highlighted the main recommendations of the Report and a printed summary of these was quickly made available to all. This initiated a nation-wide and intensive debate on the subject. Meanwhile, printed
copies of the Report itself became available in September 1966, and were quickly circulated to all State Governments and universities for information and necessary action. This stage of implementation was thus fully over before the end of 1966.

The third step was also decided upon without much difficulty. As the principal term of reference of this Commission was to suggest the model of a national system of education on which the Central Government alone could take a decision after consulting the State Governments and the universities, it was decided to treat the following recommendation of the Commission as the key recommendation to be acted upon on a priority basis: "The Government of India should issue a statement on the national policy on education which should provide guidance to the State Governments and the local authorities in preparing and implementing educational plans in their areas" (para 18.58). It was, therefore, decided that the second and third steps should be combined into one, that the views of the State Governments, universities, and all others concerned should be called for on the subject and that they should be discussed in depth in the Central Advisory Board of Education, the Vice-Chancellors' Conference, and both Houses of Parliament before the Central Government issued the Statement. As this was a fairly long-drawn-out process, and as fresh elections to Parliament were due in February 1967, Mr. M.C. Chagla only invited suggestions on the subject from all concerned and left the decision-making thereon to the Government that would come to power after the general elections of 1967. The effective programme of implementation, therefore, may be said to have begun only in March 1967 when, in her post-election cabinet, Mrs. Indira Gandhi included Dr. Triguna Sen, a member of the Commission, as Education Minister.

PROBLEMS TO BE FACED

The common adage that well begun is half done is especially applicable to reports of education commissions (or in fact, all commissions). The fate of their recommendations is largely determined not so much by their intrinsic merits as by the historical accident of what happens or does not happen in the first year or two when its proposals come under active examination. For instance, the Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) got almost totally shelved because of the transfer of education to State control in 1921 while the Reports of the University Education Commission (1948-49) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952) could receive better attention because they came in at a favourable time when the country was just adopting the technique of planned development. One expected even better auguries for the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) which prepared, at the end of a long search extending over sixty years, the first blueprint of a national system of education for the country. Unfortunately, the dice were loaded almost entirely against a vigorous implementation. In fact, the only point in favour was that a member of the Commission itself became the Union Education Minister and was called upon to implement it and its member-secretary, who was an adviser in the Ministry of Education, was entrusted with the responsibility to oversee action for implementation. Dr. Triguna Sen brought a dedication and commitment to the programme which was unique, widely recognized and respected. But he lacked a political base and found it difficult to carry the State Governments and others with him, especially when he ceased to command the confidence of the Prime Minister (which happened rather soon). Besides, he had to tackle a number of difficult problems.

One problem, viz. the sheer length of the Report was really the creation of the Commission itself. Dr. D.S. Kohari tried his best to argue that the Commission should produce a small readable report of about 50 pages. Unfortunately, no one took him seriously and I could not see how we could produce so brief a report unless we omitted a very large number of details we had discussed and decided to include in the Report and unless we made a radical departure in our approach to the problem, which was neither possible nor acceptable to any member. Finally, Dr. Kohari signed the long report although he did have a dig at all of us when he publicly apologized to the Education Minister in his letter of conveyance, for the size of the Report which, he said, could have been shorter if more money and time were available. But I have never ceased to regret not taking Dr. D.S. Kohari more seriously because I have now realized how great an impediment the length of the Report was to its effective implementation.

Another difficulty was inherent in the problem itself. The Commission took the view that its recommendations should be considered together and taken as a package deal because a national system of education cannot be created without a comprehensive and integrated approach. Unfortunately, the official machinery is neither aware of this need nor properly geared to meet it. What it prefers is to
deal separately and individually with a few recommendations for each of which a separate file can be opened and each of which can be specifically made the responsibility of some individual or section. Even the general public has the same inclination. Very soon, therefore, it became evident that no one was prepared to consider the recommendations of the Commission as a package deal and that almost everyone picked up some individual recommendations of his choice, accepted a few, rejected some and modified others without realizing that, in the process he had totally destroyed the basic purpose of creating a national system of education. The main recommendations that ultimately came to dominate the scene were those relating to language, the neighbourhood school, teachers’ salaries and the pattern of school and college classes (which many persons equate almost entirely with the national system of education or the entire thinking of the Commission). As one can easily recognize, these were probably among the less important of the Commission’s recommendations. It is thus a tragedy that the recommendations of the one Commission which was directed to look comprehensively at education were considered mostly in a piecemeal fashion.

This trend to look piecemeal even at a comprehensive report like that of the Commission is strengthened by quite a different set of factors. When a large number of recommendations are made, different vested interests and special groups generally try to pick out ideas favourable to them and oppose those which are against their interests. For instance, teachers picked up the recommendations regarding remuneration but without the precautions and safety valves which the Commission had imposed. The concept of major universities was opposed by all universities which had no hope of being selected, that is, in effect by almost all universities. The supporters of basic education felt that its claims to become the national system of education had been ignored; and so on. A piecemeal rather than a package-deal approach was therefore adopted in looking at the recommendations of the Commission and each interested group chose to support or oppose individual recommendations in accordance with its predilections. But those who supported certain individual recommendations did not always come together to support the Report as a whole or to endorse its comprehensive approach. On the contrary, those who did not like certain individual recommendations easily joined together to condemn the Report as a whole on the effective logic that if the Report as a whole is thrown out, they would automatically win their objective of dropping some specific proposals. In the long run, these proved to be the majority and won.

The creation of a national system of education does need favourable political, economic and social conditions. Unfortunately, the assumptions made by the Education Commission (1964-66) in this regard proved unrealistic. It had postulated strong Central and State Governments that would be committed to educational development, stable political conditions, a declining birth-rate, a growth of national income at six percent per annum, a lessening of social tensions due to effective development, a strengthened and revitalized bureaucracy, a committed and competent body of teachers, and a community of students dedicated to the pursuit of learning. None of these conditions has been fulfilled and one may also argue that it is not even proper to expect such ideal situations. The fact, however, remains that in all these matters, the actual conditions in the country in the twelve years after the Report of the Commission (i.e., 1966-78) were even worse than in the twelve years preceding it (1952-64) and that these were probably the worst in the period 1967-69 when the most crucial decisions were being taken on the Report of the Commission. For instance, the Congress party was truly national and fairly strong during 1952-64 and could have taken the bold political decisions needed under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru although its coherence and strength had already begun to decline towards the end of the period. The opposite is the case in the period 1966-78. Here the Congress was badly mauled, for the first time in history, in the general elections of 1967, actually split in 1969 and was almost destroyed as a party by the personal dominance of Mrs. Indira Gandhi although the cement of power managed to keep up certain appearances. The Emergency destroyed it still further and it was routed out of power again for the first time in our history, in the general elections of 1977. It has since split a second and a third time and totally lost its strength and significance. No other party has yet risen to a national level to take its place and this political fragmentation certainly lessens the possibility of taking the hard decisions needed. The performance of the economy during 1966-78 has not improved over that during 1952-64. The rate of economic growth has continued to be low and the situation has been further complicated by inflation, rise in prices and growth of unemployment. The economic situation was particularly bad during 1967-69 when the crucial decisions on the Report of the Commission were being taken: in fact, these years proved to be a plan holiday for all practical purposes although they have been
euphemistically designated as “annual plan years”. The social situation was generally tense and the higher education system became dysfunctional with large incidence of student and other unrest and frequent strikes and closures. Our frequent mishandling of several educational issues also added to the general tension and disorganization. All things considered, one is forced to conclude that the discussion and decision-making on the Report of the Education Commission became extremely ill-timed. It is true that the assumptions of the Education Commission were too Utopian and that all who would like to create a national system of education must be prepared to work under or in spite of such conditions. But that makes the task extremely difficult and we were certainly not prepared for such eventualities.

Even on the academic front, the conditions were unfavourable. Mr. M.C. Chagla described the Report as the Magna Carta of teachers and the Commission had placed great faith in them for initiating and sustaining a movement for radical educational reform. But somehow, the Report did not enthuse the teachers and they have done little to create the educational system visualized by the Commission in spite of more than one revision of salaries. The students have been dissatisfied with education, and often talk of and demand radical changes; but what they actually do is more disruptive than helpful to educational growth. The teachers and their organizations could have done so many things which have not been done; and by and large, educational administrators have not displayed the needed leadership. There are of course several noble individual exceptions to these generalizations, but these silver linings do not reduce the general gloom. There are probably several explanations as to why the academic community did not rise above the example set by the politicians or the general atmosphere of self-seeking cynicism or frustration that has come to prevail. But to explain a thing is not the same as to excuse it.

COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Undaunted by these factors, Dr. Triguna Sen went ahead with the proposals to prepare a statement on the national policy on education as had been decided earlier. He immediately set up a Committee of Members of Parliament, representing all the different political parties, and expected its report to provide him with a working draft of the national policy. He expected this to be a trump-card in his hand to help him implement the Report and even to pass a national education act whose possibility the Education Commission had desired to be explored. As ill-luck would have it, it proved to be his undoing and, in a way, also of all the grand plans of implementing the Report.

Three things went wrong and upset all the earlier calculations. The Committee of Members of Parliament was the first ever occasion in our history when persons belonging to all parties sat at a round-table to hammer out a blueprint for a national system of education. There was a difference of opinion whether such a committee should have been set up at all. One view was that it is for the party in power to crystallize its views on education and force its policies on the country as a whole because education can never be politically neutral. These persons argued that it was for the Cabinet to decide the national educational policy, to place it before Parliament for approval and to resign if it could not carry Parliament with it. On the other hand, there was a view that education should be beyond politics and an all-party or no-party affair, so that a national educational policy which must have a long-term perspective can continue to be implemented in spite of changes in Government. It was on this assumption that the Committee of the Members of Parliament was set up. One is not sure which of these two views is correct: the probability is that the first of these views is right. Incidentally, one finds that this Committee bit the Ministry of Education so badly that no such committee has been set up since (e.g., on the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women).

The second thing that went wrong was the realization that no political party had really applied its mind to the educational problem in depth and formulated well-conceived long-term policies of its own (this statement does not exclude even the Congress party). In fact, education was never a major vote-catching subject and no political party had ever thought it worthwhile to project an educational policy of its own and make it an important part of its election manifesto. The average politician did not also have an adequate “literacy in education” because there has been so little of a dialogue between politicians and educationists. This made meaningful discussions very difficult. The talks in the Committee, therefore, tended to be ad hoc or desultory and were more in the nature of party wrangles than of a national effort to evolve an agreed educational system.

The third, the most unexpected and catastrophic, development was importing the language controversy in the discussions as if it was the Report of a Language Commission rather than that of an Education Commission that was being discussed. This was most unfortunate.
because, after all, the recommendations on language were only a few of the several recommendations of the Commission and not the most important ones at that. Dr. Triguna Sen tried his best to divert these discussions to a comprehensive look at the Commission’s proposals but it needed a person made of far sterner stuff to achieve this with a group of tough politicians. Moreover, the entire historical background was against him. In 1965, when Hindi became the official language of the Union, there was a move to accelerate the use of Hindi and it led to great agitation in many parts of the country, and especially in Tamil Nadu. The agitation appeared to have died out over the succeeding months. But this was only a deceptive calm and the language conflict, which had only been driven underground, came to the surface with a vengeance when the Committee began to discuss the language issue. Consequently, the discussions in the Committee highlighted only three sets of recommendations of the Commission, viz. those relating to language, the neighbourhood school, and the $10+2+3$ pattern. The comprehensive approach to the problem and the emphasis on the national system of education were once again subordinated to the piecemeal discussion of selected recommendations.

The terms of reference to the Committee were threefold: (1) to consider the Report of the Education Commission; (2) to prepare a draft statement on the national policy on education; and (3) to identify a programme for immediate action. The wide differences in the Committee may be inferred from the fact that nine out of its 30 members wrote Minutes of Dissent which ran into 23 pages against a report of 26 pages. Most of the Minutes of Dissent related only to two issues, viz. the neighbourhood school and the language policy.

The Committee was provided with all the relevant papers, the Report of the Commission and all the comments received thereon from the State Governments and others. It agreed with the Commission on the urgent need to create a national system of education but differed from the Commission’s approach in three significant ways:

1. The Indian languages should be adopted as media of education at all stages and in all subjects in five years.
2. The neighbourhood school system should be universalized at the primary stage. Primary education (classes I-VII or VIII) should be made free immediately and free books should be provided to all pupils. An intensive programme should be launched for reduction of wastage and stagnation. Good and effective primary education of at least five year’s duration should be provided for every child in all parts of the country as early as possible and at any rate within a period of ten years.
3. The ten-year school, with a common curriculum of general education, should be adopted in all parts of the country. The new educational structure should be adopted as early as possible in all areas where the total duration of school and college education leading to the first degree in arts, commerce and science is 15 years or more. Where the addition of a year of schooling is involved, a phased programme should be drawn up for the implementation of the proposal.
4. Teachers’ status should be improved and the remuneration of all teachers, particularly at the school stage should be upgraded. Programmes of teacher education should be improved and expanded.
5. Agricultural research and education at all levels should be developed on a priority basis. Both technical education and
technological research should be taken closer to industry; and a better status in society and industry should be given to the technician and his training improved.

6. Work-experience and national and social service should be introduced as an integral part of all education. A beginning may be made in about five per cent of the institutions immediately and the programme should be universalized in a period of about ten years.

7. Science education should be emphasized and scientific research should be promoted in a phased programme spread over about ten years. Science and mathematics should be made an integral part of general education till the end of class X.

8. Emphasis should be laid on the development of essential student services, e.g., development of programmes of sports and games, building up of textbook libraries in secondary schools, colleges and universities, and appointment of joint committees of teachers and students in colleges and universities to deal with day-to-day problems.

9. Post-graduate education and research should be improved and expanded. The programme of the centres of advanced study should be developed further and clusters of centres in related disciplines should be created wherever possible.

10. The provision of facilities for part-time and own-time education should be expanded generously at all stages.

11. The programmes for spreading education among girls and the weaker sections of the community should be expanded.

12. Intensive efforts should be made to spread literacy, particularly in the age-group 15-25.

13. The recruitment policies of government should be revised to reduce the pressures on higher education, and the higher secondary stage of education should be vocationalized to divert young persons into different walks of life.

14. In admissions to higher education, some allowance should be made for the environmental handicaps of students coming from rural areas, urban slums and weaker sections of the community, and a more equitable and egalitarian basis should be evolved for the award of scholarships or grant of admissions to important institutions of higher education.

15. Programmes which need planning, organization and human effort rather than money, e.g., promoting national consciousness, character-formation, intensive utilization of existing facilities, reorganization of courses, improvement of curricula, adoption of dynamic methods of teaching, examination reform and improvement of textbooks should be developed in a big way and on a priority basis.

16. Emphasis should be placed on the improvement of educational administration and especially on the adoption of the district as the principal unit for planning, administration and development of education, the system of school-groups, the modernization of the system of school supervision, and the organization of a nationwide programme of improvement of educational institutions through preparation and implementation of individual plans.

These recommendations, though formally adopted, do not give a correct idea of what happened in the actual discussions. As stated earlier, it was only the first three items on language, neighbourhood school and the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern that were noticed; most of the time was taken up with the proposal of adopting the regional languages as media of education at all stages in a period of five years (this was a modification of the Commission's recommendation which had suggested a ten-year period). Anyone following the public debates on the Report of the Commission at this time would have easily got the impression that the only recommendation of the Commission was to use regional languages as media of instruction at all stages and that this one reform would create a national system of education and solve all our educational ills.

OTHER DISCUSSIONS

With the Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament in his hand, Dr. Triguna Sen convened a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education and a special Conference of the Vice-Chancellors of universities to discuss, not only the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), but also the Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament. There is nothing special to say about the discussions in the Central Advisory Board of Education which were very similar to those in the Committee of Members of Parliament with the highest emphasis on the issue of the medium of instruction at the university stage. The Vice-Chancellors' Conference discussed almost nothing except the proposal about the major universities (which it rejected outright) and the medium of instruction at the university stage. Finally, the Report was discussed in both Houses of Parliament
and in both these discussions also the issue of the medium of instruction at the university stage dominated the scene. Needless to say, the discussions became endlessly repetitive and tiring and one waited impatiently for the day when they would come to an end.

NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (1968)

The stage was now set for the issue of a Statement on the National Policy on Education. A drafting committee in the Ministry of Education had prolonged discussions and the rather tame draft that finally emerged was approved by the Cabinet and released in 1968.

Several questions arise in the context. The first is whether all this effort was worthwhile and whether a Statement on the National Policy on Education does serve any useful purpose. When the recommendation was made, several arguments were advanced in its favour:

1. Such a statement would provide a specific and clear direction to Central, State and Local governments to plan and implement programmes of educational reconstruction.
2. It would also provide similar guidelines on the nationally preferred educational developments to all educational institutions, teachers and students and help in the development of a national system of education.
3. It would also help in educating public opinion and serve the same purpose as the educational provisions which certain countries have introduced in their constitutions.
4. It would stabilize educational policies which would not be easily tampered with by the personal whims of Education Ministers that come and go.

This is no doubt a strong case in support of the proposal and whether one should or should not have a Statement on the National Policy on Education depends upon the character of the Statement. If the policy Statement can serve the above objectives, it is certainly worthwhile having it; and an acid test as to whether it does serve these purposes or not is to ask the question: What difference would it make to educational programmes if the Statement did not exist? If we are in a position to say that if the Statement had not been there, such and such desirable things would not have happened, the Statement is certainly relevant and worth having. But if the existence of the Statement has no effect on current policies and programmes, it does not serve the above purposes at all and is obviously valueless.

Our main comment on the Statement on National Policy on Education (1968) is that it does not serve these specific purposes adequately. This has happened mainly because, in preparing the Statement, the basic approach was to make it non-specific, non-committal and as innocuous as possible with a view to avoiding controversies or shrinking responsibilities. The problem may be illustrated by taking one paragraph from the Statement, say, the paragraph on universal elementary education for all children in the age-group of 6-14. We already have Article 45 of the Constitution on this subject which enjoins us to fulfil this directive by 1960. What one expects is that we should take all our experience in this field between 1950 and 1966 into account, analyse the causes of our failure, determine the way in which we could make better progress in the future and, more specifically, fix a revised target date for the attainment of the objective. A statement in response to these specific issues is certainly worth having and all these issues had also been raised during the discussion on the formulation of the National Policy on Education. Unfortunately, the government desired, not to face these issues squarely but to sweep most of them under the carpet. The Education Commission had given high priority to the programme, accepted the general demand that it should be implemented within a short period of time and worked on the hypothesis that universal elementary education should be provided to all children in the age-group 6-11 by 1980-81 and to those in the age group 11-14 by 1985-86. While the priority given to this programme by the Commission was generally welcomed, its proposals on the subject came in for heavy criticism on the ground that the period of implementation was too long and even went beyond the proposals of the Sargent Report* which, in itself, the people had never agreed to accept. The Committee of Members of Parliament which was definitely of the view that expansion of elementary education should receive greater emphasis suggested two lines of action, viz. (1) that a primary school should be opened within easy walking distance from the home of every child within a period of five years (para 21), and (2) that good and effective primary education of at least five years' duration should be provided for every child throughout the country as early as possible and at any rate within a period of ten years (sub-para (2) of para 95). The issues

* This Report had proposed that universal elementary education should be provided to all children in the age-group 6-14 by 1984.
were discussed again in detail when the National Policy resolution was being drafted. One view strongly urged that we should lay down a definite time-limit for realizing universal elementary education for children in the age-group 6-14 and that this time-limit should preferably be 1975-76 or at the latest 1980-81. On the other side, it was argued that we had already treated this as a time-bound programme in the Constitution itself and failed to keep our promise and that another limitation of time was not worthwhile, especially because it would more likely imply yet another failure. The State Governments took a technical position; they said that they would do the programme by 1976-77 or 1980-81. But this would need the investment of very large amounts which they will not be able to afford without corresponding special assistance from the Centre. If this were not forthcoming, they wanted a longer time to reach the goal which, in some cases, went up to A.D. 2010 or even A.D. 2030. The Centre was not prepared to commit itself to a special grant-in-aid for this programme, even in respect of the most backward States; and the official calculations showed that the proposals of the Commission were really over-ambitious and that a realistic time-limit to reach the goal would go even beyond 1986. This was neither acceptable nor politically convenient to the States. It was therefore finally decided that the National Policy on Education would deliberately make no mention of any target date to provide universal elementary education for all children, either for the age-group 6-11 or for the age-group 11-14. Even the simpler recommendation of the Committee of Members of Parliament that a primary school be provided within easy walking distance from the home of every child within a period of five years had to be kept out and the National Policy on Education merely said: “Strenuous efforts should be made for the early fulfilment of the Directive Principle under Art. 45 of the Constitution seeking to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14.” This does not take us an inch beyond Article 45 of the Constitution and nothing would be lost if it were to be deleted from the National Policy on Education. Several other examples of this type can be easily given and these will be discussed in detail in their appropriate context in the chapters that follow. It may also be mentioned that the Statement suffers from some other weaknesses such as inappropriate arrangement, lack of proper balance between different recommendations, inclusion of some programmes which are not sufficiently important and could easily have been left out, and omission of many others that have a high priority and should have been included. All in all, one is left with the impression that the Statement is far from satisfactory, mainly because of the political and economic circumstances of the period and the violent eruption of the language controversy. It should not be forgotten that it was finalized by a weak Central Government which was more anxious to avoid controversies than to bring about radical educational changes.

One must also remember that a very heavy price was paid to place this document on record. Mr. M.C. Chagla, who set up the Education Commission itself and who was then Minister for External Affairs, resigned on the ground that he could not agree to the use of regional languages as media of instruction at the university stage. Dr. Triguna Sen, the one Member of the Commission, who stuck his neck out to implement the Report of the Commission was dropped from the Cabinet very soon afterwards. It is a tragic irony of history that these two stalwarts who were so intimately connected with the Commission should have been sacrificed while implementing its recommendations. Of course, there were two other casualties also. The first was the Report of the Commission in which the Central Government lost further interest because, with the issue of the Statement on National Policy, there was very little more to be done about the matter; and the second was the national system of education which became almost a non-starter in spite of the fact that all this huge labour had been undertaken with the ostensible object of creating it.

It may be worthwhile to refer here to a similar drama at the State level, viz. the attempts made by M.D. Chaudhari, Education Minister in the Maharashtra State, to pass an Education Act for the State as recommended by the Education Commission. With a depth of interest and enthusiasm which do not usually characterize Education Ministers, he had a policy statement or the subject prepared and placed it before the legislature for discussion, the idea being that an Education Act would be drafted on the basis of the final decisions on the policy statement. Two of the proposals in this document – both taken from the Report of the Education Commission – were picked up by the Opposition for severe attack, viz. (1) to regulate the expansion of college education, and (2) to attempt the improvement of schools on a selective basis. The statement had many good points and a number of valuable features. But all these were forgotten in the storm that arose over these two issues and the feeling created among the people that both these proposals were elitist and against the interests of the non-advanced social groups. In fact, these issues played the same role in Maharashtra as the proposal of using regional languages as media
Implementation and Evaluation (1966-78)

The period of about twelve years (1966-78) forms a distinct epoch on our educational history. In 1966, the Education Commission submitted its Report. This was discussed for about two years and the National Policy on Education was issued in 1968. Both, the Report of the Commission and the National Policy on Education, were taken as the basis of educational development in the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans. All the Education Ministers of this period (Professor V.K.R.V. Rao, Shri S.S. Ray, and Professor S. Nurali Hasan) declared that they would strive to implement the Report of the Education Commission and the National Policy on Education, although they did have certain personal reservations on some issues. The Janata Government which came to power in 1977 declared however that it would like to revise the National Policy on Education (1968) and make all such changes as may be deemed necessary. It was of course understood, though it was not said in so many words, that some of these changes may go even beyond the Report of the Education Commission and even be contrary to its proposals. It did not appoint another Commission; but it did review programmes in classes I-X through the Ishwarbai Patel Committee and those in classes XI-XII through the Adheshiah Committee. At its request, the UGC has prepared a Statement on the development of higher education and is now reviewing all its programmes. The revised Statement on the National Policy which the Janata Government had promised to the people has also been recently released (1979). There is thus ample evidence to show that the era of the Education Commission which began in 1966 is now over and that the education of the country enters a different phase of development with the Statement on National Policy on Education (1979).

The main object of this study is to examine the manner in which the recommendations of the Education Commission were implemented. In view of the facts stated above, we shall restrict this review to the period 1966-78. We shall, however, extend the scope of the study to include also an evaluation of the recommendations themselves. Every commission has both the types of mistakes – of commission (i.e.,
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wrong ideas included within its report) as well as of omission (i.e., of
good and relevant ideas left out of its report). This Commission is
no exception and an evaluation of its proposals must be done side by
side with an assessment of their implementation.

COMPREHENSIVE OR SELECTIVE APPROACH

One of the earliest issues raised in the process of implementation was
whether the proposals of the Education Commission regarding the
creation of a national education system should be looked at
comprehensively as a package deal or whether they could be
selectively examined and implemented on an individual basis. We
naturally pressed for a comprehensive approach, i.e., for identification
of key recommendations covering all aspects and all stages of
education and for implementing them simultaneously and in a
concerted fashion. But it did not take us long to realize that no one
would buy the proposal and that almost everyone thought compartmentally in terms of some programmes of his interest or
choice. Even during the discussions themselves, therefore, we changed
the strategy and accepted the idea of a selective implementation. As
Dr. Kothari observed: “I am prepared to forget the comprehensive
approach. Let them select even one thing (e.g., common school or
work-experience) and do it well.” I also accepted the situation as a
hard reality of life.

In this context, it may be of interest to ask what the Commission
itself expected about the implementation of its proposals. This was
highlighted in the brief conveyance letter of the Chairman, in the hope
that even those who do not read the thousand pages of the Report will
certainly find the time to read this two-page statement. It makes three
points:

(1) What the country needs is an “educational revolution” which
will transform, improve and expand the existing educational system
through a vigorous and sustained programme of action spread over 20
years (1966-86).

(2) This educational revolution is not a one-shot affair. “In the
rapidly changing world of to-day, one thing is certain: yesterday’s
educational system will not serve to-day’s, and even less so, the needs
of tomorrow.” Therefore, “the single most important thing needed
now is to get out of the rigidity of the present system,” emphasize
experimentation and innovation, and evolve an educational policy
which will be flexible enough to adjust itself to changing circumstances
which are, in a way, unpredictable.

(3) The proposals of the Commission are in the nature of a
package deal and will have to be taken as such if a national system of
education is to be fully created. However, in this long-term task, the
Commission would be satisfied even if its report provides “the basic
thinking and framework for taking at least the first steps” towards
bringing about this educational revolution.

It is thus obvious that the Commission itself was not against a
selective implementation. Of course the main issue was, not the
principle of selective approach which had become inevitable, but the
specific recommendations to be selected because, depending on the
nature of this selection, the whole objective of the Commission would
be gained or destroyed. But here we found ourselves rather helpless. A
selection was forced on us by various circumstances beyond our
control and we were not always able to sell a particular recommendation to which we attached significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT ATTRACTION WIDE ATTENTION

Looking back at the hectic discussions that took place over the Report
of the Education Commission during 1966 and 1968 and also at the
various other decisions that have since been taken while formulating
and implementing educational plans during the last ten years, we find
that several proposals made by the Commission attracted very wide
attention. Among them, the following may be mentioned.

(1) National System of Education: A question was raised whether
all our pre-occupation with the national system of education was not a
mere hangover of the past, whether the concept was still valid in the
post-independence period, and if so, how precisely would a national
system of education be defined.

(2) Relating Education to the Past and the Future: The Education
Commission had observed that Indian education will have to be
related both to the past and the future of the country. This raised a
discussion on several difficult problems relating to Indian tradition
and national development.

(3) Medium of Instruction at the University Stage: The
Commission had underplayed the language issue but it did say that
the regional languages should become the medium of instruction at the
university stage in a period of 10 years. Political parties picked this up
as the most important recommendation and as shown in the preceding chapter, battles royal were fought over it. As a matter of hindsight, one finds that the Commission did make an unintended but significant contribution to the ultimate solution of this problem, especially because of the supreme dedication, commitment and sacrifice of Dr. Triguna Sen. If a future historian were to describe the Education Commission as the Commission on the Medium of Instruction at the university stage, he would not be far wrong.

(4) Non-formal Education: The Education Commission was one of the first in the world to point out the severe limitations of an exclusive dependence on the formal system of full-time education and to emphasize the need for non-formal education which can be pursued on a part-time or own-time (self-study) basis. It also highlighted the need to move from a single-point to a multi-point entry system. It was Prof. S. Nurul Hasan, the then Education Minister, who picked up this recommendation and made intensive efforts, through the Central Advisory Board of Education, to make the country accept the concept of non-formal education. He succeeded and the programme is now on the ground with an immense potentiality for the future. This is yet another area in which the Commission made a significant difference.

(5) Education for the People: The Report of the Commission did succeed in inviting the attention of the country to the massive problem of the education of our people. This is but right because it is the only commission after 1882 to deal with elementary education and the only commission ever to deal with adult education (including liquidation of adult illiteracy). In the Fifth Plan (1974-75 to 1978-79) it was the combined efforts of Professor S. Nurul Hasan and Professor S. Chakravarty, who was then a member, Planning Commission, that mounted a massive programme of elementary education which unfortunately did not work out. In the Fourth Plan (1968-69 to 1973-74), Professor V.K.R.V. Rao made a valiant but unsuccessful attempt to promote a programme of adult education. In the Sixth Plan (1978-79 to 1982-83), a massive attack is now being mounted, both in elementary and adult education (with full use of non-formal education) by Dr. P.C. Chunder, the Education Minister, Professor D.T. Lakdawala, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, and Dr. J.D. Sethi, Member, Planning Commission. At any rate, it can be said that the Commission did have a role in emphasizing and accelerating these programmes.

* These ideas have now become world famous because of the Report of the International Commission on Education (Unesco) which highlighted them.

(6) Pattern of School and College Classes: The idea that the country should adopt a common pattern of 10+2+3 was first put forward by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19). Since then, every commission had toyed with the idea. It was also highlighted by the Education Commission, although at a lower level of priority. Thanks again to Professor S. Nurul Hasan, the idea was pursued with considerable vigour during the last few years. One can easily assert that the Education Commission has done more for making the idea a reality than any preceding commission.

(7) Teachers’ Salaries: Revision of teachers’ salaries has been a continual programme since 1947. It, however, goes without saying that perhaps the maximum achievements in the field have been made in the period following the Report of the Education Commission. Here again credit goes mainly to Professor S. Nurul Hassan. The statement of Mr. M.C. Chagla that the Report of the Commission is a Magna Carta for Teachers is essentially correct.

(8) The Common School System: The Commission had drawn pointed attention to the segregation that now takes place between the education of the children of the upper and middle classes who generally attend private, fee-charging and good quality institutions and the children of the poor who can only avail themselves of the publicly supported, free but poor quality institutions conducted by Government and local bodies. Its proposal to do away with this segregation through adoption of a common school system has created a fierce debate on the future of public and special schools in the country. The debate is still on, and although the recommendation has been formally accepted, very little is being done to implement it.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT ATTRACTION LIMITED ATTENTION

There were several recommendations of the Commission that raised little controversy, if any, and were readily accepted, either in the original form made by the Commission or in some modified form. These include the following:

1. Making work-experience and social or national service an integral part of education at all stages;
2. Emphasis on science education and research;
3. Vocationalization of secondary education;
4. Cultivation of moral and social values or character-formation;
5. Promoting decentralization, diversification, elasticity and dynamism in the education system;
6. General education and professional preparation of teachers;
7. Integrating the different stages of education for qualitative improvement;
8. Creating a nation-wide movement for improving standards, including institutional planning;
9. Creating a climate of sustained hard work;
10. Identification and development of talent; scholarships;
11. Improvement of curricula, teaching and learning materials, and methods of teaching and evaluation;
12. Development of pre-school education;
13. Education of girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes;
14. Reduction of regional imbalances; and
15. Increase in educational expenditure from 3 per cent in 1965-66 to 6 per cent in 1985-86.

It is our sad experience that recommendations which are readily accepted are generally those which are not implemented or indifferently implemented. These recommendations of the Commission are no exception to this general finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WERE OPPOSED AND REJECTED OR JUST IGNORED

Finally, there were several recommendations of the Commission that were stoutly opposed and rejected. These include the following:

1. Change of priorities in educational development;
2. Selective admissions at the higher secondary and university stages;
3. Major universities;
4. Selective improvement of schools;
5. School curricula at two levels;
6. Organization of new educational structures and the creation of an Indian Educational Service; and
7. Continuance of education in the State List.

In addition, several other recommendations of the Commission were just ignored. I suppose that is the penalty one has to pay for opening one's mouth too wide and making innumerable recommendations.

Of course, things could have been much better or much worse. But if one agrees to be satisfied with the humbler objective of stimulating thought and taking the first steps towards the creation of a national system of education, the above record is not bad. I would even consider it good, especially in view of the difficult economic and political conditions through which we have passed.

It would be convenient to discuss the individual recommendations of the Commission in the four groups indicated above. We shall discuss the first two recommendations regarding the national system of education and relating education to the past and the future in this chapter itself. The remaining recommendations will be discussed in the following three chapters.

A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Since the principal term of reference of the Education Commission was to advise Government on the national pattern of education, the discussions generally began with the question: What is this national system of education? The answer of the Commission was that we first evolved this concept as a part of our struggle for freedom between 1900 and 1947, that the concept is still valid, and that we should continue to use it, with such modifications as would be necessary from time to time, in all our future attempts at educational reconstruction as well.

Historically, one easily understands why the concept arose as a reaction to the colonial attempt to foist a pale imitation of the British educational system on India. In the pre-independence period, therefore, the word 'national' had a specific and significant connotation and meant, in the words of the Resolution of the Indian National Congress (1906) thereon, education on (1) national lines, (2) under national control, and (3) directed towards the realization of the national destiny. Each of these three phrases needs a brief comment.

(1) National Lines: The basic assumption underlying this phrase was that every society is unique and needs a unique educational system rooted in its own traditions. It was thus an expression of the Swadeshi spirit in education; and it was necessary to emphasize this because it is only a people who have a faith in themselves and are proud of their own traditions that can fight colonial rule. Of course, due care was taken to see that this link with the past did not become revivalist or chauvinist; and in this, the ideas of Tagore and Gandhi are extremely important. Needless to say, this concept still continues to be relevant. Good education must be rooted in the traditions of the people and must give them a proper pride in themselves.

(2) National Control: In a colonial situation, one understands why the idea of national control was given the highest priority. It then
meant two things: (a) the Indian Educational Service, which consisted exclusively of non-Indians who held all important positions in Education Departments, should be abolished and all educational services should be fully Indianized; (b) the control of education should be vested in the Indian people and exercised through Indian Ministers responsible to legislatures elected by the people. Both these objectives have now been realized. New recruitment to the Indian Educational Service was discontinued in 1924 and by 1947, all educational services were fully Indianized. Indians began to be associated with primary education in 1884 under the institution of local self-government. Under the Government of India Act, 1919, education became mostly a provincial subject and was transferred to the control of Indian ministers under the system of diarchy. With the introduction of provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act, 1935, this control was considerably increased. With the attainment of independence in 1947, the Indian people had full control over all education, both at the Central and State levels.

(3) National Destiny: In the pre-independence period, this implied, first and foremost, the attainment of independence. Hence national education was expected to cultivate the love of the motherland, to promote patriotism and to train freedom fighters. But even in these early days, the expression “national destiny” was meant to cover not only political freedom but also the "greater" India of our dreams. In particular, Mahatma Gandhi initiated debate on the future society that we should have in the country and kept it alive side by side with the struggle for freedom. The attainment of independence has made this concept even more relevant, because all our efforts can now be concentrated on the creation of the desirable society and education must prepare the people to determine what this society should be and to dedicate themselves to its creation. Even the concept of patriotism is not dated by the attainment of independence. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and a free people need patriotism more, not less.

It will thus be seen that, of the three concepts of national education developed in the pre-independence period, the two concepts of relating education to the past and the future of the country are still relevant and that only the concept of national control has become superfluous. It is, therefore, desirable that we should continue to use the historically hallowed concept of a national system of education with one modification, viz. the idea of “national” control should be redefined to mean a decentralized system of educational administration in which the Central Government, the State Governments, the local bodies, autonomous organizations like the universities and even voluntary agencies will have a role to play. This is precisely what the Education Commission has proposed.

Implementation and Evaluation (1966-78)

For convenience of reference, it may be stated that a national system of education for India

- should be rooted in Indian traditions as reinterpreted and redefined from time to time.
- should be closely related to the new society we desire to create in the country as adumbrated in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- should be adequately geared for creating, preserving and diffusing knowledge, for developing the essential skills among the people, and for inculcating human and social values, especially those enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- should provide a common educational system (in which all the three channels of incidental, non-formal and formal education have an equal status) to all individuals, without any discrimination on grounds of class, social or economic status, caste, religion or sex.
- should abolish illiteracy and provide universal elementary education to children in the age-group 6-14.
- should provide equal opportunities to every individual to receive all the post-elementary education he desires and qualifies for.
- should provide equal and adequate opportunities to all citizens for continuing education and life-long learning.
- should have adequate provision for identification and intensive cultivation of all available talent.
- should be fully responsible for all education of the most talented children who would be regarded as wards of the state.
- should maintain adequate standards (in all institutions and at all levels) which would be continually rising, and internationally comparable, at least in a few key sectors.

These objectives emerge clearly from the recommendations of the Education Commission; and they are and shall continue to be valid. It is the task of each succeeding generation of teachers, students, educational thinkers and administrators to invest the skeleton of these objectives with the flesh and blood of concrete programmes to suit the conditions of the day.

RELATING EDUCATION TO THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Of the ten objectives of the national education system stated above,
the first two make an attempt to link education with society, with its historical past and the desired future. This is precisely what the Commission meant by linking education with the life, needs and aspirations of the people. Obviously, this is the most crucial aspect of the national system of education. The questions to be asked in this context are: (i) How has the Education Commission linked national education with our past and future? (ii) Are the proposals of the Commission sound and acceptable? (iii) If not, what amendments are needed in them?

(1) **Science and Spirituality:** One basic proposal made by the Commission in this regard is that science (which is the force of the present and future) should be closely linked to spirituality (which is the best contribution of the Indian tradition, not only to our culture, but to the culture of mankind). There are no differences on the views of the Commission to stress science, both for its material and cultural uses, and to create a scientific temper among the people. But serious reservations have been expressed in several quarters on the proposal of cultivating spiritual values. The problem, therefore, needs some elucidation, especially because the long discussions held in the Commission on this important issue are not adequately reflected in its Report (I personally assume all responsibility for this).

The development of India, in the opinion of the Commission, will have to be viewed in the context of human development as a whole, partly because we are the second biggest chunk of that humanity and mainly because the world is becoming increasingly interdependent and smaller. In this larger context, the basic issue is to educate man to live in peace and harmony with himself, with Nature, and with other individuals in society. All these aspects are now totally out of balance. In spite of all the explosion of knowledge, man knows least about himself, is unable (or even frightened) to live with himself, and has abandoned the ancient tradition of conquering and disciplining himself. On the other hand, he has extended the concepts of conquest and exploitation to his relations with Nature. This has, no doubt, led to the creation of a plenty of material goods and services. But it has also led to unbridled consumerism, degradation of the environment, depletion of scarce, non-renewable resources, and to a mad race among the nations to have control over the earth’s resources. Even before the advent of the scientific era, man had extended the concepts of conquest and exploitation to his relations with other men. Science has increased his capacity to do so a thousandfold. This has resulted in untold misery and suffering to millions of people, led to a tremendous increase in social and political tensions, created huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons, and posed a serious threat to the very existence of man. If all these evils are to be avoided, man’s relations with himself, with Nature, and with society have to be transformed on the principles of love, harmony and service, and he has to be educated to know himself and to conquer and discipline himself. This basic change in his relations with himself will automatically lead to the desired changes in his relations with Nature and with society also.

In this fundamental task of changing man’s relations to himself, the Commission felt that the Indian tradition could make a very valuable contribution. This tradition has always emphasized self-knowledge, the need to conquer and discipline oneself, the search for freedom through renunciation rather than through enjoyment, and the cultivation of the values of non-violence, non-acquisitiveness, non-involvement and love for all living things. If men were to cultivate these values, the Commission felt, he will be able to control the forces of science and technology and learn to make a humane use of his knowledge, not to fight and kill or to conquer, dominate and exploit, but to conserve, love and serve. The Commission felt that Indians owed it to themselves to begin this transformation within the country by relating their national education system with their hoary tradition and by cultivating the spiritual values it stood for.

One may or may not agree with these views of the Commission. But the issues raised are crucial, not only for development but even for the very survival of man. If the problem is recognized, and the solutions given by the Commission are not acceptable, we should strive for alternative and more satisfactory answers.

Even when people disagree with the Commission’s view that the best contribution of the Indian tradition to the national system of education is the cultivation of spiritual values, they still agree with the basic thesis put forward by the Commission that the national system of education must strive to relate every Indian citizen meaningfully to the country’s past. It is obviously wasteful and even pernicious to produce “educated” but “rootless” young men and women. The only result of this policy is to leave the task of linking education and tradition (because they must be linked anyhow) to the home; and this, in the present circumstances, can only lead to the continuance of the divided society we have. If we are to move in the direction of creating a cohesive and integrated society, we must make the national system of education responsible for rooting all our citizens in the common Indian tradition. Effective ways of doing this will have to be concretized.

It is unfortunate that very little work has been done in this field. We
must study the Indian tradition in depth, secularize or delink its concepts from religion, and integrate it with the educational system. This is an area of darkness which calls for the labour of some of our best intellectuals for years to come.

(2) Education and Development: The Education Commission laid the highest emphasis on relating education to development or to the creation of a greater India. That is why it designated its Report as Education and National Development. In a way, therefore, one expects this to be the best part of the Commission's Report. But, for various reasons, it turned out to be the weakest.

There are two basic weaknesses in the presentation of the Commission on this problem:

(a) The first is that its positive statements are far from adequate and even misleading. For instance, it speaks of national prosperity in which there would be growth in India's trade and commerce, more food for all, and better health. But a mere wish of this type has little meaning unless we say why India has remained poor and how its poverty can be eliminated. On this, the Commission had little to say. Its statement that "prosperity is within the reach of every nation which has determination, willingness to work hard and a stable and progressive government" is too naive. Its identification of national development only with increase in productivity, social and national integration, modernization and cultivation of moral, social and spiritual values is also unsatisfactory.

(b) The second basic weakness is that the Commission does not even refer to many crucial aspects of development. These include, at the universal level, the inequitable international economic order and the exploitation of the developing countries by the developed ones. At the national level they include the extremely skewed structure of property ownership; the arbitrary and inequitable wage-structure we have evolved; the social and cultural determinants of poverty; the large existing inequalities - social, economic, and political; exploitation; unemployment; concentration of most political, economic and knowledge power in the hands of a minority of haves and the marginalization of the vast masses of people who are poor and deprived of most good things of life. These are the "basic problems" which, the Commission argued, will have to be "squarely faced and resolutely tackled". But unfortunately, they have not been highlighted in the Report of the Commission.

There are two explanations for this failure to deal adequately wit
2.11 What is the precise relationship between educational and social transformation? The most commonly accepted view romanticizes the relationship and argues that we must begin with a radical transformation in education which, in its turn, will bring about a radical transformation in society. On the other hand, there is also a view that the social structure will always be reflected within the education system which it dominates so that no worthwhile education reform is possible unless a social revolution is first brought about. The truth is probably neither so simple nor so direct. The educational system has a duty to make a critical analysis of the social system to focus attention on its internal contradictions and on the gap between slogans and practice, and to highlight the need for structural changes, where necessary, including those needed within the educational system itself. Education can thus play a useful role in promoting the desire for a radical social change and also help in deciding the nature of such change as well as the manner of bringing it about. Similarly, education is essential to complete and consolidate a social change decided and implemented through political means, whether by bullets or by ballot. The educational system can also remedy social deficiencies which are due to educational factors. But it can have little effect on social deficiencies which arise elsewhere, say, in the economic or political sub-systems. We must also remember that, while it is comparatively easy to introduce educational reforms that support the existing social structure, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement radical educational reforms that threaten the existing social structure or run counter to its imperatives.

All things considered, it appears that, if we desire to get out of this vicious circle wherein an unequalitarian society creates an unequalitarian educational system and vice versa, we must mount a big offensive on both social and educational fronts.

2.12 The major implications of this proposal, for both social and educational reforms, can be briefly indicated:

1. In society, the basic minimum change required is to narrow down the existing wide gap between the life-styles and standards of living of the upper and middle classes and the common people by:

- eliminating or at least minimizing all direct and indirect forms of exploitation;
- imposing limits and curbs on the consumption of the rich and the well-to-do through a modification of the existing arbitrary and unequalitarian wage-structure and other allied measures;
- ensuring a basic minimum standard of living to the people through (a) an emphasis on increased production of goods and services needed by the common man, (b) a guarantee of employment at a reasonable wage to all able-bodied persons who are willing to work, and (c) the organization of an efficient and nation-wide public distribution system of food-stuffs and other essential commodities.

An important implication of this policy will be to reduce the wide gulf between urban and rural areas and to improve the standards of living of the rural people, especially of agricultural labour and small and marginal farmers.

2. In education, the corresponding basic minimum change required is to make common people, rather than the upper and middle classes, the principal beneficiaries of the educational system. This will imply, among other things:

- giving the highest priority to the programmes for the education of the common people such as adult education (including liquidation of illiteracy, non-formal education of out-of-school youth) and universal elementary education including the adoption of the common school system;
- utilizing the bulk of resources available for programmes for the education of the people so that they, and not secondary and higher education, receive the larger share of total educational expenditure;
- changing the basic values underlying the system and orienting them to common people instead of to the upper and middle classes;
- adopting the regional languages as media of instruction at all stages;
- transforming the content of education to suit the ethos of work and production and the imperatives of national development;
- improving the access of students from economically handicapped groups to secondary and higher education and taking suitable measures for optimizing their performance;
- eliminating or reducing the subsidies in secondary and higher education that now go to the upper and middle classes;
- increasing financial support to deserving students from deprived social groups; and
- restructuring educational administration on the basis of decentralization of decision-making authority so that the common people are actively involved in planning and implementation of their own educational programmes.

A major reason for our failure to bring about a radical reconstruction of educational system in the past has been the fact that we have ignored the close relationship between social and educational transformation and the consequent need for a simultaneous effort on both the fronts. The most significant aspect of our future strategy of educational development should, therefore, be to plan and implement a radical; simultaneous and complementary programme of social and educational reform.

It was stated earlier that, for better educational planning and creation of a national system of education, an intensive study of the Indian tradition is called for. To this, we may add three other areas: (1) the nature of development; (2) the future society we should strive to create in the country; and (3) the relationship between education and development. A continuing study of these problems is fundamental to the evolution of a proper national system of education. These studies are necessarily inter-disciplinary and they need a dedicated band of natural and social scientists and philosophers interested in education and an equally dedicated band of educationists who can rise above mere pedagogy and develop wider visions of philosophy and natural and social sciences. To create these bands of workers and to develop these studies becomes therefore a task of the highest priority and significance.
CHAPTER V

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (I)

As was stated in the preceding chapter, the following six recommendations of the Commission were picked out as of great significance and comparatively intensive efforts were made to implement them:

1. Use of Regional Languages as Media of Instruction at the University Stage;
2. Non-Formal Education;
3. Education for the People, i.e., Elementary and Adult Education;
4. The Common School System;
5. Pattern (10+2+3) for School and College Classes; and
6. Teachers’ Salaries.

The lag between a recommendation and its implementation is very long in our country. Many of these recommendations were made by other commissions and committees much earlier. They were repeated and supported by the Education Commission (1964-66), and a fillip was somehow given to their implementation after its Report, more by accident than by design. The association of most of these recommendations with the Education Commission is, therefore, more symbolic than real, except in the case of the common school system and non-formal education.

We shall now proceed to discuss these recommendations seriatim in this Chapter and the next.

REGIONAL LANGUAGES AS MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION AT THE UNIVERSITY STAGE

It was in 1835 that Bentinck and Macaulay imposed the English language on the country as medium of instruction in education and as the language of administration and law courts. As all national trade and industry was in British hands, English also became the language of national trade and commerce. All these privileges necessarily made English the language for good employment. English thus acquired an enormous prestige, quite unconnected with its academic utility.

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (I)

Students were avid to learn it; the schools emphasized its study*; standards in education generally came to be defined in terms of the student’s command over English; and one Director of Education even went to the length of saying that, in India, the study of the English language should be considered as “vocational education” because it secured employment to the students. But even at this period, enlightened British officers recommended the adoption of a three-language formula in education, i.e. every student should study three languages: (1) English for acquisition of new knowledge; (2) regional languages for communicating it to the people; and (3) Sanskrit for enriching the regional languages. In fact, such a three-language formula was in operation most of the time. In 1921, it operated as follows:

1. There were a few schools which used English as a medium of instruction right from the beginning (mostly meant for Anglo-Indians, etc., who claimed English as their mother tongue). But most primary schools used the regional languages as media of instruction. Some of them also taught English as a subject.
2. At the secondary stage, the study of the regional language was continued. But the study of Sanskrit was added. English was first taught as a subject and then used as a medium of instruction. The matriculation examination held at the end of the secondary stage was almost invariably conducted in the English language.
3. At the university stage, English was both a compulsory subject of study as well as the medium of instruction. Sanskrit and the regional languages could be studied on an optional basis.

Between 1921, when education was transferred to Indian control, and 1947, when we attained independence, the position changed considerably.

1) There was an increasing demand from some elite groups (whose mother tongue was not English) to send their children to English-medium schools right from the start, because of the advantages their children would have in the job market. Consequently, the number of such schools increased to some extent.
2) By and large, the primary schools used the regional languages as media of instruction. Some of them also taught English as a subject.
3) There was a demand from the people that the regional

* In fact as late as 1902, the object of secondary education was formally defined as the teaching of the English language.
languages should be the media of instruction at the secondary stage. There were three reasons for this demand: (a) the expansion of education which brought in large numbers of students who were unable to use English as a medium of instruction; (b) the growth of the nationalist sentiment; and (c) the development of the sound academic view that education at this stage can best be imparted through the regional languages. The usual difficulties were raised: lack of trained teachers, lack of textbooks, likely fall of standards, etc. But the pressures were too strong and the demand was conceded stage by stage. First, students were given the option to write their answers in the regional languages in selected subjects and this range was gradually increased till all subjects were covered. Then teaching through regional languages was permitted. This accelerated the preparation of books and training of teachers. By 1947, the regional languages were used as media of instruction at the secondary stage and at the matriculation examination in all parts of the country. But the option to study through English and to take the matriculation in English was available and was availed of by the English-medium schools, whose number however was comparatively small.

(4) English was invariably the medium of instruction at the university stage.

(5) Under the influence of the struggle for freedom, the demand for the use of regional languages as media of instruction at the university stage had already started with fervent pleas from national leaders like Tagore and Gandhi. The Indian (now S.N.D.T.) Women’s University began to use Marathi as medium of instruction as early as 1916. All institutions of national education functioning at the university stage (such as the Gujarat Vidyapeeth) invariably used the regional languages as media of instruction. There was no doubt that the change of the medium of instruction at the university stage would be an important item on the agenda for educational reform in the post-independence period.

(6) The Indian National Congress had decided to promote the use of Hindi (or Hindustani) as a link language at the national level in addition to English. Hindi was therefore being studied keenly by large numbers of people in the non-Hindi areas and especially in the southern States.

In 1947, when we became free, the overall position was that the problem of the medium of instruction remained to be solved only at the university stage. It was realized that this problem was more complicated and difficult than at the secondary stage. But the public hoped that the national leadership which had been committed to the use of regional languages as media of instruction at the university stage would solve the problem within a short period. Unfortunately these hopes did not materialize. Attainment of independence was beset with several problems that arose from partition, integration of Princely States, etc. The national leaders, therefore, felt that the accent should be on nation-building and that the explosive language issue with the triangular fight between English, Hindi and regional languages should better be kept in abeyance for some time. They also felt that quiet work within the education system for about 10-15 years would enable the country to solve the problems with greater ease. Accordingly, the Constitution allowed 15 years’ time for the development of Hindi and said that it would be the official language of the Union after 1965. During this period, it was hoped that the regional languages also would grow and come into their own.

The actual events of the period 1950-65, however, were exactly the opposite. On the one hand, the position of English became stronger. The antipathy toward English, to the extent it existed, disappeared with the attainment of independence. Its academic uses also began to be appreciated more fully. The elite group which sent their children to English-medium schools right from the start increased by leaps and bounds. In fact, the academic and social status of English and the popular love for it increased much faster after independence than during the British period, although the capacity to wield it was probably greater in the pre-independence period than it is at present. On the other hand, the position of Hindi was greatly weakened. The Hindi lobby thought that Hindi should get into the same privileged position as English and began to press for early adoption of Hindi in accordance with the Constitution. When it found that this objective was not being realized and that English was getting stronger, it created slogans of Angreji Hatao which boomeranged and made the position of Hindi in non-Hindi areas still weaker and that of English still stronger. The non-Hindi people claimed: (i) Hindi should not be imposed on any State; (ii) English and Hindi should continue as joint official languages of the Union for a long, long period*, (iii) While Hindi may some day become the sole official language of the Union, English will still have its own academic uses as India’s window on the

* This had to be conceded and provision was made by law for the continued use of English as the official language of the Union even after: 1965.
world and will always continue as an international link and as a supplementary national link as well; (iv) If non-Hindi people are required to study Hindi, the Hindi people should study an Indian language (other than Sanskrit) preferably from the South; (v) There is no essential link between the study of Hindi and patriotism nor can the role of English in promoting the national struggle for freedom be ignored; (vi) No special privileges should be available to those whose mother tongue is Hindi and those whose mother tongues are other regional languages should not be made second-class citizens; and (vii) Hindi cannot be the medium of instruction in the universities, except in the Hindi zone.

During this controversy over English and Hindi, no one had any time for the regional languages whose claims for development received little attention, if any.

Consequently, the problem of the medium of instruction at the university stage could not be solved at all. On the one hand, large numbers of students were entering the colleges and universities without an adequate knowledge of English and were unable to use it as a medium. This began to have an adverse effect on standards. Some of the universities began to take ad hoc steps to meet the situation (such as allowing students to answer their papers in the regional languages), broadly on the lines of what had been done earlier to change the medium of instruction at the secondary stage. But this was far too inadequate to meet the situation. The universities and teachers fought shy of the change and even the University Grants Commission was not able to provide adequate guidance. The academicians were divided into four groups: (1) those who wanted English to continue for ever; (2) those who wanted one medium of instruction in all universities in India and who desired English to continue until it is replaced by Hindi in all parts of the country; (3) those who wanted an immediate change-over to regional languages at any cost; and (4) those who wanted an orderly change-over to regional languages consistent with the maintenance and improvement of standards. While debates between these groups went on, no concrete plans of action emerged. A proposal to adopt the regional languages as media of instruction was made by the Universities Education Commission (1948-49) and the matter was also examined in detail by a Working Group of the University Grants Commission (1961). But no decisions were made and things were just allowed to drift. The whole problem had therefore boiled down to a stalemate when the Education Commission was appointed in 1964.

The Commission could not but take notice of the problem. After having examined it from all points of view in great depth, it made a major recommendation on the subject which is quoted below for convenience of reference:

(1) We are convinced of the advantages of education through the regional languages.
We regard the development of regional languages as vital to the general progress of the country, and as an important step towards the improvement of quality in education. To avoid any misunderstanding we would emphasize that this does not mean the shutting out of English, or other world languages. In fact we will profit from these languages all the more when our education becomes more effective and useful.

(2) In view of the importance of the problem, we suggest that the U.G.C. and the universities carefully work out a feasible programme suitable for each university or group of universities. The change-over should take place as early as possible, and, in any case, within about ten years, since the problem will only become more complex and difficult with the passage of time. A large programme of producing the needed literature in the Indian languages will have to be undertaken, and adequate arrangements will have to be made for the training and retaining of teachers.

(3) What is required is to formulate a clear policy, to express it in unambiguous terms, and to follow it up with firm, bold and imaginative action. We should avoid a policy of drift which will only be harmful. Nor should we get involved in the vicious circle of "no production because no demand" and "no demand because no production".

(4) We recognize that suitable safeguards would have to be devised, in the transitional stage, to prevent any lowering of standards during the process of change-over because of inadequate preparation. In fact, the desirability and success of the change should be judged in terms of the contribution it makes to raising the quality of education. But caution should not be equated with delay or procrastination. It is meaningful only if it is a part of a policy of determined, deliberate and vigorous action.

(5) There will, however, be one important exception to this general rule, namely, all-India institutions which admit, in considerable numbers, students from different parts of the country. These now use English as the medium of education, which should continue undisturbed for the time being. A change-over to Hindi may be considered in due course provided two conditions are fulfilled. The first is the effective development of Hindi as a medium of education at this level. This is a matter which can be left to the U.G.C. and the institutions concerned to decide. The second is the equally important political consideration that, in such a change-over, the chances of students from non-Hindi areas should not be adversely affected and that the proposal should have the support of the non-Hindi States. The latter principle has been already conceded by the Government of India even in the larger sphere of the use of Hindi in official communications between the States and the Centre.

(6) Simultaneously, it is necessary to make the regional languages the official languages of the regions concerned as early as possible so that higher services are
Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (I)

programme should be evolved for this change-over with the basic objective of improving standards in higher education. I share this view. The only “reversal of earlier policies” which I am trying to make – I have not been able to make it yet – is to introduce this element of planning and orderly progress in a movement that is proceeding in a desultory and chaotic fashion. If this is a “sin”, I plead guilty. But let it be clearly understood that this is a purely academic decision and is not influenced by any political considerations. I am happy that the Government of India also stands by it and is prepared to provide the necessary resources...

I would also like to invite your attention to two things in this context:

(1) The first is the need for speed. As the Education Commission has observed, “The problem will only become more complex and difficult with the passage of time”. Similarly, there is need to combine caution with vigorous action. Caution is obviously needed. But as the Education Commission has pointed out, “caution should not be equated with delay or procrastination. It is meaningful only if it is part of a policy of determined, deliberate and vigorous action.”

(2) The second is the need to strengthen, side by side with the adoption of regional languages as media, the study of English because it gives the student direct access to the growing knowledge of the world. Without this, higher education is a mere travesty of its name. It is only a close co-operation and collaboration between English and regional languages that can raise standards. This is, unfortunately, not always happening at present and the study of English is either being weakened or eliminated when the regional languages are adopted as media. This will put us back to the eighteenth century. The National Integration Council recommended: “The Council lays stress on the importance of teaching English as compulsory subject, whether in any transitional scheme of adoption of regional languages as media of instruction, or even after the replacement has been fully carried out at a future date. In the transitional stage, English will serve as the link among university men and between university and university in respect of exchange of professors or migration of students, whilst at all times, as a language of great international importance, English would furnish a link with the outside world, constitute an indispensable tool for further study and assist in the development of the regional languages. The Council hopes that while English would thus be an international link at all times, its place as an internal link will gradually be taken by Hindi as it develops. The Council, therefore, urges that, at the university stage, the students should be equipped with progressively better command of Hindi, in addition to a good working knowledge of English such as would enable them to follow lectures delivered in those languages.” This is the adopted policy of Government.

The Education Commission was not the first to make this recommendation. Even in the post-independence period, it has been made by the University Education Commission (1948-49), the National Integration Committee (1952) and Vice-Chancellors’ Conference (1962). Dr. K. L. Shrimlal, former Union Education Minister, had also announced in Parliament that this was the policy of Government. It had already been adopted by several universities. Why is it then that this recommendation of the Education Commission created such a terrific storm? The reasons were threefold:

* The full text of this address has been reproduced in Appendix IV.
1. The Education Commission had suggested a time-limit of about ten years. This had not been suggested before.

2. The academics were used to hearing speeches on the subject which were never followed by any action. But now they found the situation very different. The political parties showed such an enthusiasm for the recommendation that the academics were really afraid that something would happen.

3. The most decisive factor was the tremendous support given to the proposal by the Hindi lobby. At first, it was entirely opposed to the Report of the Commission on the ground that it had not accorded its due place to Hindi. But it soon had second thoughts. It argued that the best way to drive out English was to adopt the regional languages as media of instruction at the university stage; and once English was out, Hindi could easily come into its own prestigious position. It, therefore, decided to support wholeheartedly the entire Report of the Commission and this recommendation in particular.

The Committee of Members of Parliament where the Hindi lobby had a clear majority isolated this recommendation as the most important and reduced the time-span for implementation to five years. That changed the whole situation. A country which was getting ready to accept the recommendation of the Commission suddenly put its foot down; it agreed with the principle but would not accept any time-limit. The English lobby was already ranged against the recommendation. But its opposition now became stronger. Even the supporters of regional languages joined them as they were frightened by the onset of the Hindi lobby*. The war was therefore lost even before the battles began.

Eventually, the Cabinet approved a pale draft for inclusion in the National Policy on Education (1968) which said: “The energetic development of Indian languages and literature is a sine qua non for educational and cultural development. Unless this is done, the creative energies of the people will not be released, standards of education will not improve, knowledge will not spread to the people and the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses will remain, if not widen further. The regional languages are already in use as media of education at the primary and secondary stages. Urgent steps should now be taken to adopt them as media of education at the University stage.” Government also provided a sum of Rs.18 crore for the production of literature in the regional languages. If this was all the decision to be made, one wonders if all this “sound and fury” was needed at all. It is also a sober thought that even this tame decision was possible only because of the strong support of Shri Morarji Desai (who was then Finance Minister), Shri Y.B. Chavan (who was then Home Minister) and Professor D.R. Gadgil (who was then Deputy-Chairman of the Planning Commission).

Thus did this great battle come to an end and it will ever remain as one of the great events in our educational history and as a pyrrhic victory for the national system of education. As pointed out earlier, it sacrificed Mr. M.C. Chagla, Dr. Triguna Sen, the Education Commission itself and even the national system of education. But for the intervention and support of the Hindi lobby, a much better decision would have been possible at much less cost.

What have been the developments since and how has this recommendation been implemented over the past ten years? There have been both gains and losses; the latter probably outweigh the former.

1. The scheme for promoting literature in Indian languages has made differential progress in the different languages. It is necessary to evaluate the progress made so far; and there is a fear that it may not present an all too bright a picture.

2. A general tightening of the belt is also called for because the pace of the reform seems to have slackened. This gives one the feeling that we are back in square one and what the Education Commission wanted to avoid is happening again, viz. a mindless drift rather than the implementation of a carefully planned reform for improving standards.

3. The academic community has, by and large, not risen to the occasion. Ways and means of enlisting it have to be found.

4. The students’ knowledge of English has been weakened to a point of disaster, especially in some areas. Urgent steps to remedy this situation are needed. Moreover, special remedial teaching of English has to be begun in a big way in the colleges and universities.

5. The worst aspect is probably the fact that the teacher’s knowledge of English has deteriorated. Ph.D.s and M.A.s who know little or no English have now begun to produce Ph.D.s and M.A.s who know even less of English and their own subject. A special

* The supporters of the regional languages wanted the use of English as a medium to go, but desired to strengthen the study of English as a subject. The Hindi lobby supported the use of regional languages as media of instruction but was not prepared to support a compulsory study of English as a subject.
programme meant for the improvement of teachers has to be initiated and sustained on a continuing basis.

Perhaps, the U.G.C. would do well to set up a high-level committee to go comprehensively into the problem to assess the progress made so far in all the different regional languages and to suggest guidelines for further action over the next ten years or so.

Before leaving the subject, reference needs be made to two specific developments:

(1) As the Commission pointed out, this reform will succeed if access to good employment becomes increasingly available to those who have been educated through the regional languages. From this point of view, the situation has somewhat improved. The State Governments are increasingly adopting regional languages in administration. The Government of India has recently decided to hold the examinations for recruitment to Central services in all the Indian languages. But very little progress has been made in law courts and in national trade and commerce.

(2) While we are removing English as medium of instruction even from the university stage in the general education system meant for the common people, the rich and the well-to-do are increasingly sending their children to pre-primary schools teaching through the medium of English and are educating them throughout the school and college stages through the English medium. In other words, while English as a medium of instruction is being pushed up and out of the general system of education, it is percolating down to lower and lower levels in educational institutions meant for the rich and well-to-do and has consolidated its position from the pre-primary school to the university. The number of such institutions is also rising very fast. These "double standards" destroy the moral basis of the entire reform. In the philosophy of our elite, basic education got defined as "the best education for other people's children". They have now gone a step further and assert: "Education through the mother tongue or regional language is the best education for other people's children."

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In the opinion of the Education Commission, a national system of education should provide adequate opportunities for life-long learning to every individual. This is of course not possible within the existing system which insists on full-time attendance on the part of the students. The Commission therefore felt that while this full-time channel of study should continue, steps should be taken to develop alternative channels of part-time education and self-study and that they should be given an equal status with the full-time channel. Its words on this subject can be quoted with advantage:

2.53 Three Channels of Education. One of the major weaknesses of the existing educational system is that it places an almost exclusive reliance on full-time instruction and does not develop adequately the two alternative channels of part-time education and private study or own-time education. It has to be remembered that reliance on full-time education as the sole channel of instruction often divides the life of an individual into three watertight and sharply divided stages: a pre-school stage of non-formal education or work, a school stage of full-time education and no work, and a post-school stage of full-time work and no education. In a modernizing and rapidly changing society, education should be regarded, not as a terminal but as a life-long process. It should begin informally in the home itself; and thereafter, it should be the ultimate objective of national policy to strive to bring every individual under the influence of the formal system of education as early as possible, and to keep him under it, directly or indirectly, throughout his life. Similarly, there should be no watertight separation between work and education at any stage of a man's life, but only a relative shift of emphasis. An individual under full-time education should have some work-experience as an integral part of his education itself; and every full-time worker should have the inclination, leisure and means of continuing his education still further. In the same way, the transition from one stage to another should not be abrupt. For example, the transfer of an individual from the infant's play-dominated world to formal school should include a transitional phase of gentle preparation and orientation to schooling. A young person should not be compelled to pass abruptly from a stage of full-time education to another of full-time work. It would be desirable to interpose a period of part-time education and part-time work between the two.

2.54 If these objectives are to be attained, it is necessary to abandon the present policy of placing an almost exclusive reliance on full-time education, and the two alternative channels of part-time and own-time education should be developed on a large scale at every stage and in every sector of education and should be given the same status as full-time education. Secondly, adult and continuing education, which is almost totally neglected at present, should be emphasized to a very great extent. Taken together, these two reforms would

- enable those who have not completed a stage of education to complete it and, if they wish, to proceed to the next;
- help every educated person to have further education with or without formally enrolling himself in an educational institution;
- enable a worker to acquire knowledge, ability and vocational skill in order to be a better worker and to improve his chances of earning more; and
- help to refresh the knowledge of the educated person and enable him to keep pace with the new knowledge in the field of his interest.

The significance of these proposals is obvious. These were welcomed by the Committee of Members of Parliament (para 32)
which also included them within the programme of immediate action (sub-para (10) of para 95). They also found a place (sub-para (13) of para 4) in the National Policy on Education (1968). As stated earlier, they have been popularized through the special efforts made by Professor S. Nurul Hasan. Their potential for helping us to create a learning society is immense and the programmes of universal elementary education or adult education, which have now been taken up in a big way, cannot be implemented without large-scale use of non-formal channels. This undoubtedly has been one of the distinctive and outstanding contributions of the Education Commission (1964-66).

UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The proposals of the Education Commission on universal elementary education and adult education evoked considerable interest. They were also warmly welcomed and supported. If anything, the criticism was that they were not radical enough; the time-span for reaching the goal, it was said, could have been shorter; and there should have been a greater stress on pursuing the two programmes side by side.

In areas like this where there is a general support to the recommendations of the Commission, what are really the issues that one should discuss? It is our general experience that, even in such non-controversial areas where we are agreed on what is to be done but do not quite know how to do it, most of the time available is spent in talking of the desirability of the programme, the significance of Article 45, the lack of political will to implement the programme, etc. While all such homilies on the subject are welcome, they do not help in solving the problem. That is why, as shown earlier, the Statement on the National Policy on Education (1968) on this subject is the same as Article 45 of the Constitution (1950). What is needed, therefore, is a concentration of attention on three aspects: (i) a detailed discussion of the major issues involved; (ii) an analysis of the causes why the programme does not spread among the people; and (iii) development of suitable techniques to overcome difficulties and ensure success within a comparatively short time-span. Some ideas that have a significance in this context have been briefly stated below:

(1) There is an urgent need to implement the programme within a short time-span. The longer the time-span, the more difficult will be the solution because of increases in costs and population.

(2) There must be a time-limit for the programme. This is the one

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teaching methods and evaluation techniques, materials to be used, preparation of teachers, etc. The challenge becomes all the greater because we will have to run formal and non-formal streams simultaneously with an equivalence between them.

(8) The problem has immense administrative implications. It cannot be administered satisfactorily unless it is highly decentralized right up to the local community level where considerable powers will have to be delegated so that the "school and the community come closer together in a programme of mutual service and support. Adequate financial resources will have to be made available at each level where administrative responsibilities are delegated.

(9) On the basis of the models we have adopted, it is not possible at all to find the resources needed for the programme. Ways and means of reducing unit costs will have to be discovered so that the target becomes feasible.

(10) It will not be possible to implement the programme at all unless some dent is simultaneously made on the extreme poverty and destitution, especially among the lowest 10 to 20 per cent of the population.

Efforts to introduce universal elementary education for children in the age-group 6-14 are being made since 1947. They have been continued in the Fourth and the Fifth Plans after the Report of the Commission became available. An intensive further effort is being mounted in the Sixth Plan. It appears, however, that the problem is not likely to be solved by 1982-83, and not even by 1985-86, the target date suggested by the Commission. We have not yet fixed any time-limit for this programme. But a UNESCO estimate is that we may not be able to reach the goal even by A.D. 2000. It would, therefore, be desirable, on the basis of the ten principles stated above, to prepare a revised programme of fulfilling the directive of Article 45 of the Constitution as soon as possible and preferably by 1985-86. It is also necessary to try out well-planned action-research projects in a big way in every State; each State having at least one such project and the bigger States, more. This is certainly a feasible programme if we can only rise to meet the social, administrative, financial and academic challenges involved. In view of the significance of the problem, we propose to discuss the issue in detail in a special volume in this series.

ADULT EDUCATION

Programmes of liquidating mass illiteracy through direct action and of continuing further education for the non-literate adults did not receive any attention worth the name till 1937. The Congress governments that then came to power in British Indian Provinces were the first to launch adult education campaigns on a fairly large scale. These had, on the whole, an indifferent success, especially because the Congress governments resigned in 1939. But the movement was not allowed to die; and work on a small scale was kept going, in most areas, by the care-taker governments that followed. It was hoped that these mass campaigns would be revived by the national governments that came to power in 1947. But this hope did not materialize. The general view then taken was that the country should concentrate on universalization of elementary education by 1960 as a more effective instrument of making the country literate. All the same, a small-scale programme of adult education (including literacy) was kept going under the title of social education under the Community Development Scheme. Taken all in all, it was a time for small-scale action. The number of adults made literate every year was about 500,000 and the total expenditure on the programme was less than one per cent of the total educational expenditure.

It was against this background that the Education Commission recommended that a very high priority should be given to the programme, that illiteracy should be liquidated by 1985-86, and that a regular and large-scale programme of continuing adult education should be developed. These recommendations were received with considerable enthusiasm by the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education which said:

33. The liquidation of mass illiteracy is essential, not only for accelerating programmes of production, especially in agriculture, but for quickening the tempo of national development in general. Plans to accelerate the spread of literacy should therefore be prepared and intensively implemented on several fronts. With a view to reducing new additions to the ranks of adult illiterates, part-time literacy classes should be organized for grown-up children (age-group 11-17) who did not attend school or have lapsed into illiteracy. All employees in large commercial, industrial and other concerns should be made functionally literate within a prescribed period of their employment and a lead in this direction should be given by the industrial plants in public sector. Similarly, teachers, students and educational institutions should be actively involved in literacy campaigns, especially as a part of the social or national service programmes. The achievement of literacy should be sustained by the provision of attractive reading materials and library services to the new literates.

34. Adult or continuing education should be developed through facilities for part-time or own-time education and through the expansion and improvement of library services, educational broadcasting and television. The development of extension ser-
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services in universities is of great significance in this context. In particular, the universities should organize special extension programmes to train rural leadership.

The Committee also recommended that, as a part of the programme for immediate action “intensive efforts should be made to spread literacy, particularly in the age-group 15-25” (sub-para (12) of para 95).

With the refusal to accept the goal of liquidating illiteracy and to suggest a target date for it, the recommendations of the Commission were already watered down to a great extent. The National Policy of Education (1968) diluted them still further and said: “The liquidation of mass illiteracy is necessary. . . . A lead in this direction should come from the undertakings in the public sector. Teachers and students should be actively involved in organizing literacy campaigns, especially as part of the social and national service programme.” Obviously the two concrete programmes suggested in the policy statement are not likely to make any material dent on the problem; and hardly any action was taken to implement even these. Both the Fourth and Fifth Plans did little for this programme and even the Herculean efforts of Prof. V.K.R. Rao could get no response. For all practical purposes, therefore, these recommendations of the Commission were almost a dead letter till 1978.

Dr. P.C. Chunder has now launched a major programme of adult education which includes a proposal to make 100 million adults (in the age-group 15-35) literate in a period of five years. The inspiration for this programme, the first of its type in our educational history, is entirely personal to him (and to Shri Morarji Desai who has lent it his full support). The recommendations of the Commission on adult literacy campaigns are more or less on traditional lines and they may not prove to be of much practical use in the present campaign. Their main lacuna is that they do not explain how millions of adults can be motivated to learn in our socio-economic conditions. From this point of view, the policy of Government to link the programme with the creation of awareness among the poor, to some improvement in their life or to the solution of their day-to-day problems is very welcome. A good deal of experimentation and a flexible approach is obviously called for; and in spite of all the difficulties involved, one wishes success to this vital pioneering effort.

CHAPTER VI

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (II)

In this continuing chapter, we shall discuss the three remaining recommendations of the Education Commission that attracted wide attention, viz. (1) the Common School System; (2) the Pattern (10+2+3) of the School and College Classes; and (3) Teachers’ Salaries.

COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

The recommendation of the Commission regarding the Common School System is an integral part of the programme to promote the education of the poor, reduce its dual character in which the haves receive one type of education and the have-nots another, and to create a socially cohesive and egalitarian society. In this context it may be pointed out that the Commission used two expressions, the common school system of public education and the neighbourhood school which was an integral part of the former. These concepts have been fully explained in paras 1.38 and 10.19 of its Report and may be summarized here for convenience of reference.

The Commission said that we should move towards the goal of a common school system of public education

- which will be open to all children, irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic conditions or social status;
- where access to good education will depend, not on wealth or class, but on talent;
- which will maintain adequate standards in all schools and provide at least a reasonable proportion of quality institutions;
- in which no fees will be charged;
- where no discrimination will be made between teachers working under different managements;
- where the role of different managements (e.g., government, local bodies and voluntary organizations) will be properly integrated;
- where the neighbourhood school plan would be adopted at the elementary stage as a step towards eliminating the undesirable
segregation that now takes place between the schools for the poor and underprivileged classes and those for the rich and the privileged ones.

It will thus be clear that the common school system visualized by the Commission necessarily included the concept of the neighbourhood school which implies that each elementary school should be attended by all the children in its neighbourhood irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status, so that there would be no segregation in schools. Apart from social and national integration, two other important arguments can be advanced in support of the proposal. In the first place, a neighbourhood school will provide “good” education to children because sharing life with the common people is an essential ingredient of good education. Secondly, the establishment of such schools will compel the rich, privileged and powerful classes to take an interest in the system of public education and thereby bring about its early improvement (para 10.19). It is also evident that while other aspects of the common school system of public education are undoubtedly important, its essence lies in the neighbourhood school concept.

What is the implication of these concepts for the model of public schools which we borrowed from the traditional English system which allowed good education, under private management, to be largely reserved for those who have the capacity to pay the necessary high fees? The Commission’s view was categorical. It said: “Whatever its part in history may be, the Public Schools have no valid place in the new democratic and socialist society we desire to create.” (para 1.38).

It would not be out of place to mention here that this was the one group of recommendations on which there was a sharp division of opinion within the Commission itself. A minority of members was strongly in favour of the reform and were of the view that the neighbourhood school concept should be adopted immediately all over the country as the first major step to create the common school system of public education over time. On the other hand, the majority of the view that the neighbourhood school plan can only be adopted as a pilot experiment in those areas where public opinion was in its favour, that the extension of this programme to other areas would depend on the improvement of standards in the general schools for which intensive efforts should be made, and that the creation of the common school system of public education should be phased over a period of about 20 years. Ultimately it was the latter view that prevailed and has been embodied in para 10.19 of the Report.

Of all the recommendations of the Commission, the Committee of Members of Parliament was most attracted by the neighbourhood school concept. It included a special paragraph on it in its Report (para 8) and also recommended that this proposal should be immediately implemented (sub-para (2) of para 95). Of course, its Report was far from unanimous and as many as seven members wrote minutes of dissent.

As might be seen, the minority view in the Commission became the majority view in the Committee and vice versa. The arguments advanced on both sides were also substantially the same. Of course the Committee made no special recommendation on the public schools. But the obvious implication of the above recommendations is that it agreed with the Commission on the subject.

This issue created the most fierce controversy when the National Policy on Education was being drafted. As stated earlier, the unfortunate general policy adopted in the drafting was, not to clinch issues, but to avoid controversies and to sum up the debate in as innocuous words as possible. It was, therefore, decided that we should not side either with the majority or the minority view in the Committee, that there need be no reference at all to the controversial concept of the neighbourhood school and that even the time-limit of 20 years mentioned by the Commission for realizing the goal of the Common School System (para 10.19) should not be mentioned. Consequently, we had a non-controversial but ineffective and colourless statement which said: “to promote social cohesion and national integration, the common school concept as recommended by the Education Commission should be adopted” and that “efforts should be made to improve the standard of education in general schools” (sub-para (4) (b) of para 4 of the National Policy on Education). As an immediate action programme, it was also decided that the public schools and other special schools were required to reserve a percentage of their available seats to talented but economically handicapped children and provide them with adequate scholarships. To make the decision more palatable, no specific minimum percentage was laid down; and in keeping with the policy to avoid controversial issues, nothing has been done to implement this decision which is of real significance. For all practical purposes, therefore, this proposal has remained a dead letter for the last 12 years.
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adopted this model from U.K. in the nineteenth century with one difference: while the public schools in U.K. are necessarily private, in India, public schools were also established by the State (e.g., for army personnel). We have, therefore, a tradition of public schools some of which are in the private sector and others in the public sector. In addition to these, we have a large number of “special” schools which use English as the medium of instruction and are maintained largely by the missions. But now Indian private enterprise has entered this field in a fairly big way and may soon come to occupy a dominant position. It was felt that after independence the public and special schools would be liquidated. The experience is to the contrary; they have increased in number, both in the public and the private sectors. Our ideas of reform of the public schools are also borrowed from U.K., i.e., we should not abolish them but provide scholarships to the talented but economically handicapped children to attend these. Of course, we actually do very little in this regard as compared to U.K. The Labour Party in U.K. is also committed to abolish public schools but finds itself helpless to act. The “socialism” in us makes us talk a lot about abolishing public schools and then send our children these! The debate on the subject is a hardy annual in Parliament and often appears on several other platforms as well. The views on this problem seem to be crystallizing round the following three policies:

(1) The public schools should be abolished forthwith. At any rate, no public school should be allowed to function at the elementary stage or for children in the age-group 6-14.

(2) The public schools need not be abolished. In fact, they should become a part of the National System of Education as pace-setting and good quality institutions. However, on grounds of equity, talented children coming from the poorer social groups should have adequate access to them. From this point of view, a major reform to be implemented is to require the public schools to institute fellowships, from their own resources, to about 25-50 per cent of their students.

(3) The public schools are good institutions and deserve to be encouraged. The State Governments should establish public schools, select students for them on merits and give them adequate scholarships. In the non-government public schools, fellowships to cover the entire cost should be provided by the state to 50 per cent of the students who should be selected on merits.

As in the case of the Common School System, it has not yet been
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It is possible to arrive at a consensus on the issue of public schools also. But it is worthwhile to keep the debate going.

PATTERN OF SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CLASSES (10+2+3)

Structural changes in education are very difficult and costly to bring about. They have to be planned very carefully in advance and must be implemented firmly over a fairly long period to achieve the desired results. When the proposals involve a lengthening of the total duration of the course, the costs are high and there is a great resistance from parents and students. Even when there is no increase in total duration, but only a transfer of some classes from one stage to another, there are immense disturbances: teachers become surplus and facilities remain unutilized at the stage from which classes are removed while there are several problems of shortages in the stage where the classes are added. The financial resources of each stage affected are also thrown completely out of gear. Moreover, the entire programme creates an atmosphere of destabilization for everyone concerned—managements, teachers, students, parents, and administrators—which, far from being a happy situation, is unhelpful, if not actually antagonistic to development. The returns for all the trouble are unfortunately rather meagre. As the Commission pointed out, standards in education depend on four elements: (1) structure or division of the educational pyramid into different stages; (2) total duration; (3) extent and quality of essential inputs such as teachers, curricula, methods of teaching and evaluation, buildings and equipment; and (4) utilization of available facilities. Of these four elements, the contribution of (3) and (4) is the most significant. The contribution of (2) is minor and relevant only after we have made the fullest use of the existing duration; and the contribution of (1), i.e., structure, is the least (para 2.02). Under these circumstances, no educational planner ever undertakes a structural reform unless a very clear case for it is established.

In the ordinary course, the Education Commission may not even have made a recommendation regarding the structure. But it had to give its thought to the problem for some compelling reasons: (1) this was the one issue on which it received the largest volume of evidence and suggestions; (2) earlier commissions and committees had dealt with this problem in detail; (3) there was a very strong demand that the existing variety of patterns in the country should be ended and a uniform pattern designed for the country as a whole (this was the biggest demand of the mobile or transferable population); and (4) there was an equally widespread belief that a national pattern of school and college classes was an essential and important aspect of the National System of Education. The Commission, therefore, decided to include a study of the problem within its scope and to make suitable recommendations.

It would not be out of order to deal briefly with the previous history of the proposal.

(1) The universities were established in India in 1857; and by 1917, a uniform pattern of higher education had developed in the country, viz. an intermediate course of two years followed by another two years’ course for the first degree. But the duration of the school course leading to the matriculation was not uniform—it varied from 10 years in some areas to 12 years in others. But this did not matter. What was significant is that there were three main external examinations in the educational system—matriculation, intermediate, and graduation—which were broadly comparable and equivalent in the country as a whole. This pattern may be described as (10, 11, or 12) + 2 + 2.

(2) The Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) examined this issue. It held the view that the intermediate classes were really school education and could be regarded as higher education only by courtesy. It therefore suggested that these classes should be taken out of the university system and that the duration of the undergraduate course should be increased to three years. As the duration of the school stage leading to the matriculation in Bengal was ten years, this meant a pattern of 10 + 2 + 3. Unfortunately, the Government of Bengal never implemented this recommendation. But a partial implementation was done by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. It refused to increase the duration of the undergraduate course to three years (which was the tough part of the programme). But it did decide to take the intermediate course out of the university system (which was a much simpler operation). It created a separate Board of Intermediate Examination which held the examination and gave affiliation to “intermediate” colleges which taught the course. To avoid administrative and financial problems, it allowed the intermediate colleges to function where they were, viz. if they were part of a degree college, they were allowed to remain on the premises of the degree college, use its facilities, etc. and were also given a long
time to separate themselves for the degree colleges. The use of the phrase "intermediate college" did not create any distinction of status and at that time there were no serious differences between the salaries of teachers in intermediate and degree colleges. All in all, the programme taken up for implementation was fairly simple and it was carried out in a planned and smooth manner under very favourable circumstances. In 1947, therefore, the all-India situation was as follows:

- the matriculation examination was held at the end of a school course of 10 to 12 years;
- then followed a two-year intermediate course. In some areas like U.P., it was not a part of the university system; it was taught in separate institutions called intermediate colleges and the examination at its end was held by a Board. In other areas, it was a part of the degree course and the examination at the end of it was held by the universities; and
- last came an undergraduate course of two years for the first degree.

(3) The Post-War Plan of Educational Development in India (1944) proposed the higher secondary pattern of \((5+3) + 3 + 3\), i.e., an elementary education of eight years, a higher secondary course of three years and a degree course of three years. This was implemented only in Delhi Union Territory (1945-47) where the earlier pattern was that of Punjab \(10 + 2 + 2\). As the total duration was the same, the problem was a little easier, but as some restructuring was involved, there was considerable protest. However, the overall size of the problem was small, and with all the resources of the Central Government to back it, the implementation was an easy job.

(4) The issue was raised again after the Reports of the University Education Commission (1948-49) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952) were received. The University Education Commission was categorical in its view and recommended the \(10 + 2 + 3\) pattern. The Secondary Education Commission was in favour of the higher secondary pattern of Delhi but was not quite sure whether the duration of the school course should be twelve or eleven years. This complicated a problem which was already very complex and difficult because three things had to be done at once, viz. (1) the duration of the degree course had to be raised to three years, (2) the total duration of school and college classes had to be raised to 15 years in all the fourteen-year States by adding one year, and (3) the

intermediate stage of two years was to be taken out of the university and made a part of the school stage. Controversies were, therefore, inevitable, and in the debate that followed the following groups emerged:

(a) Uttar Pradesh refused to break the intermediate course. It had \(10 + 2 + 2\) pattern. It said that the simplest reform would be to raise the degree course to three years. It was prepared to make the change if the needed funds were given as a grant-in-aid (the cost was then estimated at Rs.40 millions).

(b) The States where the duration of courses leading to the first degree was already 15 years (all the southern States, Bombay, Bihar, Orissa, Assam) were prepared to adopt the pattern of \(10 + 2 + 3\). But they were not willing to reduce the duration to 14 years or to adopt the higher secondary pattern of Delhi.

(c) The remaining areas where the duration of the courses leading to the first degree was only 14 years, refused to add one year. They were willing to adopt the Delhi pattern under a phased programme, i.e., they will have high school teaching a ten-year course, a pre-university course of one year and a degree course of three years; and they would gradually convert high schools of ten years into higher secondary schools of 11 years.

There were protracted discussions and unending debates. Even the decisions made by different bodies were not uniform, and these also changed from meeting to meeting. Ultimately, the decisions made were based on considerations of expediency and economy rather than of a sound educational policy.

(a) It was decided to give priority to the concept of a three-year degree course on which all were agreed.

(b) It was decided to adopt the higher secondary pattern but not to insist on the fourteen-year States to add one year or fifteen-year States to reduce one year.

(c) It, therefore, followed that there would be no uniformity in the duration of school education. There was also no attempt to locate the higher secondary stage (of one or two years duration) exclusively in schools. This position was accepted squarely, and each State was left free to devise to arrange school education just as it liked so long as it fell in line with the policy of creating a three-year degree course.

These decisions were also implemented between 1954 and 1964. The three-year degree course, therefore, became a fait accompli (except in U.P. and the city of Bombay) especially as the U.G.C. gave grants
for the purpose. But in so far as the education below the first degree is concerned, almost chaotic conditions emerged. The sixteen-year States generally followed the pattern of 12 + 1 + 3; the fifteen-year States generally adopted the pattern of 11 + 1 + 3, the fourteen-year States adopted the patterns of 10 + 1 + 3 or 11 + 3; and Kerala was the only State which had a pattern of 10 + 2 + 3. The plus two stage being located in colleges. These were very unfortunate decisions; and one cannot help feeling that even if no decisions had been taken, the problem would have admitted of an easier solution at a later date.

(5) When the Education Commission came on the scene, it had to take note of the widely prevailing dissatisfaction at the large variety of patterns that were simultaneously in operation and the almost universal demand for the adoption of a common pattern of school and college classes. The main issue to be decided was whether this demand for a uniformity of pattern should or should not be supported. There was a sharp division in the Commission itself and the issue had to be decided by votes. In accordance with the vote of the majority of members, it was decided to make a recommendation for a uniform pattern; but it was also decided that the minority view that a uniformity of pattern is not an essential feature of the National System of Education nor necessary for improvement of standards should also be included in the final Report (paras 2.10 and 2.11).

(6) The question then arose: which pattern should the Commission recommend—the higher secondary pattern of 11 + 3 or the pattern of 10 + 2 + 3? Here the views were clear: the Commission was unanimous in the view that the higher secondary pattern was wrong on account of the reasons given in para 2.09 of the Report. Consequently, the Commission decided to recommend the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, with considerable flexibility to be permitted within the ten-year school. The rest was merely a question of working out the details.

(7) The Commission emphasized the difficulties involved in changing the pattern and advised detailed planning, careful preparation and adequate provision of funds.

When these recommendations came before the public, the controversy of the earlier years, 1952-54 (when the higher secondary pattern of 11 + 3 was adopted), was raised again in spite of the fact that the Committee of Members of Parliament supported it and considered it as the third important recommendation of the Commission. There were three main issues on which battles royal continued to be fought:

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (14)

1. The fourteen-year States were not willing to add one year;
2. Some wanted the plus two in colleges while others wanted it in the schools as recommended by the Commission;
3. Who should bear the cost of the programme, the Centre or the States?

On the first of these issues, the Central Advisory Board of Education evolved a solution, viz., there should be a pass course of two years and an honours course of three years. Every student in the fourteen-year States would get a degree, as in the past, at the end of 14 years. But he will have to spend one year extra and get an honours degree if he desired to join the Master's degree courses. This arrangement, the Board felt, would reduce opposition and costs. The Board was of the view that such a change should be made by the fifteen-year States also so that a national uniformity is maintained. On the second issue, the Central Advisory Board of Education had no objection to calling classes XI-XII as "intermediate classes" or "higher secondary schools" and attaching them to schools or colleges, on the clear understanding that they were outside the university. On the third issue, the fourteen-year States argued that, as this move to change the pattern had come from the Centre, there should be a special Central grant to meet the costs involved in the adoption of the new pattern. As in the past, this demand was led by U.P. This was of course turned down.

Finally, long debates were held on the issue whether a uniform pattern is necessary at all and whether the addition of one year will improve standards and bring in returns proportional to the cost. Parases 2.10 and 2.11 of the Report were quoted again and again in this context. But finally the opinion veered round to the view that a uniform pattern is desirable and that we should move gradually in the direction of adopting it.

The stage was thus set for drafting a paragraph on the subject for inclusion in the National Policy on Education. Here the first decision was that the proposal should be given a low priority by including it as the very last item and it was therefore put as item 17 in para 4 of the Resolution. Secondly, the consensus reached was expressed as follows: "It will be advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective should be to adopt the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, the higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions." The rider regarding pass and honours course suggested by the Central Advisory Board of Education was not
incorporated in this draft, because there were serious doubts whether a
detail such as pass and honours courses for the first degree should be
mentioned at all. Nor does the draft make any reference to the
flexibility that has always been permitted regarding the different ways
in which the first ten years may be divided between the elementary
and secondary stages.

Because of public demand, the implementation of this recom-
mandation started very soon in spite of the fact that the Centre had
refused to provide any special assistance for the purpose. As it is easy
to imagine, the first moves were made by the fifteen-year States who
did not have to increase the total duration. Andhra Pradesh was the
first State to come forward for implementation because it had two dif-
terent patterns inherited as a result of re-organization of States (one
from the old Andhra State and the other from the old Hyderabad
State). The same reason led to initiatives to be taken in Karnataka and
Maharashtra. Of course, personal factors such as interest shown by
individual education ministers were also responsible. By 1972, the
reform was definitely under way in the fifteen-year States, although its
pace was rather slow. The fourteen-year States however remained in-
different, if not hostile, and took no initiatives.

It was at this stage that Professor S. Nurul Hasan decided that
some positive action by the Centre was called for.* He wanted to
press the programme on three main grounds; it would reduce the ex-
ansion of higher education, help in improving its standards, and
would also reduce the overall recurring costs of education in the long
run (i.e., the plus two as part of school would always cost less than as
a part of university education). The strategy he adopted was threefold:
(1) to implement the reform in Delhi and all other Union Territories
and also in organizations like the Central Schools so that the
bonafides of the Central Government are established; (2) to pursue the
matter vigorously with the fifteen-year States where the problem was
comparatively easy; and (3) to press the fourteen-year States into
some action. He succeeded in the first two of his objectives and
brought the programme almost to a point of no return. But he could
not do anything about the third objective and by and large fourteen-
year States could not decide to launch the programme. But Prof.
S. Nurul Hasan's idea was that if a lead is given by the Delhi Union Ter-
ritory, the fourteen-year States would follow suit more readily.

* Prof. S. Nurul Hasaq's assessment of the whole problem, given in his Address to a
seminar, has been included in Appendix V.

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (II)

The coming in of the Janata Government with its strong base in the
States where the total duration is 14 years (U.P., Haryana, Punjab,
Himachal Pradesh, M.P. and Rajasthan), the debate over this issue
was raised again. These States, as pointed out earlier, had won in the
1954 decision on the higher secondary pattern. They lost in the 1968
decision on the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern but had not reconciled themselves
to the situation. Not one of them had taken any concrete steps to
implement the new pattern. With all the political levers of power in
their favour, they now felt that they could have the decision reversed
or at least stall its further implementation. Dr. P.C. Chunder himself
had reservations about adding one year to the undergraduate course
for all students and even about the need for an absolute uniformity in
this matter. The Prime Minister made no secret of his hostility to
some aspects of the new pattern adopted as a result of the Commiss-
ion's Report. The entire issue therefore was thrown in the melting
pot. It speaks volumes for the work done by Dr. P.C. Chunder that
the whole situation has, at last, been saved. His new Statement on
Educational Policy shows that he has brought the country round to
the view that it is desirable to have a broadly uniform pattern, that it
would be a folly to undo all the good work done in the past, that school
education should be of twelve years followed by a two-year pass or
three-year honours course. By bringing the Central Advisory Board of
Education compromise specifically into the Statement on the National
Policy on Education, Dr. P.C. Chunder obviously proposes to meet
the fourteen-year States half-way and to persuade them to act. One
wishes him good luck.*

So far we have discussed mainly the structural arithmetic of the
problem, whether $11 + 3$ or $10 + 2 + 3$, because unfortunately, it is
this arithmetic alone that has obsessed the public mind; and we have
also given too large a space for this discussion because, equally unfor-
unately, the public has been confusing mere educational structure
with the whole of National System of Education, and the entire Report
of the Commission with this one recommendation. But now that the
dust created by the controversies has settled and the problem seems to
have been finally sorted out, it is necessary to take a wider view and
decide upon the action to be taken over the next few years. In this con-
text, the following major issues need to be highlighted.

(1) The first obvious thing is to see that the new pattern is adopted

* Dr. P.C. Chunder's assessment of the problem, embodied in his Convocation
Address at the Nagpur University, has been given in Appendix VI.
by all States and Union Territories in the country before a prescribed
date, i.e., the target date of 1985-86 suggested by the Commission or
any other agreed date. In so far as fifteen-year States are concerned,
most of them have already adopted the pattern. Some of them could
have planted better. But, anyhow, they have gone ahead and done
the thing and any problems that remain will get sorted out in due
course. The matter therefore has to be pursued with those few States which
have not yet made definite decisions. This will not be much of a
problem, but the real difficulty is with the fourteen-year States. In
1971-72 when the Calcutta University Commission made the recom-
menation, the fourteen-year pattern prevailed in areas which are now
the States of West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh,
Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
Even after sixty years, none of these States have shown their readiness
to add one year and to adopt the pattern, except possibly Jammu and
Kashmir, Tripura, and West Bengal. This shows how tough the
problem is. The C.A.A.E. compromise of a two-year pass course may
or may not cut much ice. More capon will not do. and giving these
States any special grants would be discriminatory and would be
resented by the fourteen-year States. The Central Government has
a trump card: it may refuse to recognize the fourteen-year degree
on a par with the fifteen-year degree for purposes of recruitment under
the Government of India. One should be prepared to use this authority
if necessary.

(2) It is essential to stabilize the pattern, partly because the people
are wary of frequent changes, and partly because such structural
changes are difficult to implement, costly and disturbing. The State
Governments should be requested to adopt the new pattern but then to
make no further changes therein. At any rate, frequent shuffling of
the pattern should be stopped. Some have even suggested a
parliamentary legislation for the purpose.

(3) It is necessary to educate the public properly on this issue. The
people must be categorically told that the pattern or structure is
merely the skeleton of the national system of education and that it
should not be equated with the national system of education as a
whole. They should also be clearly told that the structure should not
be over-emphasized because it has the least effect on standards.

(4) Having adopted the new pattern uniformly throughout the
country, we should now concentrate over the next 20 years on two
main programmes for improving standards. The first of these is to
raise the quality or inputs into the structure. These include, as stated
carrier, better teachers, better curricula, better educational materials,
better methods of teaching and evaluation, better student services,
closer community contacts, better supervision, and better buildings
and equipment. The second is to ensure that the existing facilities are
utilized to the utmost through proper planning and the creation of a
climate of dedicated hard work. At present, the quality of our inputs is
very unsatisfactory in the vast bulk of our institutions, and the low
intensity with which we use the existing facilities is disgraceful and
almost criminal in a poor and developing country. This merely
highlights the point that the adoption of the pattern is not the last but
only the first step in a programme of creating a national system of
education and improving standards and that an immense task awaits
all of us in the field during the next twenty years or so.

TEACHERS' SALARIES

The Commission was of the view that the quality, competence and
character of teachers is the most important factor that influences the
quality of education and its contribution to development. It also
placed a great responsibility on teachers as important change agents
for creating the national system of education. Consequently, its
proposals regarding teachers are extremely important and they
remain worthy of attention. Here we shall deal only with the
proposals dealing with the remuneration of teachers.

Under the British rule, the teachers never had a square deal. Institutions
directly conducted by Government were very few; and the
remuneration of teachers in them (along with benefits like pension)
was probably the lowest as compared with other categories of teachers.
But it was still low (and often very low) in comparison with that of
other government employees. The bulk of teachers were employees of
local bodies (where the remuneration was lower than in government
institutions) and in private institutions (where, barring a few
exceptions such as public or special schools, or some excellent private
institutions of high prestige or quality, the remuneration was the lowest,
there were no pensionary benefits, and there was not even an adequate
security of tenure). Improvement of the remuneration and service
conditions of teachers was therefore a major programme undertaken by
the Central Government since 1947 and it was a regular plan scheme
in the first three Five-Year Plans. While the Central efforts were
directed to improving the remuneration of the teachers of all
categories, the Centre did pay special attention to the improvement of
the salaries of university and college teachers.
In this context, the Commission laid down some basic principles which are of great significance and deserve a recapitulation:

1. The existing salary structures in public service and permissible incomes in many sectors are arbitrary, high and beyond the economic capacity of the country. An urgent reform needed therefore is to substantially downgrade the salaries and drastically level down the other incomes. If such attempts are made, the teachers would be ready to play their part. But they naturally resent the discriminations now made against them only.

2. At the university stage, the remuneration of teachers should be broadly comparable with the senior services of Government, viz. a Vice-Chancellor should get the salary of a Secretary to Union Government and the faculty should be equated with the I.A.S. cadres. Salaries should be the same in all faculties, and the differences in the scale of pay of university and college teachers should be progressively reduced.

3. The starting salaries of primary, secondary and university teachers should be in the proportion of 1:3:5.

4. Teachers in government, local body or private service should draw the same scales of pay and should have the same conditions of service.

5. The improvement in the scale of pay should not be entirely automatic. It should be linked with improvement in qualifications and quality.

6. The selection procedures should be improved at all stages and for all categories of teachers.

7. Scales of pay should be revised periodically and linked to the cost of living index.

8. There should be adequate retirement benefits, fair promotional chances, and provision of welfare services on an appropriate scale.

9. Conditions of work and service of teachers should be improved.

10. Just as the Central Government lays down minimum scales of pay for university and college teachers and gives a special grant-in-aid to State Governments for implementing them, the Centre should also lay down minimum scales of pay for primary and secondary teachers in all parts of the country and make special grants available to the State Governments for implementing them.

It will be readily seen that the main objective of the Commission was to ensure that the existing discrimination against teachers in the public services is done away with, that teachers get an adequate remuneration so that a reasonable proportion of the best talent available is attracted to the profession, and that the existing wide differences in the remuneration of different categories of teachers are removed so that teachers of all types and at all stages of education become a unified and cohesive profession. It was these recommendations that made Mr. M.C. Chagla describe the Report of the Commission as the Magna Carta of teachers.

It must be admitted that all the recommendations of the Commission, these recommendations have been implemented more effectively due to a variety of factors. In case of university and college teachers, the Commission had only supported the new scales of pay which the Central Government had already decided to introduce in the Fourth Plan. Professor S. Nurul Haque carried out one more revision and made the scales of pay of college and university teachers the best ever they had. The size of the university and college system is now so large and the university and college teachers are now so well organized that they have a great political pull; and with the latest revision of their scales of pay, the recommendations of the Commission have been implemented almost in toto. An equally good achievement is that the old discrimination in remuneration between the teachers in government, local authority or private service has now almost disappeared. During this period, there was a general move by employees of State Governments that they should get dearness allowances, etc., at Central rates. In fact in this period of inflation, there were almost continuous agitations by all categories of workers in the organized sector for improvement of their remuneration. The teachers also organized such agitation in all parts of the country and at all levels of education. They have also come to acquire considerable political influence, especially the primary school teachers. It was the combined effect of all these factors that has led to a substantial improvement in the remuneration of all categories of teachers, at all levels and in all parts of the country. To ascribe all this result to the recommendations of the Education Commission only would be naive. But there is no gainsaying the fact that some of the improvement (e.g., revision of pay of university and college teachers) was due to a deliberate attempt to implement the Report of the Commission which also provided a rallying point and a direction to all efforts in this field.

This has not been a picture of an unmixed blessing either. The teachers complain that a good deal of the pay increase is lost due to inflation. This however is not the only loss. The Commission's hope that the improvement in the scales of pay will not be automatic and that it will be definitely linked to improvements in qualifications and selection procedures has not materialized. One does not mind even if
all the existing incumbents get the benefit of the revised scales (irrespective of qualifications), provided at least that new recruitment would be of the best type. Unfortunately it has not been possible to break all the vested interests and to improve selection procedures adequately all round. In fact, it appears that while the new scales of pay will attract a fair proportion of the country's talent to the teaching profession, one is not certain that they will be allowed to get into it.

One also has second thoughts about the principle that the Government of India should lay down, in every five-year plan, national scales of pay for university and college teachers and then help to implement them through special grants-in-aid to State Governments. Experience has shown that this measure keeps the university system continually disturbed. After the Central Government announces the new scales, the Central universities get it automatically. But State Governments take their own time to decide and generally do not do so unless there is some agitation and pressure. Consequently, teachers have to agitate almost continuously to get the national scales of pay. Not every State has decided the issue by the time the plan comes to an end; and when the agitation over the next plan scales begins all over again. Besides, doubts have been expressed whether it is desirable to maintain national scales of pay in education when they do not exist in other sectors of public service. Even if national scales of pay are maintained in universities because of their national significance, is it desirable to provide national scales of pay for college teachers wherever it is impossible to maintain nationally comparable methods of selection? Is it this growing antipathy to national scales of pay for teachers (except perhaps in the universities) that was mainly responsible for throwing out the recommendations of the Education Commission that minimum national scales of pay should be laid down for primary and secondary teachers? The State Governments would not accept it at all on the ground that they cannot do so without accepting similar proposals for other categories of employees. Nor was the Central Government prepared to give a special grant-in-aid for the purpose. In fact, considerable doubts have been raised about the desirability of national scales of pay for teachers (which the Commission thought was an essential part of the national system of education) and about the actual role the Central Government should play in establishing them. There is a considerable flaw in these arguments, and it is worthy of note that the question of teachers' salaries which had figured in each of the first five-year plans does not find a place in the Sixth Plan.

Recommendations that Attracted Wide Attention (II)

The large improvement in the salaries of teachers accentuated the differences between them and the non-academic staff of educational institutions. This has led to intensive agitation by them which have been almost continuous and often backed by teachers or students or both according to convenience. This has added one more element of substantial disturbance in the educational system which was already disturbed.

There is also considerable disappointment about the academic role of teachers. No one would object to teachers agitating for their legitimate rights. But one does expect that they do not restrict their activities to this end. The Education Commission held the teachers largely responsible for creating a national system of education and especially for maintaining and improving standards. The record of the teachers and teachers' organizations leaves a good deal to be desired in these respects. Society and teachers owe a duty to each other, and the Commission observed: "Throughout the world, the general experience has been that, as the material rewards of teachers are elevated, it becomes possible to recruit into the profession individuals of a continually improving quality and with more extended professional training; and in proportion as the competence, integrity and dedication of teachers has increased, society has been increasingly willing – and justifiably so – to give greater recognition to their material and economic status. We visualize a similar development in India over the next twenty years." One is not sure that this hope has been fulfilled during the last twelve years. The Education Commission appealed to the society to do its duty to the teachers and, it must be said, that the society has, by and large, risen to the challenge. But have the teachers risen equally to the challenge of their duty to the society? This question is being increasingly asked and it must confess that it disturbs the gravity. This is a matter for honest searching and deep introspection for all teachers and teachers' organizations before it is too late.
CHAPTER VII

Recommendations that were Opposed and Rejected

In the two preceding chapters, we dealt with six recommendations of the Commission that attracted wide attention and were accepted at least in principle and are, in all cases but one, being implemented. There were seven other recommendations of the Commission which also attracted wide attention, but they were all opposed and rejected. These include:

- new priorities in educational development;
- selective admissions at the higher secondary and university stages;
- major universities;
- selective improvement of schools;
- differential systems of grants-in-aid;
- administrative reforms including the creation of an Indian Educational Service; and
- continuance of Education as a subject in the State List.

We shall discuss these in this chapter.

NEW PRIORITIES IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Education Commission was of the view that the existing priorities in educational development (expansion first, qualitative improvement next, and transformation last, if at all) should be reversed and that the highest priority should be given to programmes which transform the educational system, that programmes of qualitative improvement should come next and that programmes of expansion should come last. While this basic recommendation was discussed a good deal, no one was prepared to accept it. The Committee of Members of Parliament threw it out completely and said that it would like to place greater emphasis on expansion, especially at the school stage. This was the feeling in 1967, it has also dominated the thinking in all the educational plans since formulated; and it is still the policy which finds the largest support among political and official circles, among the general public and even among a section of the academics who, by and large, accord a higher priority to qualitative improvement. The pressures for providing increasing facilities at all levels of education are intense and understandable. There is an increase in population; the desire to receive education is continually reaching newer and newer social groups who are farther and farther down on the social ladder so that thousands and thousands of new first generation learners seek admissions every year and it is not desirable to say “no” to them; and even among those who are already in the system, there is a continuous trend to stay longer. Hence a certain increase in enrolments, about 4 to 5 per cent (about 2 per cent on account of population increase and about 2 to 3 per cent on account of the increase in the desire to learn) is inevitable and even this legitimate demand consumes a great deal of the additional funds available every year. These pressures of expansion are felt, first and foremost, at the political level and consequently politicians find it difficult to withstand them. No member of the State legislatures can hope to be re-elected unless he secures additional schools or teachers for his constituency. The bureaucrats also are happy with the programme which is the easiest to implement and to spend money on. The public is also satisfied because their children receive “education” and are not required to stay at home (where they will be a nuisance) or left to the streets (where worse things may happen to them). The warning of the Commission that a mere extension of the existing education system without transformation (or a basic change in its character) and without improvement of its quality is likely to do more harm than good fell therefore on deaf ears. For one thing, no one seemed to believe that Government would really transform or improve education to any significant extent; everyone believed that some education (and even bad education) is better than no education; and many suspected that all this talk of transformation and quality is a clever dodge of the already educated to see that the uneducated do not have an adequate access to education. Many politicians had only a faint idea of what “transformation” meant; and as for quality, the common retort was: we cannot sacrifice quantity for quality. The recommendation of the Commission, however significant, had really no chance in such a hostile atmosphere.

Even when we tried to explain that we were not against expansion as such but only against the expansion of a wrong kind, the situation still remained the same. For instance, when we said that every effort should be made to bring the children of the poor into schools (which was a desired type of expansion) and that enrolments in secondary
and university education from the urban upper and middle classes (which was the wrong kind of expansion) should be cut down, the reaction was even more hostile. We were in fact called fools who try to educate those who do not come to school and do not want to learn while we refuse to educate those who voluntarily come to schools and want to learn. The first duty of a government, we were told, was to educate those who are willing to learn. The task of educating those who do not even want to learn should come later. No one also seemed to appreciate the point that all secondary and higher education involves a subsidy which goes to the wrong social groups. The general attitude seemed to be that it is the right of every citizen to live on subsidies from the state; and if some cannot do it, they should thank themselves. Even the argument that reckless expansion of secondary and higher education is increasing educated unemployment did not click and was met with a retort: Even if you cannot give us jobs, will you not give us education at least? And some argued that they would prefer even educated unemployment to uneducated unemployment because the former can act as a powerful pressure for social change. We will deal with some other aspects of this problem in greater detail in the next section on selective admissions.

The arguments of the Commission to slow down expansion did not cut ice even with a large number of academicians who believed that any attempt to cut down an expansion at this stage will affect the poor adversely and slow down the pace of desirable social change. For instance, the late Dr. D.R. Gadgil said: "I feel that the Commission has entirely failed to appreciate the dynamic part that expansion of education has played and is playing in the transformation of our society. Ours is an essentially unequal society, where those with wealth and rank enjoy many privileges and the handicaps of the underprivileged are numerous, where occupational mobility is small and employment opportunities neither ample nor diversified. In such a society it is only educational opportunity that can be relatively equalized by public policy. Through the past decades class after class, area after area in Maharashtra have striven, with or without official support, for expanding educational opportunities open to them. The movement has thrown up notable leadership and an army of workers. It has also received solid and enthusiastic popular support. The entire process has been on the whole beneficial, making for a more evenly balanced economy and society. The process is far from complete and nothing should be done now to check its progress. Undoubtedly, any major waste resulting from unchecked expansion must be carefully eliminated. But this must be done as part of a positive policy of spreading and equalizing educational opportunity and not through adopting a restrictive and regressive one."

Programmes of qualitative improvement also found little support. The enlightened public saw this point, deplored the continuing fall in standards, and desired that something urgent and drastic be done to improve quality. But such parents were a minority, though vocal. The general public was of the view that education must expand, with quality if possible and without quality if necessary. The Education Commission had taken the view that the first and foremost responsibility for improving standards is on teachers. We however found that teachers and their organizations were not prepared to accept this position. The education administrators did not even realize that programmes of qualitative improvement have to be differently administered; and we also discovered that neither the educational administrators nor the Education Departments were adequately equipped to implement them. The students talked of quality but almost everything they did contributed more to the deterioration of standards than for their improvement. The general impression left on us in these discussions, therefore, was that we were unable to convince the general public of the desirability of emphasizing qualitative improvement over that of expansion. Nor could we convince those concerned to strive for improvement of quality; and even if we had, the chances of implementing our proposals successfully were not too bright.

On the matter of transformation, we ran into three types of difficulties. The first was to convince the people that transformation is an essential third dimension of educational reform. The general view was – and still continues to be – that educational reform is only two dimensional, quantitative and qualitative, and that one should act on the first and talk loftily about the second. For instance, even many teachers do not understand that programmes like the introduction of work-experience as an integral part of all education or the creation of an elastic and diversified educational system, or the development of non-formal channels, are not merely programmes of qualitative improvement (though they do help in raising standards) and that they have to be treated as belonging to yet another, more complex, more difficult but more desirable category of educational reforms. The second difficulty was that most programmes of transformation

* Convocation Address to Poona University, 1966.
needed not only human inputs of dedicated and planned hard work but also large-scale financial investment which could not be found on a priority basis. The third and the most important was that programmes of transformation (e.g., vocationalization of secondary education) needed changes, not only in the educational system but also in the social, economic and political system. For instance, the programme of the neighbourhood school is a programme of transformation. It cannot, however, be implemented in the school system alone without making corresponding changes in the socio-economic system. In fact, we discovered very soon that programmes of educational transformation are intimately related to the programmes of social transformation, that they cannot be implemented within the existing social system which always opposes them, and that the only way in which one can give top priority to programmes of educational transformation is to begin simultaneous and complementary educational and social transformation on a fairly large scale. No one seemed to be prepared for this contingency which demanded so much more from the Government and the people. For all these reasons, this basic recommendation of the Education Commission regarding new priorities in educational reform was not quite fully understood; it was opposed and side-tracked. It finds no mention in the National Policy on Education (1968). It is also not mentioned in the National Policy on Education (1979) which shows that we have made no headway in this matter in the past 12 years. But the proposal is too significant to be ignored, and it is doubtful if we can really create a national system of education without facing squarely the issues it raises.

SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS IN HIGHER SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The Education Commission was not the first to put forward this idea. In fact, selective admissions to secondary and university education was a basic principle of education in the U.K. and the British administrators were always trying to impose it on Indian education, especially after 1900 when they realized that uncontrolled expansion of secondary and university education was leading to dissatisfaction against government and promoting the struggle for freedom. Indians, on the other hand, were stoutly resisting these attempts because they felt that the spread of secondary and university education would help to modernize the country. This struggle went on throughout the British period; and on the whole, the Indians won, especially after 1921, when education became a transferred subject. The last British attempt to impose selective admission on India was the Post-War Plan of Education Development (1944-48) which provided secondary education to one student out of every five who completed elementary education, and university education to one student out of every fifteen who completed secondary education. Naturally, Indian public opinion rejected the plan outright.

In the post-independence period, a recommendation regarding selective admissions to the universities was again repeated by the University Education Commission (1948-49). It was not accepted but the subject was discussed almost continuously, especially as the problems of educated unemployment and student unrest began to grow. No effective decision could, however, be taken, especially because the backward classes opposed the proposal stoutly on the ground that selective admissions would affect them adversely and reduce their chances of vertical mobility.

The Education Commission made proposals for regulation of enrolments in higher secondary and university education. While making them, it did use man-power estimates as one criterion for determination of enrolment policies. This part of the argument came in for a good deal of criticism on the ground that the man-power approach to educational planning is neither desirable nor suitable, that the man-power estimates of the Commission erred on the side of exaggeration, and that it is not possible to link theoretically framed man-power estimates to practical day-to-day decisions in establishing institutions or determining their enrolments. Most of these criticisms were justified and on hindsight: I find that the man-power approach has only a limited role in educational planning. This aspect of the problem is however not discussed here because it was only incidentally related to the actual recommendations of the Commission which would remain unchanged even if the man-power approach is entirely rejected.

The proposals of the Education Commission on selective admissions are not always fully understood; and it is, therefore, necessary to state them in some detail.

(1) The capacity of a society to expand educational facilities in terms of real resources sets up minimum targets (para 5.13). The Commission found that this salutary principle was generally ignored in practice and that enrolments were increased without increasing the facilities available. It was of the view that this attempt to expand
education at the cost of standards was harmful and should be abandoned and recommended that enrolments in any institution should be limited to the actual facilities available therein.

(2) The public demand for secondary and higher education and even the desire to provide secondary and higher education to all talented students who deserve such education sets up high targets of enrolments which will be beyond our capacity to reach. The Commission, therefore, recommended that we should try to ensure that an enrolment policy is based on social justice and that secondary and higher education becomes available at least to the most talented students (para 5.13).

(3) The present policy of open-door access has had several undesirable consequences: (a) dilution of standards; (b) over-production of some categories of personnel and under-production in others; (c) over-enrolment from urban families and upper and middle classes; and (d) under-enrolment from the poorer sections (para 5.07). The Commission was of the view that these evils can be corrected only through a policy of selective admissions.

Against this background, the Commission made elaborate proposals for selective admissions which can be summarized as follows:

1. The attempt to introduce selective admissions at the university stage only cannot succeed in isolation. It must be accompanied by adequate preparation at the secondary stage.

2. Expansion is very difficult to control when secondary education is one undivided unit. The child is too young (aged 13 or 14) to be submitted to selection when secondary education begins (class VII or IX); and once admitted, he continues to remain in the school till he completes secondary education. This leads to unnecessary expansion. The Commission, therefore, divided the secondary stage into two substages: (i) a lower secondary stage ending with class X where no principle of selection was introduced; and (ii) a higher secondary stage of classes XI-XII (where the child will be in the age-group 17-18) where selective admissions could and should be introduced.

3. The higher secondary stage should be diversified and about 50 per cent of the students should be diverted into vocational and mostly terminal courses. This would greatly reduce the pressures on university admissions.

4. Selective admissions are not an end in themselves; their objectives are two: (a) to relate the output of the educational system to man-power needs so that educated unemployment is reduced; and (b) to relate admissions to provision of facilities with a view to improving standards.

5. Emphasis should be placed on proper planning of the location of higher secondary schools, colleges and universities and on fixing the maximum number of students that can be admitted to them in view of the facilities that actually exist. This will be a far more effective method of regulating enrolments than selective admissions as such.

6. No selective admissions need be made where the number of applicants is already less than the number of seats available. But where applicants exceed the number of seats available, selection becomes inescapable and should be resorted to.

7. Method of selection should be improved. Better selection tests should be devised and special emphasis should be laid on social justice.

8. Selective admissions are meant for full-time institutions only. Side by side, the facilities for part-time and own-time education should be fully expanded so that no individual who is qualified and desires to study further need be denied education beyond class X.

The Commission pointed out that a policy of selective admissions exists even now, but it is in force only in a small core of institutions of higher education with prestige and quality. Here the net effect of selections is to convert these institutions into "elite" centres which are availed of mostly by the privileged groups. On the other hand an open-door access is provided in the vast bulk of the institutions of higher education which maintain indifferent standards and are mostly availed of by the common people. The Commission wanted this "dualism" to be reduced, if not eliminated altogether. From this point of view, it made two recommendations: (i) access to the good quality and prestigious institutions should be made available to talented students from the non-privileged groups through a programme of reservations, special facilities (such as personal guidance, etc.), scholarships and placement; and (ii) the principle of selective admissions as described above should also be introduced in all the higher secondary schools and institutions of higher education where a policy of open-door admissions prevailed, mainly with a view to preventing an undeserved or inappropriate use of these resources.

There is no doubt that these proposals of the Commission were sufficiently realistic and moderate and that they carried the conceptualization of the problem a good deal further. But these never
received a good hearing. The political climate was totally hostile and no party would touch the proposal with a pair of tongs. At the very beginning, the Committee of Members of Parliament rejected it outright and suggested that “every effort should be made to provide admissions to institutions of higher education to all eligible students who desire to study further”. The backward classes were totally opposed. They welcomed the Commission’s proposals to give them better access to the privileged and elite institutions. But they would not agree to any selective admissions below the M.A./M.Sc. level. Their view was best represented by Shri Jagjivan Ram who told the Commission that he will launch a satyagraha and a nation-wide campaign if Government adopted selective admissions at the higher secondary or undergraduate stage. A State Education Minister told Dr. D.S. Kothari: “If selective admissions are introduced, the Vice-Chancellor will not have headaches. But if they are introduced, we [i.e., Government], who have to deal with the non-selected students, will have big headaches. Since we are in a position to make the decision, we shall pass on the headaches to you.” The fate of the recommendation was, therefore, sealed at the very outset and there was no reference to it in the National Policy Resolution (1968). It was also pointed out earlier that an indirect reference to the proposal in the Maharashtra White Paper on Education created the highest storm against it and had ultimately to be deleted from the final version. Even today, there is no chance of an acceptance of the idea at the political level.

This political reluctance to support the principle of selective admissions at the higher secondary and university stages springs from, and is in turn strengthened by, several social factors among which the following may be mentioned:

(1) The hang-over of the pre-independence struggle against the British Government which wanted to restrict secondary and higher education is still too strong. We then developed a bias for a policy of open-door admissions which is more like that in U.S.A. Even though this policy is suited only to very affluent societies, we refuse to see the contradiction between our educational objectives and our financial capacity and persist in pleading for uncontrolled expansion of secondary and university education.

(2) From the social point of view, it is the advanced castes or groups that support selective admissions because they have come to realize they can hold their own in the competition. On the other hand the proposal is opposed by the backward classes who fear that their vertical mobility will be adversely affected. In a hierarchical society like ours, education tends to percolate, over time, to castes and social strata which are lower down in the scale. At any given time, therefore, there will be some castes or social strata which have advanced enough and will be willing to support selective admissions. At that very time there would also be other social strata and castes whose hopes have been aroused but which have not received adequate benefits from the system. They will tend to oppose such proposals tooth and nail. The line at which the fight for and against selections takes place varies from time to time, and hence the groups that support and oppose the proposal also differ over time. But there is no doubt that the social opposition to such proposals from some backward classes or the other will continue for a long time to come.

(3) The social situation has built-in problems for which selective admissions are no solution. For instance, what are these young men and women to do? They have completed secondary education. They cannot get a job and the age of marriage for girls is continually rising. They join higher secondary schools or colleges because there is nothing else to do and they cannot stay at home doing nothing. A system of selective admissions may solve a problem for the educational system but it does not solve the social problem they are actually facing. The social pressures will, therefore, see to it that selective admissions are not introduced.

(4) There is an innate distrust of the selective process itself. The public is convinced that all selection will be biased by considerations of caste, religion, personal loyalties and even corruption. There is some trust in selections where the process is remotely controlled at very high levels (i.e., the all-India examinations for IITs). But no one is prepared to buy the idea that selections to higher secondary schools, colleges and even universities will not be manipulated.

(5) A trend has grown to look upon the expansion of education itself as a major avenue for new jobs. As unemployment increases, the case for selective admissions becomes stronger. But exactly for the same reason, the social and political opposition to the idea gains increasing strength.

The rejection of this recommendation should not be regarded as a defeat for the Education Commission. This concept is one answer to a major social and educational problem, viz. how to control the growing volume of educated unemployment and to raise educational standards in spite of the limited resources available, without affecting the interests of the backward classes and their chances of vertical
mobility. We have been struggling with this problem since 1921 and have neither been able to accept this solution nor to evolve any other suitable alternative. The stalemate has continued and will continue until we find an answer. The attempt to popularize this concept or to devise suitable alternatives to it will, therefore, have to continue.

Some important developments of the last twelve years which have a bearing on this problem and the various proposals that are being put forward to solve it deserve notice.

(1) State Governments are now less inclined to establish new colleges and universities. This is due partly to continuing pressure from the U.G.C. and the Central Government and partly to lack of financial resources. It is also a fact that the rate at which new colleges and universities were being established has fallen; and even the rate of increase in enrolments at the university stage has gone down considerably. The growing unemployment among the matriculates and graduates has probably begun to dampen the zest for secondary and higher education to some extent.

(2) An idea has been put forward that a system of reservation (on the basis of population) may be introduced for backward classes or weaker sections or first generation learners, etc., so that their fears about an adverse effect on their vertical mobility can be allayed. Although the suggestion is good, it has not yet become acceptable to the backward classes who do not accept selective admissions even with this sugar-coating. Needless to say, the proposal is totally opposed by the urban upper and middle classes whose access to the system will be adversely affected by it.

(3) The idea that fees should be increased to control expansion of higher secondary or university education has also been put forward. Two points are argued in favour of the proposal: (i) it will control expansion to some extent through monetary devices rather than through direct selection; and (ii) it will at least reduce the element of subsidy in such education. The proposals for raising fees are of a number of types: (i) a flat rate increase of a small amount every five years or so; (ii) relating fees to income; (iii) making fees pay an increasing share of the total cost, etc. Side by side, it is also proposed to give fee concessions to all poor and needy students (including those from backward classes) in order to ensure that a rise in fees does not affect them adversely. None of these proposals has been found to be acceptable, and no Government seems to have the political courage to raise fees.

(4) The old idea that Government should recruit all their employees at the end of the school stage and then train them, where necessary, in special institutions for any period from one to five years is often paraded before the public and the authorities. It has had no general acceptance and its claim that it will lead to a reduction in university enrolments is at best hypothetical.

(5) The idea of vocationalizing secondary education and diverting a large proportion of students into terminal courses to reduce pressures on universities was first put forward in 1882. It is being discussed continually ever since. The basic issue is that we have not been able to vocationalize secondary education on any worthwhile scale. Even if we do it, we are not quite sure that we will not be creating a problem of unemployment among those who have received vocational education without solving the problem of pressures on university admissions.

(6) The idea that degrees should be delinked from jobs is now being increasingly canvassed. But we do not know how to do this in practice, what further problems it would create and what precise effect it will have on reducing enrolments at secondary and university stages.

(7) Courses of part-time and own-time education are becoming increasingly popular, but they are still far below the targets suggested by the Commission. Further work on them is, therefore, needed in three directions: (a) to extend their coverage, (b) to improve their quality, and (c) to make them really effective in controlling expansion of full-time institutions.

It is a pity that we are caught in a dilemma where we are helplessly converting uneducated rural (or urban) under-employment or unemployment (which is mute, unorganized and without any nuisance value) into urban (or rural) educated unemployment (which is vocal, organized and has a nuisance value). We are also continually being driven into a situation where an unemployment dole will have to be increasingly provided to control the explosive volcano of urban discontent. Selective admissions which could be an answer to this problem are not socially and politically acceptable and we have not yet been able to devise any worthwhile alternative or alternatives. This is certainly not an enviable situation.

Of course, one knows the long-term and ideal solution of the problem. As the Commission observed, we need integrated plans of development at the national, State and district levels which will (1) reduce the birth-rate by at least half in a planned programme spread over 10-15 years, (2) bring about very rapid economic development so that there is a job for every young person who enters the labour force,
and (3) create an education system which will train every young person for some job needed in the society. How to do this is the main question; and one is not sure whether it can be done at all under a capitalist system or how to bring in socialism, even assuming that socialism can provide a better answer. At the moment, our options seem to be limited. But we are duty bound to explore all available options to the full and to search for an answer or answers that will be feasible and continually approximate to the ideal. This is yet another area in which there is immense scope for research and experimentation.

SEED-FARM TECHNOLOGY

The Commission held the view that if standards are to be maintained and continually improved, it is necessary to create high quality pace-setting institutions in every sector and at every stage of education. These institutions can generate excellence in the first instance and it can then be extended to others. By the time the entire system absorbs and internalizes this excellence, the pace-setting institutions would have climbed to a still higher level of excellence and set in motion another wave for spreading excellence of a higher order; and so on.

The Commission described this process as the seed-farm technology and was of the view that the existence of high quality and pace-setting institutions at every stage and in every sector is an essential characteristic of the national system of education.

This concept, it must be admitted, is not new to Indian education. The British Government had introduced, as early as 1882, the concept of “model” institutions maintained by Government which would provide inspiration and practical guidance to other institutions to improve themselves. The Indian Education Commission (1882) had suggested that Government should maintain a high school in every district and a college or so in every Province as “models” and leave the rest of the field open for private enterprise. This idea was developed further by Lord Curzon in the early years of this century and, in some form or the other, survived till 1947. But Indian public and academic opinion never accepted this concept. They argued that Government cannot have the monopoly of running model institutions, that the quality of many private institutions was far superior to that of government institutions, and that not infrequently a government institution, in spite of all the heavy investment made therein, can only be a model of what an educational institution of that type should not be. Secondly, it was argued that many of the so-called models set up were so costly that they were not repeatable at all. They were the Qutub Minars or Taj Mahals which had a place of their own; but they were planned to be unique or rare rather than multipliable things.

Thirdly, the vast bulk of the institutions could not have the resources even to approximate the models they were supposed to imitate; and not infrequently, this impoverishment of the average institution was due to the creation of the costly models themselves. Fourthly, it was argued that model institutions, even when successfully set up, tended to be linked to privilege and were generally availed of by students from the well-to-do and privileged classes only. All in all, the nationalist view was that the concept of model institutions to be maintained by Government was a cheap, futile device adopted by an alien Government which did not desire to invest adequately in education and that this device tended to lower the average standard of the education system rather than to raise it. In fact, the famous prayer of Fra Lippo Lippi was often quoted in this context with considerable effect: “Make no more giants, God! Raise up the whole race at once.”

The Commission had taken full note of this experience and criticisms. While recognizing all the negative features of the old concept of “models” the Commission still came to the conclusion that the creation of pace-setting institutions was essential and that the programme could be worked out in a way which would avoid the dangers into which the pre-independence experience of “models” had run. For instance,

- the pace-setting character of educational institutions should not be linked to their management only and that it would be wrong to assume that Central institutions were better than those of States, or that the latter were better than those of local bodies, or that government institutions were better than private ones. The pace-setting institutions could be under any management. They should be identified by appropriate and objective criteria and should have the same level and type of financial support, irrespective of their managements;
- the difference between the pace-setting institutions and others should not be very wide – as between a skyscraper and a hovel – but should be small and bridgeable. In fact, the costs allowed by the Commission to the pace-setting institutions vis-a-vis the others were only of the order of 2 : 1;
- there should be definite mechanisms in the system whose main
The Education Commission and After

The objective should be to strive to ensure that the excellence generated in the pace-setting institutions is extended to the others. Similarly financial and other support must be liberally available to every institution which has the potential and which is prepared to strive to reach the higher levels of excellence; and

suitable measures can and should be adopted to ensure that the benefits of the pace-setting institutions go to the under-privileged groups and to society as a whole rather than to a privileged class.

The programme of pace-setting institutions recommended by the Commission is to be understood against this background and subject to all these reservations.

MAJOR UNIVERSITIES

Of the two recommendations of the Commission on the subject of pace-setting institutions, let us begin with that of major universities. The Commission recommended that we should strive to create, over the next ten years or so, five or six major universities which would

- function on a national basis in the sense that they enrol talented students from all parts of the country (on the basis of scholarships provided) and recruit their faculty also on a national basis;
- use English and Hindi as media of instruction;
- make first-rate post-graduate work and research possible;
- maintain standards which are internationally comparable; and
- be closely linked to the university system as a whole, so that the transfer of the excellence generated therein to other universities is facilitated.

These major universities were not necessarily Central, although the Central Government should support them liberally through the U.G.C. In fact the Commission had turned down a proposal, frequently discussed in the Central Advisory Board of Education, that a Central University should be established in every State.

In the opinion of the Commission, creation of these universities would have several advantages: (1) They would help to improve standards at the post-graduate stage and thereby the standards in the education system as a whole; (2) they would supply the high quality staff needed for higher education as well as for other walks of life; (3) they would provide first-rate centres of post-graduate education and research in the country itself and thereby obviate the need to send students abroad in large numbers; and (4) they would help the country to develop an indigenous capability in research and restore its self-respect so that the centre of gravity of intellectual life which is now outside the country will be located within the country itself. The Commission also highlighted the point that the development of these universities was essential in the present state of higher education and that the proposal was in the larger interests of the country and democracy itself in spite of its apparently elitist character.

In spite of all the Commission’s eloquent plea for the proposal, it invited very strong opposition from all quarters. The use of the word “major” was unfortunate and a tactical blunder. But the proposal had no chance even if it had not been used. The Committee of Members of Parliament rejected it summarily. The Vice-Chancellors’ Conference also threw it out, quite understandably because the Vice-Chancellors whose universities could not have been selected under the scheme were hostile and in absolute majority. Even academics who generally favoured a selective approach were not in favour of this particular reform; and needless to say, scholars like Dr. D.R. Gagil, who opposed elitism in all its forms, were extremely critical. He said:

23. The Commission evidently believes that in academics, excellence is achieved by massing resources; it also seems to think that these “major” universities will suffer from no problems of administration of personal relations or of hierarchical ordering. While it may be true that an isolated scholar with a heavy load of other work cannot develop his potentialities, a high concentration of a body of scholars is not absolutely essential for the best type of work. The newer departments in a large number of Indian universities are gradually establishing conditions in which a steady stream of good work should become possible. How large the concentration can be at any number of points depends on the size of the country and the availability of scholars. In our situation, high concentration at a few points can only be brought about by denuding others and it is a matter for judgement as to what type of distribution will give the best results. Personally, in this matter as in others, I am for relative dispersal. However, this need not be judged purely subjectively. We have today a high concentration of research personnel in the national laboratories; these are well equipped and have adequate resources. Further, there are many other large institutions of research and training run by government, by individual ministries or as autonomous corporations. There is a sufficient number of these in Delhi alone for the Commission to have carried out individual case studies with which to support its novel and revolutionary recommendation. I may be misinformed; but what I have heard regarding the functioning of a number of the laboratories and institutions does not support the assumption that a concentration of resources and research personnel will automatically lead to a large volume of high quality research or that the higher the concentration the more is the institution free from administrative, hierarchical or personal problems.

24. How will the major universities contribute to the solution of the problems highlighted by the Commission? Let us recapitulate that these problems are of a lack
of interest among teachers, of financial worries, of unsatisfactory physical conditions, of hierarchical concentration of authority and of intrigues, specially present in the weaker colleges and universities; among the students they relate to unsatisfactory home conditions and earlier training, to intellectual apathy, to the medium of instruction, to financial worries etc. There is nothing in the report of the Commission to indicate how the establishment of “major” universities will help in the solution of these problems. The only suggestion which indicates a connection between the “major” universities and others is that the major universities would supply “a goodly portion of the outstanding personnel needed for the staffs of universities, colleges” etc. It would easily take ten years for these universities to get established and to rise from their present low standards into towering excellence. After that some of their products may flow out but if experience elsewhere is any guide the outstanding among them would soon flow back into the “major” universities.

25. The “major” university concept has thus no relevance to an improvement of existing conditions in our universities and colleges. However, it is possible to state with some confidence that the establishment of “major” universities will, on the other hand, surely worsen these conditions. At least three important effects of this step on the other Indian Universities can be identified. Firstly, they will suffer a diminution in the financial resources that will be available to them in future plan periods. In view of the grandiose writing of the Commission, I would put the diminution at the minimum of an average ten per cent. More seriously they will have to put up with the loss, now and continuously afterwards, of a large number of their best men in all subjects. Thirdly, they will suffer degradation. It is one of the merits of present Indian situation that in our various systems of ranking and privilege there is as yet no established ranking among universities. We do not suffer from the psychological strain resulting from the classification of “bridge” and “redbrick”. I can think of no greater disservice to Indian education than the deliberate, artificial creation of this new division. I am sceptical of the heaping of resources and of official patronage having the ability to create high standards of academic excellence. But I have no doubt that immediately after their establishment teachers and students at the major universities will behave like snobs and that the others will be permanently afflicted with an inferiority complex.

26. I realize that the Vice-Chancellor of a University which has no obvious claims to be up-graded into a major university tends delicate ground in commenting on this subject. However, I feel it so important to protest against this monstrous idea that I am prepared to risk the misunderstanding. Also I have hopes that Poona can stand even this strain. This city has been the centre of activities of scholars like Shankar Balkrishna Dixit, Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade, Dr. Ketkar and Dr. Sukthankar and knows that high standards of scholarship are compatible with limited resources. I hope I shall not be considered presumptuous if I claim that the tradition of these scholars has in recent decades been maintained, to the best of their ability, by their successors. Therefore, I feel confident that this University will continue to retain the services of at least a small number of devoted scholars and maintain high standards of work, whatever its external ranking.

27. I should like to make it clear that the Education Commission is not particularly to blame. It was doing no more than following the current fashion. This favours “etatism” and concentration of resources, all in the name of ultimate peace and plenty. I realize that I am the dissent in this consensus. I dissent because I believe that socio-economic progress is indivisible in a real sense and because nobody has yet ex-

plained to me the magic through which the addition of skyscrapers at Nariman Point can help to transform the hovels, say, under Bandra bridge.*

An attempt was made to save the proposal with some modifications. The main criticism of even those who accepted the principle of selective approach for qualitative improvement was that a “university” cannot be the unit for such development. They, therefore, argued that a Department, and not a university, should be taken as the unit, that all departments of all universities should be eligible for selection as Centres of Advanced Study, that specific and objective criteria should be laid down for the selection of departments for their elevation into Centres of Advanced Studies, and that resources should be found to elevate a fair number of the total departments into such centres. In this general policy, they were prepared to “cluster” a number of advanced centres into some selected universities where conditions were favourable. Such clusters of centres would naturally support each other and the universities having them may, therefore, be able to perform the task which the Commission had visualized for major universities. This agrument was accepted by the Committee of Members of Parliament who supported it (para 57) and this modified proposal also found a place in the National Policy on Education (1968) which said: “Centres of Advanced Study should be strengthened and a small number of centres of centres aiming at the highest possible standards in research and training should be established” (sub-para 12 (d) of para 4 of the Resolution). But this victory was of no avail and no effective steps were taken to implement the proposal even in this modified form. During the past 12 years, even the idea of ‘Centres of Advanced Study’ has lost the prestige and glamour it had in 1966.

SELECTIVE IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS

In line with its recommendations on major universities, the Education Commission also recommended the selective improvement of secondary and primary schools as pace-setting institutions. It suggested the organization of a nation-wide movement for school improvement in which every school would be involved and would be required to stretch itself to the utmost through a system of institutional planning in which stress will be laid, not so much on monetary inputs, as on careful planning and the combined efforts of teachers, students and

* Convocation Address to the Poona University, 1966.
parents. Against the backdrop of such a movement, it recommended a programme of raising every institution to certain minimum levels and the creation of a few pace-setting institutions. Its words on the subject deserve to be quoted in full.

10.3.1 Programme for Action: It will not be possible, for lack of resources, to raise all schools to a high level within a short period. The strategy to be adopted for development should, therefore, be on the following lines:

(1) The highest priority in the programme should be given to the creation of a minimum proportion of “quality” schools at every stage which would serve as pace-setting institutions. The number of really good schools in the present system is pitifully small, and in order to obtain good results in the shortest time, it is necessary to concentrate available resources in a few centres. As a first step towards improving all schools, therefore, we should strive to improve, during the next ten years, at least ten per cent of the schools at the primary stage to an optimum level. At the secondary stage, we should have one quality school (i.e., at the optimum level) in every community development block.

(2) This programme of creating optimum level schools will begin with the strengthening of the existing good schools. At the secondary stage most of these are in the private sector. While these should be assisted to develop, an attempt should be made to invite to have good secondary schools in the public sector as well.

(3) At the lower primary stage, the access to these schools will mostly be for children in the neighbourhood only. At the higher primary and secondary stages, admissions to these schools (with the abolition of fees they will be really open to all children) should be regulated on the basis of merit to ensure that the brighter children from all strata of society receive the best education available. There should be adequate provisions of scholarships in these schools. They should also be equitably distributed on a geographical basis, one secondary school being set up in each community development block and two or three higher primary schools in different parts of the same block.

(4) The second priority in the programme is to ensure that no school falls below the minimum level.

(5) With regard to other schools, each should be assisted to rise to the best level of which it is capable. The system of assistance should be such as to reward good performance as indicated by periodical evaluations. As time passes, more and more of these schools will rise higher and pass into the class of “quality schools”.

This proposal was also received with the same intense hostility as that of the major universities. The Committee of Members of Parliament rejected it outright and said that “better results can be obtained if we strive to maintain at least the minimum standards in all institutions and offer special additional assistance, on the basis of proper criteria, to those institutions which show high level performance and promise”. The State Governments turned it down. It also found no support even among educational administrators (i.e., Education Secretaries and Directors of Education) who were extremely reluctant to operate any selective programme on the ground that it would create great problems for them in their relations with the political leadership. Even the good schools themselves remained lukewarm and complained that the well-meant recommendation of the Commission would be twisted by politicians to suit their own purpose and that, instead of helping deserving institutions, the scheme was more likely to assist mediocre or bad schools that would be selected under this programme for all kinds of non-educational considerations. The proposal did not even find a mention in the National Policy on Education (1968).

Professor S. Nurul Hasan tried to revive this concept under the scheme of Central Schools which he put forward in the Fifth Plan. He wanted a pace-setting elementary school in each community development block and a pace-setting high school in each district. The cost of these schools would be entirely met by the Centre which would lay down the broad policy, but actual administration in each State would be vested in an autonomous body under the chairmanship of the State Education Minister. Each Central School would have a hostel for 50 per cent of its students and scholarships to cover 25 per cent of the enrolment. Admissions would be made on merit and an adequate number of seats would be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The schools would also be linked organically to other schools in the neighbourhood and would help them to raise standards. While based on the recommendations of the Commission, the proposal improved over the concept of quality schools in several ways. But in spite of his best efforts, the scheme was not adopted by any State nor supported by the Planning Commission. It had finally to be dropped.

At this distance of time and in the light of all experience since gained, I have no regrets that these recommendations of the Commission were rejected. This does not mean that I have lost my faith in the need for pace-setting institutions. If anything, that faith has become stronger rather than weaker. But my view of the debates over these recommendations is that no one really challenged either the need for concentration of resources at selected points in our programme of qualitative improvement or the desirability of having pace-setting institutions to provide a direction and momentum to the programme. The basic difference related to three aspects of the problem.

(1) The strongest objection was raised against the idea that such pace-setting institutions could be created by administrative and financial action on the part of the University Grants Commission, or the Central and State Governments. It was argued that such
institutions can be created only by bands of dedicated and competent workers who come together. I am afraid that here the position taken by the critics of the Commission is justified.

(2) The second objection was to the proposal that the creation of the pace-setting institutions should be given top priority on the ground that it will generate a nation-wide movement for qualitative improvement. Here the view of the critics was that the Commission is putting the cart before the horse, that the pace-setting institutions will naturally arise in a dynamic and sustained programme of qualitative improvement and that the attempt to create such pace-setting institutions by administrative action in the very beginning is more likely to hinder than generate a nation-wide movement of qualitative reform. Here also, I must admit, the criticism was fully justified.

(3) The third point of attack was the proposal to concentrate "massive" resources at a few points. It was argued that in a vast country like India, and in a situation where the total pool of competent and dedicated people is so limited, such massive concentration at a few points will do more harm than good. Instead, what was advocated was an intensive effort to increase the available pool of talent and a two-pronged policy which supports (i) adequate concentration at selected institutions or centres side by side with (ii) dispersal of such institutions and centres in the different parts of the country. I accept the criticism (which applies to the proposal of major universities but not to the selective improvement of schools) as well as the alternative policy recommended.

What emerges as to the total effect of this experience is that there is really no short cut, nor any easy solution to the problem of qualitative improvement in India. This complex and difficult challenge raises several questions such as:

- how do we persuade our leading academics to work together in groups of optimum size to achieve the best results possible and discourage the usual tendencies to plough lone furrows of their own?
- how do we create and sustain a nation-wide movement for the pursuit of excellence and a climate of dedicated and sustained hard work necessary for the purpose?
- how do we create an objective and efficient administrative machinery to judge academic merit and to provide it with adequate financial support?
- how do we balance the competing claims of policies of concentration and relative dispersal of resources? and

Recommendations that were Opposed and Rejected

- how do we get out of the present psychological and social attitudes which insist that either everyone moves or none moves (which in practice implies that none moves) and make the people accept the idea that a selective and discriminating approach is inescapable in a dynamic programme of qualitative improvement?

These complex problems, however difficult, must be squarely faced and solved. If we do so, the pace-setting institutions visualized by the Commission will automatically arise and play their role of generating and spreading excellence. But if we cannot tackle these problems (and I am afraid the Commission did not shed any light on how to do them), a mere administrative attempt to create the pace-setting institutions is not likely to succeed. It may even do more harm than good.

DIFFERENTIAL SYSTEMS OF GRANTS-IN-AID

I do however regret that the proposals of the Education Commission on the adoption of a discriminating system of grants-in-aid were not accepted. The Commission found that the existing systems of grants-in-aid, with very few exceptions, are non-discriminatory and that they give assistance to all institutions in a given category on some uniform basis related to the expenditure incurred. They do not take into account the academic performance of these institutions in the sense that a poor performance does not necessarily lead to a cut in the grant and an excellent performance does not necessarily earn an additional assistance. The Commission was of the view that such a grant-in-aid system cannot really lead to a sustained movement for qualitative reform, especially in view of the fact that more than 80 per cent of secondary schools and colleges are assisted under these systems. In fact, the system actually creates disincentives for qualitative improvement. The Commission, therefore, suggested that every institution may continue to get a basic maintenance grant (which may be described as bread-and-butter grant as at present on some egalitarian basis related to its committed expenditure. But the grant-in-aid systems should make two additional provisions.

(1) A special additional grant (which may be described as the "jam" grant) should be given to those institutions which really do good work. It should be clearly understood that this grant is not meant for everyone and that it is a discriminating and not an egalitarian grant. Steps should also be taken to create an adequate
machinery to administer these grants on the basis of objective criteria.

(2) There should be provision for cuts, even in the maintenance grant, if the institutions fail to perform.

The Committee of Members of Parliament on education endorsed these proposals fully. It said: “The policy of the Government towards schools conducted by voluntary organizations should be selective rather than uniform. The system of grants-in-aid should be revised, simplified and made more liberal. All recognized schools should be eligible for grant-in-aid on some egalitarian basis which will help them to maintain proper standards. In addition, there should be no cuts for gross failure and special grants for good and outstanding work” (para 74). But unfortunately the proposal did not find a place in the National Policy on Education, on the ground that it is merely a matter of detail. But even in discussions with the State Governments, it did not receive any support, largely because the officials concerned were unwilling to operate a system of this type and the schools were unwilling to believe that such a system can be operated upon on objective lines and without non-academic considerations such as those of caste or political connections being brought in.

As in the case of selective admissions, the rejection of these proposals also cannot be the end of the matter. I see no alternative to a reform of our grant-in-aid systems on the lines recommended by the Education Commission, so long as these systems exist. We must therefore continue our efforts to win acceptance for these proposals, with modifications if necessary.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

As the Commission looked upon educational administrators as important change agents for the creation of the national system of education, it laid considerable emphasis on improvement of educational administration. Its main proposals on the subject fall into the following categories:

1. Creation of several new institutions (e.g., National Board of School Education, Central Testing Organization, State Councils of Education, etc.) and improvement of existing institutions (e.g., National Council of Educational Research and Training);
2. Creation of the Indian Educational Service;
3. Improvement of Ministry of Education and the State Education Department;
4. Creation of a decentralized educational administration with the establishment of District and Municipal School Boards; and
5. Regulation of private enterprise in education.

These naturally attracted wide attention. But unfortunately no reference to any of these issues was made in the National Policy Resolution because a decision was then made in principle not to include any proposals of administrative reform in the Resolution.

We may discuss each of these categories separately and briefly.

(1) Institutional Reforms: Institutions are an integral part of educational administration and there is no doubt that the creation of a national system of education will need a very different institutional structure than the one which we have at present. We may be required to abolish some existing institutions, modify others and create several new ones. But looking at the various suggestions made by the Education Commission on the subject and the reactions they evoked, I am left with two uneasy feelings. Firstly, I do realize, as a matter of hindsight, that educational administration has been a neglected area of study and that we did not then have adequate specialized knowledge to go into depth and make concrete proposals which could have been implemented with advantage. Unfortunately, we do not have this expertise even today. Secondly, I do realize that we over-emphasized the role of the institutional structures. In fact, our reaction to several problems was merely to suggest the creation of an institution to look after it. In this category, we may include such proposals as Joint Teachers’ Councils in each State and Union Territory, State Boards of Teacher Education, U.G.C. and N.C.E.R.T., Joint Committee on Teacher Education, State Councils of Education (on the lines of the Central Advisory Board of Education), etc. Of course, each one of the new institutions proposed by the Commission would have done some useful work if it had been created; but I also do not think that it would have made a radical difference to the overall situation if some or even all these institutions had been brought into existence. That their non-creation has not made us lose much has also become evident now because the proposals have remained mostly unimplemented for the past 12 years. All things considered, I have no regrets that these proposals have been mostly side-tracked. I would also not protest against the observations of the Committee of Members of Parliament on this subject (although I do not share its view completely) when it said: “We have not favoured several recommendations of the
Commission whose main objectives are to create certain new administrative structures or changes in existing ones . . . such programmes will lead to increasing bureaucratization and increase in unproductive expenditure."

(2) The Indian Educational Service: The Commission recommended the creation of an Indian Educational Service as a very important measure to improve the efficiency of the Ministry of Education as well as of the State Education Departments. The Committee of Members of Parliament turned this proposal down very peremptorily. Almost all the State Governments were opposed to it; and hence the plan had to be shelved sine die. If the present mood of the States is any guide, there is hardly any chance of the proposal being adopted in the near future. Moreover, the proposal did not enliven anyone, except probably the officers of the State Education Departments who obviously regarded it as providing additional promotional opportunities to them. I must also confess that I do not feel as enthusiastic about it now as I did in 1966. While therefore the issue may be kept open in theory, I do not see any chance of the revival of the I.E.S.; and even if it were to be revived, it will only make a marginal contribution to the solution of the basic issues.

(3) Reorganization of the Ministry of Education and the State Education Departments: The Education Commission did make several proposals for the strengthening and reorganization of the Ministry of Education at the Centre and the Departments of Education in the States. As stated above, the most important of these proposals, viz., the creation of the I.E.S., has been turned down. Among the other proposals, some significance attaches to the Commission’s view that the posts of the Secretary to the Ministry of Education and of State Education Secretaries should be filled by the appointment of educationists rather than from the cadre of I.A.S. officers. This recommendation also has been turned down. The other recommendations of the Commission were really minor because of the assumption that the creation of I.E.S. will take care of most problems. Consequently, the present position is that the Education Commission has not been able to make any contribution to the improvement of the educational bureaucracy, either at the Centre or in the States; and in view of the decision not to revive the proposal for creating an I.E.S. the whole problem will have to be examined afresh.

(4) District and Municipal School Boards: The creation of these Boards was one of the most important proposals made by the Education Commission regarding decentralization of authority in educational administration. It was of the view that a time has now come to administer all school education from the district level and to associate the local people closely in planning and implementing educational reforms. For this purpose, it recommended the creation of the Municipal School Boards in towns and cities of one hundred thousand population (or more) and that of the District School Boards for other areas. Unfortunately, this far-reaching proposal has not been accepted so far. This is one of those areas where the proposals of the Commission are on a sound footing and there is need to pursue them relentlessly. Probably, the report of the Asoka Mehta Committee may be of help in trying to implement this recommendation in the years ahead.

(5) Private Enterprise: A major administrative issue the Commission tried to tackle related to the role of private enterprise in the national system of education of the future. It made several important recommendations on this subject. For instance, even after granting the great contribution of private enterprise to the development of education in the past, it still maintained that the growing educational needs of a modernizing society can only be met by the state and that private enterprise can have only a limited and minor role in the national education system of the future. Under the Indian Constitution, private schools had a right to exist; and the Commission suggested that they should not be interfered with, subject to the condition of compulsory registration, if they remain broadly within the framework of National Policy on Education and if they do not seek aid or recognition. But when private educational institutions seek aid and such aid now covers almost the whole cost of the institutions concerned – they should, in the opinion of the Commission, be suitably incorporated in the common school system of public education (or in the general system) and the sharp differences that now exist between them and the government schools should be reduced to the minimum. From this point of view the Commission made several important recommendations relating to the teachers, grant-in-aid and control of these institutions (paras 18.09 to 18.11). Unfortunately, the Commission did not examine the complex issue of minority schools and Article 30 of the Constitution which impinges heavily on this issue.

The Committee of Members of Parliament was more inclined to flatter and please rather than hurt private enterprise and observed that
private enterprise in education can make a useful contribution even in the days ahead, that it should be encouraged and made full use of, that grant-in-aid to private schools should be revised, simplified and made more liberal, and that the guarantees and assurances given to minority educational institutions should be fully protected (paras 73-78). It made no reference to the Commission's views on control of private enterprise, nor to the system of compulsory registration of unrecognized schools. The National Policy on Education also avoided all discussion of the subject, except to reiterate the rights of minorities. This merely underlines the fact that there is a close relationship between voluntary organizations and political parties and politicians. For the same reason, all inconvenient issues about private enterprise have been side-tracked throughout the past 12 years. No problem can, however, be solved by being swept under the carpet; and the precise role of private enterprise in a national system of education will be one of the major issues to be tackled in the reconstruction of education in the days ahead.

SHOULD EDUCATION BE IN THE STATE OR CONCURRENT LIST?

Finally the Education Commission also discussed the role of the Central Government in education and the inclusion of education as a subject in the Concurrent List.

On the first of these issues, the Commission was of the view that the Central Government should play an advisory role and provide a stimulating but non-coercive leadership. The Commission also recommended that the Central Government should assume substantial financial responsibilities for education through the expansion of the Central and Centrally-sponsored sectors (paras S1.13 to S1.16 of Supplementary Note I). All these proposals were fully supported by the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education (paras 82-88); but no reference to them was made in the National Policy Resolution (1968). On the second issue, however, the Commission was divided. The majority of the members were for the status quo and for the continuance of education in the State List. They recommended that "there is plenty of scope, within the present Constitutional arrangement, to evolve a workable Centre-State partnership in education and that this has not been exploited to the full. The case for amending the Constitution can only be made after this scope is fully utilized and found to be inadequate. All things considered we recommend that an intensive effort be made to exploit fully the existing provisions of the Constitution for the development of education and evolution of a national educational policy. The problem may then be reviewed again, say, after ten years" (para 18.30). The minority in the Commission, however, recommended that the Constitution be amended and education brought in the Concurrent List. There is no reference to this issue, either in the Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education or in the National Policy on Education (1968). But the implicit assumption of both the documents was that while education should continue to be a State subject, it should also be looked upon as a national concern.

The topic has however continued to be debated ever since. The view in Parliament has generally been in favour of bringing education in the Concurrent List. The State Governments have always opposed the proposal. It might be noted that this opposition had been there even when one single party (i.e., the Congress) was in power in all the States and national Congress leadership was strong and effective. Over the years, this opposition has only become stronger as the Central political authority became weak and different political parties began to come to power in different areas. On a recommendation made by the Sapru Committee (1963), Mr. M.C. Chagla had earlier taken up the issue of bringing higher education in the Concurrent List. He had to give up because all States (with the exception of Punjab) opposed it. The present proposal which covered all education naturally had no support among the States. The academics continued to be divided over it, and matters would have gone on indefinitely like this if the Emergency had not intervened. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, suddenly picked on the idea and made it a fait accompli. The Janata Government which came to power with a pledge to undo all the Constitutional amendments made during the Emergency declared its intention to put education back in the State List. It did not succeed, mainly because of the opposition from the Congress. But Dr. P.C. Chunder has declared in Parliament that the policy of his government is to act as if education is in the State List.

Another important development of this period must be noted. The recommendations of the Education Commission for large Central financial support for education were based on the position existing in 1966, viz. that the periodical Finance Commissions transferred resources to the States mainly to cover their budgetary deficits so that the latter had to depend very largely on the Centre for financing their
developmental plans. The Seventh Finance Commission has changed this policy and transferred substantial resources to the States so that they have larger autonomy to finance their development proposals. This has changed the situation substantially. In the first place, the Centre now has more limited resources to expand the Central sector. The proposal of the Commission to expand the Centrally sponsored sector has also run into hot weather. The State Governments have been pleading, since 1966, to abolish all Centrally sponsored schemes. They are winning continuously and now the Centrally sponsored schemes, especially in education, have been reduced to the minimum and they appear to be on their way out.

All things considered, the Centre’s role in education has been thrown in a melting pot during the past 12 years; and its satisfactory resolution is one of the major issues to be tackled in the years ahead.

CHAPTER VIII

Other Recommendations

In the three preceding chapters we dealt with those recommendations of the Education Commission which attracted wide attention and were either accepted or rejected. The remaining recommendations of the Commission can be conveniently divided into three main categories:

1. Recommendations which did not excite any major controversy were accepted with or without modifications, but are being implemented only indifferently;
2. Recommendations which were just ignored; and
3. Recommendations on Education for Agriculture (Chapter XIV), Vocational, Technical and Engineering Education (Chapter XV), and Science Education and Research (Chapter XVI).

We shall not discuss the recommendations in the second category. They have rightly become a thing of “historical importance” and with so many dogs wide awake and loudly barking at us, it is probably good wisdom to let the sleeping ones lie undisturbed. Similarly, we shall also not discuss the recommendations in the third category, mainly with a view to keeping the scope of this study within manageable limits. We will, however, devote some attention to the recommendations in the first category which have some significance. Anyone dealing with reports of committees and commissions in India is familiar with a common attitude, viz. to avoid debate and controversy by accepting a recommendation in principle and then to defeat the very purpose of this agreement by either refusing to implement it or by implementing it in an indifferent manner. In the Central Advisory Board of Education, for example, so many of its resolutions remain unimplemented that a humourist has suggested that it should adopt the motto: “We agree to everything on condition that we implement nothing.” It is not therefore a matter of surprise that several recommendations of the Commission excited little debate and were mostly agreed to in principle, but were either indifferently implemented or just put into cold storage. It is mainly with this group of recommendations that we shall be concerned in this chapter.
WORK-EXPERIENCE AND NATIONAL OR SOCIAL SERVICE

Basic education was one great contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the restructuring of Indian education on national lines. But his revolutionary concepts were never accepted. He made work not an element, but a medium of education so that work became the centre of education and children learnt as they worked. He also desired education to be autonomous and free from state control; and hence he maintained that self-sufficiency was the acid test of his plan and that every basic school should fully meet all its expenditure (including teachers’ salaries) from the sale of the produce of the students and teachers. He also contended that this would be practicable if the schools produce commodities for use rather than for the market and that, when commodities for the market were produced, the state took over all the produce of the school. His entire plan therefore was outside the formal state-supported educational system as we know it, and was an instrument for creating a non-acquisitive and non-consumerist society. But these radical ideas were never accepted. The scheme of basic education as it was officially formulated was a far more modest affair. To begin with, it was adopted only at the elementary stage of seven or eight years where the curriculum provided a good deal of time for socially useful productive work in a selected craft (e.g., spinning and weaving, agriculture, carpentry, etc.) to inculcate the dignity of manual labour. Gandhi’s idea of self-sufficiency was totally abandoned; and the only expectation was that the craft should be efficiently practised and that the sale of produce should meet at least the cost of raw materials used and if possible leave some surplus which could be used for students’ welfare activities or given to the students. Similarly, Gandhi’s idea that the basic school of seven years should not teach English was also abandoned. Similarly, his concepts of making work and community service the media of education were also watered down and it was decided that (i) instruction in the basic school was to be related, as far as possible, to the craft practised; and (ii) the school was expected to strive, not only to live as a community, but also to serve its local community in as many ways as possible. Later on, these principles were extended to the pre-school stage through pre-basic schools, to the secondary stage through the post-basic schools and to the university stage through the experiment of rural institutes. Initially, the concept was restricted to formal, full-time education only. Later on, it was extended to non-formal part-time education also; and Vinobaji advocated part-time one-hour schools of non-formal instruction to children who had to work during the day for their family or their livelihood.

After a careful study of the programmes of basic education and their development over about three decades (1937-66), the Commission came to the conclusion that the two fundamental contributions of basic education were: (a) the concept of involving children in work to inculcate the dignity of manual labour; and (b) the concept of national or social service in which every student was expected to participate. These concepts would abolish the dichotomy between education and work, create individuals who are educated as well as productive workers and bridge the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses. It therefore recommended that work-experience and social or national service should be made an integral part of education at all stages of education. This recommendation has come to be almost universally accepted. It also finds an important place in the National Policy on Education (sub-para (6) of para 4).

Work-Experience: In an overview of the implementation of this recommendation over the past few years, the following issues stand out.

(1) The concept of work-experience has become a subject of some debate. The Commission felt that this was an improvement, in some ways, over the idea of craft-teaching as practised in basic schools. For instance, it would emphasize the use of science and technology and modern methods of production instead of crafts which tended to look backwards; it would also include actual participation in productive work (as in a farm or factory) instead of work organized only on the school premises; and so on. But this new concept was not acceptable to the supporters of basic education who have apparently continued craft-teaching in the basic schools, while several other schools introduced the new concept of work-experience in their programmes. To avoid this dichotomy, the Ishwarbhai Patel Committee has suggested a new concept of socially useful productive work which combines the essence of basic education with the innovations proposed by the Education Commission. We hope that this will make it possible to introduce a fairly uniform programme in all schools for inculcating the dignity of manual labour.

(2) The fundamental issue is not this fine debate over the concept or definition, but a vigorous implementation of the programme in all schools in an effective fashion. A study conducted by the NCERT in 1973 gives some quantitative data on the progress of this reform. It
showed that work-experience had been introduced only in 5.27 per cent of primary schools, 9.38 per cent of middle schools, 25.61 per cent of secondary schools, and 7.09 per cent of higher secondary schools. This was the measure of progress achieved in about, say, five years (1968-73). On the other hand, craft (in the sense of basic education) had been introduced in 25.10 per cent of primary schools, 34.88 per cent of the middle schools, 32.02 per cent of the secondary schools, and 54.62 per cent of the higher secondary schools. This was an achievement of nearly 36 years (1937-73). Taken together, work-experience was provided in 7.08 per cent of schools and crafts had been introduced in 30.56 per cent of the schools. About 62 per cent of the schools do not yet have any provision either of work-experience or of craft-teaching; and quite obviously, an extension of the programme to all schools is the greatest need of the day. The activities done under work-experience or craft-teaching are also similar, the only differences being in relative significance (e.g., spinning and weaving is more common under craft-teaching than under work-experience). By and large, some more time is devoted to craft-teaching than to work-experience.** There is, however, little information about the quality of the programme and its cost aspects. It is also found that the programmes have not spread equally in all areas (Tables A-1 for work-experience and A-9 for crafts). The main difficulties that have hindered the expansion of the programmes are lack of government approval, resources, equipment and trained teachers. This shows the very long way we have still to go even in implementing an agreed and high priority recommendation of this type.

(3) Even if work-experience or socially useful productive work is introduced in all schools, does it necessarily follow that we would be able to inculcate the dignity of manual labour in all our children? The answer is probably in the negative. This value-inculcation will succeed only if we simultaneously strive to promote a similar value in the society as a whole. We have hardly taken any steps in this direction.

National or Social Service: (1) The idea that the programmes of national or social service should be developed as an integral part of education at all stages has been accepted. But little information is available about what is being done in this regard at the school stage.

* See Tables 2.2 to 2.5 (for work-experience) and Tables 2.8 to 2.11 (for crafts) in Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Work Experience in Schools, New Delhi, 1977.

** Ibid., Tables 2.5 and 2.18.

Other Recommendations

Many schools are operating some concrete programmes in this field and some of them are of high quality. But unfortunately very little is being done to universalize them. It should be a programme of high priority to develop national or social service as an integral part of education in all the schools of the country as soon as possible, especially as the programme does not involve heavy financial inputs.

(2) The main controversy during the past 12 years or so has been about making national or social service compulsory for all university students. The issue was first examined by the C.D. Deshmukh Committee which recommended that every student who completes higher secondary education should be required to spend one year in a full-time and vigorous programme of national service and that he should not be allowed to join a university unless he completes this programme satisfactorily. This recommendation has been hanging fire for so many years; but it has not yet been possible to implement it partly because of the heavy cost involved but mainly because of the organizational difficulties it presents. It is here that the Education Commission helped to break the stalemate by suggesting that a simpler and worthwhile alternative would be to include a compulsory course of social service as an integral part of undergraduate education in the first two years. The recommendation led to a debate round the relative merits of military training (N.C.C.), national social service (N.S.S.) and games and sports. After the Chinese aggression, a decision had been made to make N.C.C. compulsory for all students at the undergraduate stage. This programme needed heavy expenditure and was not progressing satisfactorily. It was therefore decided to make N.C.C. voluntary and to provide it to about one-third of the students. It was also decided that N.C.C. may be taken as an approved alternative to N.S.S. and that N.S.S. should be provided only to those students who were not admitted to N.C.C. But then the question of students who took considerable part in sports, games and cultural activities came up and it was proposed that students participating in such programmes should be exempted from the N.S.S. In other words, the proposal put forward was that every student at the undergraduate stage should undergo a comparable programme of N.C.C., N.S.S. or sports and cultural activities. But as resources were limited, it was decided to leave all the programmes optional, i.e., it was open to a student to join any one (or even none) of three programmes of N.C.C., N.S.S. or the sports and cultural activities. This of course is a major modification of the recommendation of the Education
Commission.

(3) At present the N.S.S. programme is being implemented on a voluntary basis. A student joining the programme is required to do voluntary service of an approved character for 120 hours a year for the first two years of the undergraduate course. A total of about 450,000 students participate in the programme every year in addition to an equal number of students who participate in the N.C.C. There is unfortunately no precise estimate of students who participate on a similar basis in sports, games or cultural activities. A scheme under which about 500 graduate students at a time will put in a year of approved national service has also been introduced recently.

Obviously, the need now is to evaluate the net results of all these programmes and to decide whether or not a programme of national service shall be obligatory on all undergraduate students and if so, in what form.

**VOCATIONALIZATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The early secondary schools provided only a single track of general education leading, through the matriculation, to the university. From 1882, however, a new policy was adopted and it was decided that secondary education should have two main channels. The first channel would provide, as in the past, general education which would lead to higher education through the matriculation examination. But the second channel would be terminal and would provide vocational courses of a practical character which would prepare the students for some specific job and for an entry into the world of work. This programme was developed between 1882 and 1947 and the alternative courses provided included those in agriculture, commerce, engineering, fine arts, forestry, medicine, teacher training (including physical education), veterinary science, etc. The programme, however, did not make much headway and, even in 1947, the total enrolment in all the vocational courses put together was even less than 10 per cent of the total enrolment at the secondary stage. The main reasons for the failure to divert a large number of students to the terminal vocational courses were: (i) the high prestige attached to university education; (ii) the generally lower emoluments available to those who had vocational education; (iii) the inadequate employment opportunities due mainly to the failure to develop agriculture and industry or even to open up avenues of remunerative self-employment; (iv) the lower social status of those who followed the vocational courses; and (v) the general unwillingness of educated youth (who preferred white-collar jobs) to enter upon blue-collar careers. In the post-independence period, a policy of rapid expansion of secondary vocational education was adopted and far larger employment opportunities became available in the expanding fields of agriculture and industry and education and health services. Between 1950 and 1965, the enrolments in secondary vocational courses were therefore almost three times. But in the meanwhile, the enrolments in general secondary education also had increased so greatly that the overall ratio of enrolments in vocational schools to the total enrolments in secondary education remained almost unchanged.

The Education Commission attached great significance to the development of vocational education at the secondary stage and made far-reaching recommendations on the subject which may be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) There is immense scope for the development of certificate and diploma courses in agriculture and industry (as well as in other fields).

(2) In addition to full-time courses of general and vocational education which already exist, it is also necessary to provide part-time and non-formal courses of general and vocational education. These will smoothen the transition from full-time education to full-time work by interposing a period of part-time education and part-time work between the two.

(3) At the end of the elementary stage, a certain proportion of the young boys and girls who have completed the elementary course will join secondary schools. The bulk of them will be wanting to study further at the higher secondary stage. But a few of them would not like to do so or cannot afford to do so for economic and social reasons and would prefer to learn some vocation or trade and start earning as soon as possible. For this latter group, the Commission recommended the provision of a variety of vocational courses at the lower secondary stage. The duration of these courses should be one to three years. The Commission also suggested that an effort should be made to expand these vocational courses in such a way that the enrolment in them would be about 20 per cent of the total enrolment at the lower secondary stage by 1985-86 (against only 2.2 per cent in 1965-66); this implied an annual growth rate of about 20 per cent.

(4) A large number of boys will drop out at the end of the elemen-
tary stage and will start working on the family farm or in some other industry or even set up a business or trade of their own. A still larger number of girls will drop out and get married, sooner rather than later. The Commission recommended that part-time non-formal education of general or vocational type should be provided to these persons, according to their needs, between the ages of 14 and 18.

(5) The programmes of full-time vocational education will have to be greatly stepped up at the higher secondary stage, the enrolments therein being increased from 20 per cent of the total in 1965-66 to 50 per cent of the total in 1985-86 (this would imply an annual growth rate of about 10 per cent). These courses also will be of one to three years' duration according to needs. In addition a wide range of part-time courses will have to be offered to those who are already in employment or have left school and desire to improve their qualification.

In order to develop these programmes on a sustained basis, the Commission also recommended the institution of special grants to State Governments in the Central sponsored sector.

These proposals were supported by the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education (para 27). They were generally welcomed in all quarters and the National Policy on Education laid a special emphasis on them (sub-para 11(b) of para 4 of the Resolution). However, the implementation of the programme has run into several problems.

To begin with, it must be admitted that the proposals of the Commission on this subject were unrealistic and impracticable. Its estimates of potential employment opportunities available for certificate and diploma holders were too high and all the district studies made so far indicate a comparatively small scope for additional employment, even under very favourable conditions of economic growth. Moreover, this is probably the one area in which a manpower planning approach is likely to be helpful and even the National Policy Resolution (1968) said: "provision of facilities for secondary and vocational education should conform broadly to the requirements of the developing economy and real employment opportunities" (sub-para 11(h) of para 4). But very little has been done to promote studies to deepen our understanding of this problem. The Commission has also obviously underestimated the personnel, administrative, and financial problems involved (including those of buildings and equipment) in securing the very large expansion of vocational secondary education it visualized. All these aspects of the problem will have to be examined afresh.

Another unfortunate thing is that the scheme of Central grants to the programme has run into problems and has not yet been initiated on an adequate scale. With the whole future of Centrally sponsored schemes hanging in balance, one is not sure how the large resources needed for this programme on a continuing basis can be found.

A third problem is the unfortunate linking up of this programme with the adoption of the $10 + 2 + 3$ pattern. A careful examination of the above recommendations of the Commission will show that its proposals for vocationalization at the secondary stage are not at all connected with the adoption of the new pattern. What the Commission has visualized is the provision of vocational courses of one to three years' duration to those who have completed the elementary stage. These courses need not be provided in the secondary schools only. In fact, only a few of them would be provided in the ordinary lower secondary schools and may be of three years' duration. The bulk of them would however be provided in special institutions such as the I.T.I.s and a large proportion of these would be industry-based rather than located in schools. Similarly, the programme of vocationalization at the higher secondary stage simply means that diploma level courses of vocationalization (with a duration of one to three years) should be provided to those who have passed class X. Of course, some of these may be of two years' duration and may also be provided in higher secondary schools along with the academic programme of the same duration. But this is not all the programme. The bulk of it will be provided in special institutions such as polytechnics or teacher-training schools and quite a proportion of them would be industry-based. In spite of all these very clear recommendations of the Commission, the entire discussion of the programme of vocationalization of secondary education is being carried on as if it is equal to the two-year courses of full-time vocational education that can be provided in higher secondary schools. While important problems are involved in the organization of the two-year vocational courses (to be run side by side with academic courses of the same duration) in the higher secondary schools - and these need to be discussed - one should not forget to deal with the much wider dimensions of the problem as visualized by the Education Commission.

The Commission also visualized a large programme of non-formal and part-time secondary education most of which will be vocational
The Education Commission and After

(or have an important vocational component) and which is needed by those young boys and girls who would leave the formal school at the end of elementary or lower secondary stages. This problem has received only scant attention so far.

Finally, we should like to refer to problems connected with the organization of the full-time higher secondary stage of two years which is expected to have two streams—the general and the vocational. These have recently been examined by the Adiseshiah Committee whose main recommendations are as follows:

1. The general education stream of the higher secondary stage should include the study of one language (with 15 per cent of time-allowance), socially useful productive work (with another 15 per cent of time-allowance) and three electives from the humanities and social and natural sciences (which will take the remaining 70 per cent of the time). The vocational stream will have the study of one language (with another 15 per cent of time-allowance) a general foundational course (with another 15 per cent of time-allowance) and vocational electives (which will take the remaining 70 per cent of the time, half of it being spent on practical work). By and large, higher secondary schools should provide for both the streams.

2. There should be no rigid barriers between the general and vocational streams and there should be many cross-overs between the two. Where necessary, bridge courses should be provided.

3. The provision of vocational courses should be related closely to employment or self-employment opportunities available in the areas concerned. For this, carefully planned local surveys are needed.

4. Necessary steps should be taken to provide the physical plant, trained teachers, textbooks, etc., for the vocational streams.

5. Vocational courses should be popularized through better opportunities for vertical mobility and preference in recruiting policies of governments.

The programme has naturally run into several difficulties which were not unexpected. The basic problem is that, in the present situation, very few students opt for vocational courses. Consequently, most of the higher secondary schools run only the general education stream. Another difficulty is that the necessary vocational surveys and man-power studies at the district level are not yet available so that the planning of the vocational courses is far from easy. The high cost involved in setting up vocational courses is yet another deterrent to schools in providing them. The difficulties of securing teachers, textbooks, etc., are still formidable. Careful and detailed plans for adequate and proper development of the vocational courses are prepared only in a few States, and the experience of their implementation is not very encouraging. All things considered, one finds that the vocational streams have been very recently introduced, that their teething troubles are far from over and that their popularity is very thin at the moment. They have yet to enjoy social prestige and for the moment they may be described as the best education for other people’s children. One must, therefore, wait and see how the situation improves and how the incentives and inter-linkages recommended by the Adiseshiah Committee help in the process. One must also watch carefully the extent to which these vocational courses really prove to be terminal and help the students to get employment or self-employment.

The problem of vocationalization of secondary education has therefore made only a limited progress in the past twelve years due to all these difficulties. This is obviously one of the toughest nuts one has to crack in Indian education and there is so little of research and experimentation to help us. The guidance provided by the Education Commission has, at best, been of limited use; and this is therefore one area where a good deal of fresh thinking needs to be done in the years ahead.

QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT

Other Recommendations

The recommendations of the Education Commission regarding qualitative improvement of education have also proved to be largely ineffective for several reasons. For one thing, the country did not accord that high priority to programmes of qualitative improvement of education which the Commission had visualized. Nor did it regard the recommendations of the Commission on the subject as a package deal which, in fact, they were. The one significant recommendation of the Commission in this regard, viz. the creation of pace-setting institutions at every stage and in every sector of education was deliberately rejected. The other two significant recommendations, viz. the organization of a nation-wide movement for qualitative improvement of education and the creation of a climate of sustained and dedicated hard work in all the educational institutions could not be implemented in the existing social and political climate. The Commission had placed the major responsibility for improving standards on teachers and stu-
dents; but neither they nor their organizations accepted this position; nor did they strive actively to realize the objective. The Commission’s proposals for improvement of supervision also misfired because its proposals for the reconstruction of the State Education Departments (of which supervision is an integral part) were not implemented. Something no doubt was done in the areas of curriculum revision, production of textbooks and other materials, adoption of improved teaching methods and examination reform. But the achievements of these limited efforts were more than off-set by the negative results of sheer administrative inefficiency of not being able to hold examinations in time or allowing mass-copying. All in all, one feels that the Commission has made but little contribution to the improvement of standards in education and that during the past twelve years they have continued to decline due to social, political, and academic forces which we find ourselves unable to control.

There is however one important recommendation of the Education Commission which needs some notice. The Commission found that there was little articulation between different stages of education and that each educational institution was atomized, isolated from others, and dealt with directly by the Education Departments. It therefore recommended that these counter-productive arrangements should be replaced by the creation of an integrated system wherein (1) the universities will work specifically for improving standards at the school stage and in close collaboration with their colleges; (2) the colleges themselves will work in close collaboration with secondary schools in their neighbourhood, and (3) the secondary schools will work in close collaboration with the primary and middle schools in their neighbourhood. The main tasks of these groups of institutions in a locality working together would be to share facilities and expertise, to identify and develop student talent, and to evolve common programmes of educational development (including innovations and experiments) and community service. Such an integrated system will “break the terrible isolation under which each school functions at present. It will enable a small group of schools working in a neighbourhood to make a cooperative effort to improve standards. It will enable the Education Department to devolve authority...and also provide the necessary stock of talent at the functional level to make use of this freedom” (para 2.52). As usual, this excellent recommendation has been universally accepted. But the implementation is ad hoc, limited and perfunctory. Here however is undoubtedly a direction of advance which can be exploited to the full in the years ahead.

EDUCATION ACTS

The Education Commission had recommended that the Government of India should issue a Statement on the National Policy on Education and that the State Governments should pass comprehensive Education Acts to give a statutory basis to education. Such legislation can serve a limited but useful purpose. Unfortunately, the recommendation about State Education Acts has not been seriously pursued. The Governments of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh initiated some action, but the proposals are in cold storage at the moment. The main difficulty is that when legislation is proposed, several knotty problems are brought to the surface, controversies arise, and one is called upon to take a definite position on issues which we generally try to sweep under the carpet. The powers that be therefore prefer to maintain the status quo where educational administration is carried on mostly on the basis of executive orders, where fundamental problems are generally shelved, and where decisions on them are taken, not as part of a carefully laid down long-term policy, but in an ad hoc reaction to the various pressures as they arise from time to time.

STUDENTS: WELFARE AND INVOLVEMENT

The Education Commission made several recommendations regarding students. These included:

- abolition of tuition fees at the elementary stage;
- lower secondary education to be made tuition-free in all government, local authority and aided private schools;
- provision of tuition-free education to all needy and deserving students at the higher secondary and university stages (paras 6.08-6.15);
- free textbooks and writing materials to be provided at the primary stage;
- a programme of book banks to be developed in secondary schools and institutions of higher education;
- libraries in secondary and higher education to contain a number of sets of textbooks;
Other Recommendations

the overall situation in higher education as the Commission had hoped. On the whole, one is left with the impression that the Commission's contribution to the solution of the difficult problems of student discipline and unrest was marginal and that the problems need a far greater study in depth.

TALENT SEARCH: SCHOLARSHIPS

The recommendations of the Commission regarding search for and development of talent were far reaching. It was of the view that our large population could be our best asset because native intelligence tends to be distributed equitably. Unfortunately, however, only a small proportion of this native pool of ability is discovered and cultivated, due to a variety of reasons. The programme of discovering and developing talent is therefore of supreme significance and a great responsibility of the national system of education, especially as our development is considerably handicapped for lack of trained and competent personnel. From this point of view, the Commission made several proposals (paras 9.52 to 9.57, 11.07, 16.54 and 16.56). These include:

- The provision of universal elementary education is the foundation of the programme because it will net all available talent in schools;

- An intensive and nation-wide effort should be made at the elementary stage to discover all talented students. They should then be enabled, through a programme of scholarships and placement to continue their education in good secondary schools. The same process should then be repeated at the secondary stage and all talented children should be assisted to pursue their education in good institutions of higher education, and so on;

- Talent cannot be identified by the total marks in an examination. Special efforts will have to be made to identify talent in every field;

- The top talented students should be regarded as the wards of the state and enabled to receive all education they can benefit from;

- Special efforts are needed to discover and develop talent in science and mathematics;

- Enrichment programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular, should be organized for talented children, ultimately in every school;

- There should be an adequate programme of scholarships at every
stage. For example, by 1985-86, we should have scholarships for 5
decent of the total enrolment at the higher primary stage; 10 per
cent of the total enrolment at the secondary stage; 25 per cent of the
total enrolment at the undergraduate stage. At any rate, it should
be ensured that all the top talented students (say, 5-15 per cent of each
age-group) will receive the best possible education;
- There should be a small programme of scholarships for study abroad;
- There should be a liberal programme of loan scholarships in higher
education to supplement the national and university scholarships; and
- Methods of selecting students for scholarships should be improved;
and it may be ensured that “talent” does not get too closely as-
associated with elite socio-economic backgrounds.

These recommendations go much beyond a traditional programme
of scholarships and their special features are obvious. What is equally
important, they have to be taken as a package deal with the main ob-
ject of mounting up sustained nation-wide programme for the search
and cultivation of talent.

These were enthusiastically supported by the Committee of
Members of Parliament on Education; and fortunately, they also find
a place in the National Policy on Education (1968) which said: “For
the cultivation of excellence, it is necessary that talent in diverse fields
should be identified at as early an age as possible, and every stimulus
and opportunity given for its full development” (sub-para (5) of para 4
of the Resolution).

Some action has been taken in the past twelve years to implement
this decision. A few scholarships for study abroad have been in-
roduced; there has been some increase in national scholarships; and a
major innovation has been the introduction of about 20,000
scholarships a year for identification and development of rural talent
(at the rate of two scholarships per community development block).
But the impact of the programme is still marginal: a very large pool of
native ability is still eliminated at the elementary stage itself; and even
a good deal of the talent that finds its way in the schools remains un-
developed or underdeveloped because of generally low level of stan-
dards we maintain in our educational institutions and because of the
absence of any special programmes to pay the required attention to
gifted students. This is therefore obviously an area on which a very
high emphasis will have to be placed in the years ahead.

**Other Recommendations:**

**Character-Formation**

One of the most persistent demands put forward by the people in the
post-independence period is that the national system of education
should emphasize the formation of character – the cultivation of
moral, social and spiritual values. One realizes the genesis of such a
concern in a society where moral values are on the decay. But one is
not clear how to build these values in the formal school system and
how effective a school programme of cultivating these values can be in
revitalizing the society.

The problem had been discussed in detail by the University
Education Commission (1948-49) and by the Sri Prakasa Committee
of the Central Advisory Board of Education. The Education
Commission was largely guided by these recommendations and also
made its own significant contribution. The proposals of the
Commission may be briefly summarized as follows:*

1. Moral, social and spiritual values should be cultivated through
   indirect and direct instruction.
2. The indirect influence in building up character is extremely
   significant. The school atmosphere, the personality and behaviour
   of teachers, the facilities provided in the school – all these will
   have a large say in developing a sense of values. The school
   assembly, the curricular and co-curricular activities, the
   celebration of festivals of all religions, work-experience, team
   games and sports, subject clubs, social service programmes – all
   these can help in inculcating the values of cooperation and mutual
   regard, honesty and integrity, discipline and social responsibility.
3. Specific provision of direct moral instruction is highly desirable:
   one or two hours a week should be set aside for the purpose in the
   school time-table.
4. Moral values can be taught in relation to all religions.
5. There should be a definite effort to promote national
   consciousness and pride. Every student should have an
   understanding of India’s cultural heritage and its achievements.
   He should also be aware of the present reality, the problems
   facing the country and the ways in which they are being (or
   should be) tackled.

* For details of the proposals, see paras 1.74 to 1.80; 8.94 to 8.96; and 11.03 and
  11.04.
6. In inculcating values, we should also draw upon other traditions such as the liberalizing forces that have arisen in the Western nations and which have emphasized, among other things, the dignity of the individual, equality, freedom and social justice (e.g., the French Revolution, the concept of the Welfare State, the philosophy of Marx and the rise of socialism). These values are of special significance in the Indian society which suffers from lack of equality and social justice.

7. A general study of the different religions of the world could be a part of the undergraduate course. Students could also be encouraged to meet in groups for silent meditation.

8. The universities should prize and cultivate values like intellectual integrity, courage and scientific knowledge and must learn to encourage individuality, variety and dissent within a climate of tolerance. They should also foster free and disinterested thinking which can challenge vested interests and established ways, not only among their students, but as far as possible in the general public as well.

9. Provision for instruction in moral, social and spiritual values should be made in all government and local authority schools; and private schools should be encouraged to follow suit.

10. University Departments in Comparative Religion should be specially concerned with the ways in which these values can be taught wisely and effectively and should undertake preparation of special literature for use by teachers and students.

The proposal of laying emphasis on moral and social values was welcomed and supported by the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education; and the National Policy on Education also emphasized the programme (para 3). The proposals were also generally "accepted" in official as well as non-official circles. The main hitch has been that the implementation has been very indifferent. There is no dearth of exhortations on the subject; but sound academic work, which is needed most, is conspicuous by its absence. The government and local authority schools have not introduced the programme; and

* The Committee of Members of Parliament on Education added: "All students should be given appropriate courses in citizenship which emphasize the fundamental unity of India in the midst of her rich diversity. These should include a study of the Freedom Struggle, the Constitution, the noble principles enshrined in the Preamble and the problems and programmes of national development" (para 4).

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Other Recommendations

the few private schools that provide moral instruction do it mostly for religious considerations and generally in a way far different from that visualized by the Commission. Experimental work is very limited. On the whole, one might say that the educational system is not as conscious of its responsibilities in this matter as it should have been and deliberate, planned efforts at character-building are minimal. At the same time, events such as strikes by students, teachers and karmacharis, malpractices in examinations, nepotism and even corruption within the system, feuds and rivalries among students and teachers exercise a very negative influence which, in its turn, is strengthened by the untoward effects of the mass media and of the general lack of character within the wider society itself. This was the situation in 1966 and it is so in 1978. There is no reason to assume that the recommendations of the Commission on this subject and their general acceptance by all concerned have made any difference to the overall picture.

DECENTRALIZATION, DIVERSIFICATION, ELASTICITY AND DYNAMISM

The policy of the British administration, since 1882, was only to maintain a minimum number of government institutions as models and to leave the entire expansion of education, especially at the secondary and higher stages, to Indian private enterprise. Over the years, therefore, the educational system came to consist mostly of private schools and colleges conducted by Indians. The Government distrusted them and this distrust grew as the freedom struggle began to intensify. The Government, therefore, created an administrative machinery which left little freedom to schools and teachers. All curricula had to be approved by the State Education Departments or Universities. No textbook which was not approved could be used. Inspection was rigorous and educational institutions were subject to innumerable rules, regulations and orders which multiplied over the years and decided in advance the action to be taken by the schools and teachers in almost every contingency that might arise. External examinations which controlled teaching indirectly but almost totally were over-emphasized. Working days of schools, vacations and holidays, and even time-tables were centrally prescribed; and so on. One understands this system because it is only through such centralization and standardization that a few British officials could control what
happened in the system as a whole. Of course, we paid a heavy educational price for this policy. The teachers who had no freedom in teaching could give little freedom to the students in learning. The entire educational process therefore became mechanical and was sustained merely by external inducements such as getting certificates, degrees and jobs. The attempt at uniformity (which was an inescapable result of centralization) made it impossible to adjust education to the environment or needs of different categories of children, in a plural, diverse and vast country like India and had an adverse effect on the relevance of the programmes and the quality of educational services. When these attempts at centralization and uniformity are superimposed on the large and growing size of the system, one gets a huge monolithic structure which can be moved only with great expenditure of money and energy. Consequently, the system also became rigid and static and changed only slowly and at rather infrequent intervals, when it changed at all.

One naturally expects that these unhealthy policies would be fully and quickly changed by governments after independence because there was no longer any need to distrust schools or teachers. But unfortunately this did not happen. The political reasons to distrust schools, colleges and teachers ceased to exist; but the educational elites that came to power replaced them by academic reasons for distrusting schools and teachers; they had such poor opinion of the teachers and schools that they felt it necessary to continue the earlier policies of distrust on educational grounds and for maintaining standards. This was obviously a rationalization to cover the innate love of power of the administrators and their inclination to continue the status quo. The situation therefore became worse because the bonafides of the Indian administrators could not be challenged (as we could do in the case of the British) and because they had a “sacred” justification for their policies. During the past three decades therefore the policy of distrusting the schools and teachers has continued to dominate the scene; the trends towards uniformity (or standardization) have increased; and with the immense growth in the size of the system, its rigidity and static character have been intensified. The country became free in 1947; but in the realm of education, the slavery of the schools and teachers to the grinding machine of administration only increased, with a corresponding deterioration in the freedom, spontaneity and creativity of the educational process.

The Education Commission desired to revolutionize this situation and to do, at least between 1966 and 1976, what really ought to have been done between 1947 and 1956. It recommended that we should improve the quality of teachers and the conditions for their work and then restructure our educational administration on the basis of a trust in schools and teachers. No doubt some risks were involved and there was probably a price to pay. But the Commission was convinced that this risk and this price would be very small as compared to the price we have paid and are continuing to pay for a policy of distrust. It also felt that the policies of centralization and striving after uniformity were highly counter-productive and need to be abandoned. It therefore put forward a number of significant proposals among which the following deserve mention.

(1) In a plural society like India, any attempt at a rigid uniformity becomes difficult and counter-productive. As the life and culture of the Indian people is a rich mosaic of “unity in diversity”, their education system also should be diversified to suit the local needs and conditions, within the broad framework of a national system of education.

(2) For the same reason, we should also evolve a highly decentralized system of educational administration. The state should respect the autonomy of the universities which should share it with their departments. The colleges should become autonomous and thus confer freedom and responsibility on the teachers and students. Similar freedom should eventually be extended to the schools as well. In administration also, authority will have to be genuinely shared between the local community at one end and New Delhi at the other. The school and its community should come closer together in a programme of mutual service and support, with a definite role for the latter in administration. All school education should be administered from the district and city levels. The States should largely function as policy-making, planning and coordinating authorities and the Centre should provide a stimulating leadership in the national interest.

(3) Side by side, we should evolve a decentralized system of educational planning which needs to be done at the institutional (or community) and district levels in addition to the Central and State levels where alone it is done at present.

(4) The national system of education should be flexible and capable of adjusting itself to the life and needs of the people which vary greatly from community to community and from individual to individual or group to group even within a given community. The policy should be to adjust the educational system to the life of the people rather than insist on the people to adjust themselves to the system at the risk of
being kept out or pushed out of it. Such a flexibility is all the more essential in the modern world where the future shape of things is somewhat unpredictable.

(5) The national education system should be dynamic, especially in modern societies where social change itself has become so rapid. In a changing environment, the effectiveness and even survival of an organization depends upon its willingness to continually evaluate itself and on its capacity to renew itself to meet the changing challenges of the day. The educational system should therefore be equipped for making a continuous, critical and objective assessment of its own performance and also to change itself adequately as the occasions demand. “In the rapidly changing world of to-day,” said Dr. D.S. Kothari, “one thing is certain: yesterday’s educational system will not meet today’s, and even less so, the needs of tomorrow.”

These principles of changing the existing educational system underlay many of the concrete recommendations made by the Commission. They found support with the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education although, unfortunately enough, they were regarded either as administrative matters or as details and excluded from the National Policy on Education (1968). In the discussions outside, however, I found that these principles were generally accepted in all quarters and it was agreed that we should reform our educational system on these lines. But this agreement in principle did not help much in implementing individual reforms. Several instances of this can be given.

(1) **Autonomous Colleges:** This proposal of the Commission to create autonomous colleges has made little progress. It is only the Madras University, due entirely to the vision and dynamism of its Vice-Chancellor, that has implemented it. Elsewhere, it still continues to be a subject of debate.

(2) **Experimental Schools:** The idea of giving “autonomy” to selected schools has made equally poor progress. Only one Board of School Education (i.e., Rajasthan) has adopted it; and here too, the reform is more due to an individual to than the system as such.

(3) **Examination Reform:** The Commission suggested that we should move in the direction of abolishing external examinations and replacing them by a system of continuous internal evaluation (para 11.53); that remuneration to examiners (which is the vested interest which tends to perpetuate the system) should be abolished (para 11.57); that more frequent periodical assessment should be introduced to reduce the importance of the final external test and examination techniques improved (paras 11.54 and 11.55); that certificates at the end of school examinations should simply state the performance of the candidate without any declaration of having passed or failed (para 9.80); and that a system of a complete internal assessment of students (which is not mixed with external examination results) be developed (para 9.84). Very little practical effect has been given to these recommendations and we continue to rely almost solely on the external examinations in spite of their established unreliability and in spite of the fact that we cannot hold them on time or manage them efficiently (as the growing evil of mass copying implies).

(4) **Curricula and Textbooks:** The idea of decentralizing the capacity to construct curriculum to the school level has hardly been adopted. On the contrary, curriculum-making is tending to be even more centralized and raised to the national level. In the preparation of textbooks, Central organizations such as the N.C.E.R.T. are having a more important role so that a textbook-based curriculum is being adopted on the more centralized national basis rather than on the basis of the State as a unit.

(5) **Administration:** University administration continues to be highly centralized, slow to move, and inelastic, with little delegation of authority to departments or colleges. The State Education Departments are getting even more centralized with more and more decisions being taken at the level of the minister; and hardly any delegation of authority has become possible to local authorities and communities or to the district level staff. Similarly, educational planning also continues to be centralized at the national and State levels.

(6) **Elasticity:** The trend for uniformity still continues to dominate the scene so that reforms based on the concept of elasticity cannot be implemented. We saw earlier how a selective approach in admissions to higher secondary and university education or in development of institutions and the adoption of a differential system of grants-in-aid were opposed and rejected. Similarly, the Commission’s proposals (i) to allow good schools to adopt an advanced curriculum suited to their resources (para 8.0) and (ii) to grade schools on the basis of their performance were also rejected. It has not been possible even to implement the simple proposal that different regions be allowed to have different patterns of vacations suited to their local conditions; and “standard” building plans are still used in spite of the knowledge that they create horrible, inconvenient monstrosities in many localities.

(7) **Procedures and Practices:** In spite of all the recommendations
of the Commission to the contrary and in spite of their acceptance in principle, the control of the administrations over schools and teachers has increased rather than decreased during the past 12 years and administrative procedures have become more complicated and dilatory. Consequently, progress in this field is extremely slow, if not at a standstill.

Why is it that, in this crucial recommendation, which is not disputed in theory, there is so little progress in practice? The answer lies in the fact that here an attitudinal change is mainly involved; and it is naturally very difficult to bring it about. The traditional authoritarian attitudes are too strongly entrenched to permit any real delegation of authority. The desire for uniformity is so strong that it does not even tolerate diversity, to say nothing of cultivating it as a matter of policy. On false grounds of anti-elitism and in the name of so-called democracy and egalitarianism, we would like to treat everyone alike, and thereby prevent the development of wisely discriminating policies without which neither elasticity nor a pursuit of excellence is possible. Mediocrity has taken control of our academic life and administration which finds security in a static situation, especially as it is unable to move itself. At the same time, our innate suspicions of elitism prevent even those who can from moving ahead. Unless the existence of these attitudes is consciously admitted and a deliberate attempt made to change them, a national system of education which is decentralized, diversified, elastic and dynamic cannot be created and no individual reform based on these principles can be successfully implemented.

CHAPTER IX

The Continuing Educational Crisis

(1965-66 to 1977-78)

In the preceding four chapters, we discussed what happened to some of the more important individual recommendations of the Education Commission. In this chapter, we shall consider the overall educational development in the country during the past twelve years. This will give us some idea of the impact of the Report of the Commission on the education system as a whole.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The period of twelve years between 1965-66 and 1977-78 falls naturally within three sub-periods: (1) the three annual plan years (1966-68); (2) the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74); and (3) the truncated Fifth Plan which consisted of four years only (1974-78).

As compared with the earlier period of fifteen years (1950-51 to 1965-66) or the first three Five-Year Plans, the post-Commission period of twelve years (1965-66 to 1977-78) shows several interesting variations and common features such as:

- Expansion of educational facilities at all stages was the principal feature of the first three Plans. It also continued to be the dominating feature of the post-Commission period in spite of its plea for according higher priority to programmes of transformation and qualitative improvement.
- The development of secondary and university education (with special emphasis on agricultural, technical and medical education) was accorded high priority in the educational development in the first three Plans. This priority continued to dominate the scene even in the post-Commission period, in spite of the lip-service paid to mass education.
- The goal of universalizing elementary education for children in the age-group 6-14 is being pursued since 1950-51. As may be readily seen, the progress was comparatively easy in the first three Plans
when we were working at lower levels of enrolment and costs were comparatively low. In the post-Commission period, the problem has become more difficult because of rising costs and because we are now working at higher levels of enrolments where further progress becomes exponentially difficult.

- The tensions within the education system remained under reasonable control in the first two Plans (1950-51 to 1961-62). But since the third plan, they have come to the surface and have assumed an increasingly acute form which has led, during the past seventeen years, to continued disturbances in the system, especially at the university stage. This has made the task of educational reconstruction more difficult and complicated.

- The successful implementation of programmes of educational development needs two essential conditions: (1) a strong political authority to make and implement decisions, as well as favourable social and economic conditions; and (2) large investment of financial resources. As stated earlier, both these factors were more favourable in the first three Plans when we really spent our time in dealing with less important issues. In the post-Commission period, we have tried and are still trying to face up to some of our fundamental problems which need a far stronger political will, a much active social support and a far larger investment of funds. Unfortunately, we do not have even the same political, economic and social support that we had in the first two or three Plans.

The overall picture of educational developments between 1965-66 and 1977-78 is therefore one of a growing gap between the big challenges which are becoming increasingly complex and our attempts to deal with them which are proving to be increasingly inadequate.

With these few broad observations, let us survey quickly the major developments in the different sectors of education, from the pre-school stage to the university stage.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education has been a comparatively neglected sector of education. The Education Commission (1964-66) was the first to discuss the issue and support the idea that the state should accept a limited responsibility for pre-school education, especially among the underprivileged groups (paras 7.03 to 7.07). But this is one of those recommendations with which everyone agrees and no one does anything special about. Hence pre-school education has developed, both before and after 1965-66, in response to market forces rather than to planned action. The principal demand for it has come from the urban upper and middle classes for whom it has become either a prestige symbol or a necessity (because of women working outside home). The data of Table IX.1 show its progress during the period under review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IX.1: Pre-school Education (1965-66 to 1977-78)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No. of pre-schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No. of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No. of pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expenditure (Rs. in million)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The officially published statistics (Table IX.1) of the Ministry of Education do not include the data about unrecognized pre-schools (the most numerous category) and also about Balwadis, conducted by the Department of Social Welfare. Even if due allowance is made for all such inadequacies, pre-school education was available to only about one million children or to about 2 per cent of the total population in the age-group 3-6 in 1971. The position has not altered materially since then; and the target suggested by the Commission that we should provide pre-school education to five per cent of the children by 1985-86 is still a far cry.

As the Education Commission had not gone into sufficient details and prepared a realistic blueprint for action, the Central Advisory Board of Education appointed a Study Group on the Development of the Pre-School Child, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Mina Swaminathan, to examine the issue from all points of view and to prepare a ten-year plan for action (1971-81). Its report is still the best document available on the subject; and its proposals can easily provide the guidance needed for the development of pre-school education in the years ahead (1982-2000).

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Article 45 of the Constitution provided that free and compulsory
education should be provided for all children till they complete the age of 14 years. Since independence, we have been trying to reach the goal, and our principal method of achieving it is twofold: (1) We are trying to establish primary and middle schools in all areas so that an elementary school becomes available to every child within easy distance from home; and (2) we are trying to enrol every child in school so that the total enrolments in classes I-V would be about 110 per cent of the children in the age-group 6-11 (to allow for over-age and under-age children admitted to these classes) and those in classes VI-VIII would be about 90 per cent of the children in the age-group 11-14. This is of course a purely statistical approach which is unsatisfactory because it ignores the qualitative aspects altogether. But that is all what we have been doing.

Table IX.2 shows the number of primary and middle schools during the period under review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary schools</th>
<th>Middle schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>209,671</td>
<td>13,596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>391,064</td>
<td>75,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>454,270</td>
<td>106,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>462,567</td>
<td>110,036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The needs of additional primary and middle schools were ascertained through specially conducted Educational Surveys in 1957, 1965, and 1973. A quick survey for the same purpose was also attempted during 1979. The rough estimate is that we may need about 600,000 primary schools and about 200,000 middle schools to reach the goal of universal education. The rate of establishment of new schools has obviously slackened in the post-Commission period. But in spite of the long distance we have yet to travel, it is not beyond us, if we make the effort, to reach the target in a period of five years or so from now. But the Sixth Five-Year Plan has fought shy of the target and one is not quite sure whether we will reach it even by 1985-86.

The data relating to enrolments in classes I-V or children in the age-group 6-11 are given in Table IX.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>13.77</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>19.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>(60.6)</td>
<td>(24.8)</td>
<td>(43.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>(96.3)</td>
<td>(56.5)</td>
<td>(76.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>(100.4)</td>
<td>(66.1)</td>
<td>(83.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to the total population in the age-group 6-11.

It will be seen that between 1950-51 and 1965-66, enrolments in classes I-V increased at an average of two millions per year. In spite of all the talk and debates on the subject since the Report of the Commission, the enrolments at this stage have increased only by about 1.6 million a year, a level of performance which is even lower than that between 1950-51 and 1965-66. We have run very hard indeed not even to keep where we are, but to fall a little behind.

The position of enrolments in classes VI-VIII is also somewhat similar. This is given in Table IX.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>(20.6)</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
<td>(25.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>(44.2)</td>
<td>(17.0)</td>
<td>(61.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>(48.6)</td>
<td>(23.9)</td>
<td>(72.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in parentheses show the percentages to the population in the age-group 11-14.
In contrast with the position at the primary stage, the enrolments in classes VI-VIII in the post-Commission period (1966-78) are slightly larger than those in the first three Plans. But the journey we have yet to complete is very long, and what is worse, the additional enrolments in these classes in some areas are not even keeping pace with the growth of population.

One must also note that this game of enrolments does not always tell the truth. Bogus and inflated enrolments have become a routine and these unfortunately are the highest in the backward States.

It is obvious however that mere targets of enrolments in classes I-VIII do not tell the whole story. The following related facts also deserve to be noted:

1. The rate of drop-outs is very high: out of every 100 children enrolled in class I only about 50 reach class V and only about 25 reach class VIII. These rates have remained almost constant since 1950.

2. The expenditure on elementary education increased from Rs.2,130 million (or 34 per cent of total educational expenditure) in 1965-66 to Rs.7,873 million (or 37 per cent of the total) in 1975-76. The very large increase in absolute figures is due mainly to rise in prices and upgrading of salaries of teachers. But it is also evident that the low priority accorded to elementary education in 1965-66 (or as a matter of fact throughout the post-independence period) continues unchanged to this day.

3. The qualitative aspects of the problem show marked deterioration. In many schools, the teachers' salaries constitute about 98 per cent of the total expenditure. The condition of the school plant has deteriorated; and even academic achievements of students show a trend towards decline.

4. The revised enrolment target for the Sixth Plan shows that it will not be possible to make elementary education universal even at the end of the Seventh Plan, i.e. 1989-90.

How does one compare the situation of elementary education in 1977-78 with that in 1965-66? In 1965-66, the total estimated population of children in the age-group 6-14 was 90 million, of whom 61 million were enrolled and 29 million were not attending. In 1977-78, the total population of children in the age-group 6-14 is expected to be 131.50 million, of whom 83.21 million are enrolled and 48.29 million are not attending. In other words, the children out of school even in 1977-78 are more numerous than those in 1965-66, showing that, as a country, our additional enrolments at the elementary stage in the post-Commission period are not keeping pace with the growth of population! If the increases in costs and deterioration in standards are also taken into account, it is obvious that the task of reaching the goal of universal elementary education has become more difficult in 1977-78 than it was in 1965-66. The crisis of non-performance in elementary education which has persisted throughout the post-independence period has only deepened over the past 12 years.

ADULT EDUCATION

The same can be said of adult education as well. In spite of all the plans made by the Education Commission, the programme of adult education has continued to be neglected during the past 12 years as the data of Table IX.5 will show.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IX.5: Adult education classes (1965-66 to 1977-78)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of adult education centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolments in above centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on adult education (Rs. million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of expenditure on adult education to total educational expenditure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The fall in the number of adult classes and the enrolments therein is due to the closure of the Gram Shikshan Mohim in Maharashtra.

During this period, there has also been a rise in the total number of illiterates in the country. This is yet another example of a continuing crisis of non-performance in the post-independence period which has also deepened during the past 12 years.

ENROLMENT TARGETS

Ever since 1947, the highest emphasis in educational development has been on a linear expansion of the educational system as we inherited it in 1947. This implies a certain attitude which needs a categorical statement, viz. that the existing system of education is basically good, that the first responsibility of government is to expand it and provide
access to it to an increasing number of people, and that all ideas of reforming and transforming the system can be pursued side by side to the extent possible. It is for this reason that the hard core of all the five year plans approved so far consists of enrolment targets for children in the age-groups 6-11, 11-14, 14-17, and 17-23, corresponding to the primary, middle, secondary and university stages respectively. It is again for the same reason that the largest part of the plan allocations is devoted to the realization of the enrolment targets. As was pointed out earlier, the Education Commission has not been able to make any change in this policy, and all its plans to accord a higher priority to programmes of qualitative improvement or transformation have so far fallen on deaf ears.

It is of course necessary to note that this game of enrolment targets has some relevance at the elementary stage where we are expected to provide universal education to children in the age-group 6-14. Consequently the plans try to raise, as high as possible, the targets of enrolment at the primary and middle school stages. On the other hand, there is no such definite target at the secondary and university stages. Here the enrolments basically depend upon (1) the extent to which pressures rise up from below (i.e., the number of persons who complete the elementary stage and desire to proceed to the secondary or those who complete the secondary stage and desire to proceed to higher education); and (2) the facilities provided for secondary and higher education (i.e., the number of new secondary schools and colleges opened, their dispersal in various parts of the country, and the number of students they are allowed to enrol). Since the principle of selective admissions has not been accepted, since open-door access prevails, and since the State Governments are anxious to see that educational facilities are made available to all those who desire such education, the targets of enrolment in secondary and higher education really mean the minimum expansion of secondary and higher education that will be needed to meet the public demand for it. Of course, our experience has always been that the targets fixed for primary and middle school education generally prove to be ambitious (leading to shortfalls in achievement) while those in secondary and higher education generally prove to be underestimates so that we compliment ourselves on over-shooting them. Naturally, the failure in achieving the first group of targets, i.e., in primary and middle school education (where the enrolments need to be stepped up) is as bad as the success in over-reaching the targets in secondary and higher education (where the enrolments need to be kept down).

### Table IX.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrolments in classes IX-XI/XII (1950-51 to 1977-78)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to population in the corresponding age-group."

It will be noticed that there is no marked difference in the expansion of enrolments in secondary level institutions in the fifteen years before
the Education Commission and the twelve years after it. There is of
course a sharp increase in the period between 1975-76 and 1977-78,
due mainly to the adoption of the new pattern; and this represents
more an adjustment than a real increase. The obvious implication is
that all the discussions about expansion of secondary education and
its restriction have had no major impact on the overall enrolment
situation in secondary education which continues to be more or less
what it was before 1965-66.

(3) Expenditure: The expenditure on secondary education
increased from Rs.1,377 million in 1965-66 (or 22.2 per cent of the
total expenditure) to Rs.4,936 million (or 23.5 per cent of the total
expenditure) which implies that its overall priority also did not change
to any significant extent.

(4) Vocational Secondary Education: Coming to the provision
of vocational education at the secondary stage, one finds that the
progress has been disappointing. Owing to the failure to promote
industry in a big way, there were no increasing opportunities for
employment at the middle level in industry. Opportunities for
employment in other sectors also did not show any rapid increase.
On the whole, the employment profile remained in a low key so that
vocational secondary education also showed a recession. Table IX.7
shows the position of vocational secondary education between 1965-
66 and 1975-76.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IX.7: Vocational secondary education (1965-66 to 1975-76)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. No. of secondary vocational schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enrolments in above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expenditure on above (Rs. million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Proportion of this expenditure to total educational expenditure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A word of explanation is needed. Owing to a change in the classifi-
cation system of educational statistics adopted during this period, the
figures for 1975-76 are not strictly comparable to those of 1965-66.
For example, polytechnics which were shown as vocational education
at secondary level in 1965-66 are now classified as vocational
education of the collegiate standard. But even after due allowance is
made for these changes, it is still found that the increase in secondary
vocational education between 1965-66 and 1975-76 is marginal. At
any rate, there is hardly any increase in the proportion of students at
the secondary stage diverted to the vocational courses. This is of
course a sad comment on all the debate on vocationalization of
secondary education that has gone on in the country during the past
12 years.

How does the overall situation in secondary education in 1977-78
compare with that in 1965-66 and what difference did the Report of
the Education Commission make to this overall situation? Perhaps the
main contribution of the Education Commission to secondary education
was to undo the damage which had been done by the concept of the multipurpose secondary schools adopted after the
programme, secondary education was “streamed” into Arts, Science,
Engineering, Agriculture, etc. and a student was called upon to decide
his future career at the end of class VIII or the age of 12 or 13. Dr.
D.S. Kothari said that this was as bad as child-marriage. All this has
now ceased to be and this attempt at a premature specialization has
come to an end. On the positive side, the adoption of the new pattern
of 10 + 2 + 3 has strengthened secondary education, especially where
classes XI-XII have been added to schools. These have definitely been
changes for the better. The basic issues however remain mostly
unsolved. Secondary education in India has suffered from a number of
weaknesses: a rapid and uncontrolled expansion and the creation of
small, uneconomic, non-viable institutions (more than 50 per cent of
the secondary schools have small enrolments of less than 250); poor
standards; lack of diversification (i.e., more than 90 per cent of the
students take up only the academic courses leading to the university);
absence of terminal vocational courses on an adequate scale; and
above all, lack of relevance. The Report of the Commission did not
make any meaningful dent on these issues to which the educational planner of tomorrow will have to address himself.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The post-independence period may be described literally as the “era of
higher education” in Indian educational history. The elite that came
to power in 1947 was hungry for more and better higher education of
which it had been starved in the pre-independence period and which
alone gave it what it desired most, viz. a recognition in the
international world. It was also convinced that the future of the Indian
society depends upon the universities, symbolized best in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's observation: "A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people." The University Education Commission was the first to be appointed by the Government of free India, and throughout the past thirty years, higher education has received the highest priority, the best attention and proportionately larger allocation of funds. It is also the one sector of education which has expanded most.

But this is not all the story. The ruling elite also decided that higher education will continue to be, as it was in 1947, the almost exclusive preserve of the upper and middle classes who would use it mainly for perpetuation and strengthening of their privileged status and for providing some vertical mobility to the underprivileged groups with a view to legitimizing it. Higher education thus became the selective mechanism par excellence to determine who should or should not be admitted into the elite status, and without it one could not hope to get any meaningful job or a privileged position of self-employment. This created a very fierce competition to get access to higher education and it would have been socially explosive to deny anyone an entry into this "lottery" pool. Hence the insistence on an open-door policy which necessarily led to uncontrolled expansion and consequent dilution of standards. This is why the powers that be evolved the "dual" policy of maintaining a core, high quality sector of higher education which continued to be the almost exclusive preserve of the elite and surrounding it by a "red light district" of poor quality institutions in which everyone was welcome to fish and to take his chance. But obviously, a system like this cannot go on indefinitely without accumulating the tensions which are inherent in it. These began to come to the surface by 1960 and increase as the distance between the job and the degree became longer. Student unrest, which was the main symptom of this deep-seated malaise increased in all areas, became almost endemic in some, and everywhere made the situation worse by disrupting the system and lowering the standards still further. Politicians, some of whom fished in troubled waters and others troubled the waters in order to be able to fish, soon joined the fray and, in their characteristic style, made the problem more complex and intractable. The result of these developments was to create a first-rate crisis in the system of higher education: a crisis which converted it from "a pursuit of truth and excellence" into a "fire-fighting operation". We must judge the developments of the period mainly with a view to determining the extent to which the Report of the Education Commission has helped us to resolve this crisis.

Before 1965-66, the policy was to provide admission to every student who completed secondary education and desired to study further. The Education Commission recommended selective admissions and regulation of enrolments in higher education. These proposals were rejected and the old policy of open-door access has therefore continued with one modification: the State Governments are now less anxious to expand higher education (except in backward areas) on account of financial stringency. Consequently, higher education continued to expand during most of the period under review and has only been checked slightly in recent years. The data of Tables IX.8-IX.11 tell the story.

**Table IX.8: Institutions of higher education (1950-51 to 1977-78)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities and other institutions of this level</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research institutes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Colleges of general education</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>1,673</td>
<td>3,667</td>
<td>3,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Colleges of professional education</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>2,775</td>
<td>3,276*</td>
<td>3,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Colleges of other education</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1,253</td>
<td>1,405</td>
<td>1,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>843</td>
<td>5,820</td>
<td>8,514</td>
<td>8,847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Increase largely due to a change in classification, viz. institutions of vocational secondary education where the minimum admission qualification was class X (e.g. polytechnics) were now included in this category.

**Table IX.9: Enrolments in higher education (1950-51 to 1977-78)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>6,851</td>
<td>13,898</td>
<td>15,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Postgraduate and diploma at this level</td>
<td>16,528</td>
<td>71,821</td>
<td>180,257</td>
<td>236,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Undergraduate</td>
<td>86,648</td>
<td>625,907</td>
<td>1,408,744</td>
<td>1,863,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pre-University/intermediate</td>
<td>221,337</td>
<td>623,642</td>
<td>1,504,829</td>
<td>858,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Undergraduate diploma</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>5,350</td>
<td>6,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Contd.)
The Continuing Educational Crisis

Table IX.9: (Contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Professional education (college standard)</td>
<td>97,542</td>
<td>738,120*</td>
<td>1,462,118*</td>
<td>1,585,929*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>423,245</td>
<td>2,069,311</td>
<td>4,575,196</td>
<td>5,65,316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes enrolment in institutions of collegiate standard.

Table IX.10: Teachers in higher education (1950-51 to 1975-76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950-51</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities and other institutes of this level</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>9,271</td>
<td>18,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research institutes</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Colleges of general education</td>
<td>15,312</td>
<td>58,057</td>
<td>128,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Colleges of professional education</td>
<td>4,901</td>
<td>53,972</td>
<td>78,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Colleges of other education</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>6,675</td>
<td>8,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24,423</td>
<td>128,364</td>
<td>235,822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IX.11: Expenditure on higher education (1950-51 to 1975-76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950-51</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities</td>
<td>49.05</td>
<td>320.54</td>
<td>995.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Deemed universities</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>31.61</td>
<td>124.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Institutes of national importance</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>37.35</td>
<td>222.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research institutes</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>18.23</td>
<td>36.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Colleges of general education</td>
<td>71.71</td>
<td>383.36</td>
<td>1756.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colleges of professional education</td>
<td>42.19</td>
<td>466.55</td>
<td>1508.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Colleges of other education</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>31.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171.43</td>
<td>1,269.77</td>
<td>4,674.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total expenditure on higher education, as a proportion of total education expenditure was 15.8 per cent in 1950-51, 20.4 per cent in 1965-66, and 21.8 per cent in 1975-76.

It will thus be seen that, throughout the period under review, the basic policies adopted early in the post-independence period continued to hold sway with some minor modifications. Among the good things done, one may refer to the revision of the salaries of teachers; the programme of qualitative improvement promoted by the U.G.C.; advancement of research in various fields and especially in social sciences; the attempt to adopt the regional languages as media of instruction; increase in scholarships; certain revision of curricula and extension of the semester system; some attempt at examination reform; and so on. But these exercises did little to change the overall situation in higher education. On the other hand, the main recommendations of the Commission which could have made some difference were either thrown out (e.g., selective admissions, major universities) or were being indifferently implemented (e.g., autonomous colleges). One also cannot help feeling that the proposals of the Commission were not radical enough and did not address themselves to the fundamental weaknesses of the system which, in their turn, are again related to the fundamental weaknesses in the society itself. Even if all the recommendations of the Commission were implemented, the basic contradictions and tensions within the system would still have remained. They can only be cured through a simultaneous attempt to alter the society and the system of higher education. This was of course not on the agenda. It is, therefore, hardly a matter of surprise if the crisis in higher education still continues: over-production of "educated" persons; increasing educated unemployment; weakening of student motivation; increasing unrest and indiscipline on the campuses; frequent collapse of administration; deterioration of standards; and above all, the demoralizing effect of the irrelevance and purposelessness of most of what is being done.

EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Since equalization of education opportunities through expansion of facilities has been the principal programme of educational development in the post-independence period, it is necessary to see how far this succeeded, especially after 1965-66.

Equalization of educational opportunities has three aspects: quantitative, social, and qualitative. On the quantitative side, the most important programme of equalization is the provision of universal elementary education. As was pointed out earlier, only a limited progress was made in this field. The wide gap between advanced States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat on the one hand and backward States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, continued to persist. In fact, as the advanced States made considerable progress and came nearer the goal of universal education, the total
concentration of non-attending children in the backward States increased. Today, the eight backward States in education contain 74 per cent of all the non-attending children in the country. Similar anomalies continue to persist between advanced and backward districts.

On the social side, the education of girls has continued to progress at a faster rate than that of boys throughout the post-independence period. The gap between the education of boys and girls at all stages had therefore decreased considerably between 1947 and 1965; and it narrowed still further between 1965 and 1977. Table IX.12 gives the details.

**Table IX.12 : Education of girls (1950-51 to 1975-76)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of girls enrolled for every 100 boys in</th>
<th>1950-51</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary (I-V)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Middle (VI-VIII)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Secondary (IX-XI/XII)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Universities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Colleges of general education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colleges of professional education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the scheduled castes and tribes, the progress of education at all stages continued to be rapid and maintained the trends set up between 1947 and 1965. At the school stage, the coefficient of equalization (i.e., the proportion of the enrolment of scheduled castes and tribes to their total population divided by the proportion of all enrolment to total population and multiplied by 100) for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is shown in Table IX.13.

**Table IX.13 : School Education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1965-66 to 1975-76)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient of equalization</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>S.T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. At primary stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At middle stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At secondary stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IX.14 shows the progress of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes at the university stage.

**Table IX.14 : Higher education enrolment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (1965-66 to 1975-76)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.C.</td>
<td>S.T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre-university intermediate</td>
<td>42,200</td>
<td>5,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Undergraduate</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>8,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Postgraduate</td>
<td>2,650</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Professional</td>
<td>31,800</td>
<td>5,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other education</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1965-66, the total number of post-matric scholarships awarded to scheduled castes was 78,548 at a cost of Rs.37 million and that to scheduled tribes was 15,925 at a cost of Rs.7 million. In 1975-76, the scheduled castes were given 282,100 scholarships at a cost of Rs.243 million and the scheduled tribes were given 54,255 scholarships at a cost of Rs.46.7 million.

On the whole, therefore, the education of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes may be said to have made satisfactory progress during the period under review. The problems that continued to cause concern were:

- The progress was not uniform among all the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The dominant among them availed themselves of the facilities to a much greater extent than the others so that a special effort was needed to reach the more backward amongst them.
- The qualitative aspects remained less satisfactory. The wastage rates among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were generally higher. Their achievements were generally lower. In spite of this expansion, it was not always possible to find suitable candidates for the reserved superior posts in government service.
- The scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students do not yet have adequate access to quality and prestigious institutions. Reservation and continued special efforts seem to be called for.

One unhappy development of this period was the growing tensions between the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and certain other castes which are almost equally poor but who do not have either the
educational support which the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes get or the reservations in government service. It was admitted that both these groups have fairly comparable economic handicaps while the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have social handicaps in addition and what is even more important, a handicap of centuries of deprivation and neglect. While this made out a case for some special treatment to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, it was argued that it was not fair to totally refuse both educational support and reservations to the poor people and backward castes other than the scheduled castes and tribes. A movement has therefore begun which demands that the same principles of educational support and reservation (which are now applied to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) should be applied to all poor people and other backward castes. Another form of the demand is that both educational support and reservations should be extended to all economically handicapped persons irrespective of caste or birth. This is one of the major problems that will have to be tackled in the years ahead.

The equalization of educational opportunities has a qualitative aspect also. The Education Commission referred to the segregation that takes place at the school stage, between the children of the privileged classes (who go to good quality and prestigious private schools) and of the under-privileged people (who go to the publicly maintained poor quality schools). It also drew attention to a similar phenomenon at the university stage where the privileged groups use a core of high quality institutions while the under-privileged ones use the penumbral of institutions with low standards. No attempt was made to remedy either of these evils.

QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT

Unfortunately, educational data in India are collected annually on the basis of indicators of inputs only, e.g., number of schools, enrolments, number of teachers, provision of buildings and equipment, expenditure on supervision, etc. But no indicators of inputs can give an idea of qualitative improvement: these need a study of outputs which are not available, except the results of certain examinations. There is therefore very little empirical data to show whether standards in the educational systems are improving or declining. This will have to be indirectly inferred from certain data about inputs, from subjective impressions and from special studies (which are very few). Some broad observations that can be made in this context are the following:

- In all planning exercises and at the administrative level, expansion continued to be the first priority; and even conceptually, programmes of qualitative improvement were ranked lower.
- An increasing proportion of the total allocation available was used up for programmes of expansion so that very little money was left for programmes of qualitative improvement. Even the idea that a certain minimum allocation (say, 20 to 30 per cent) should be reserved for programmes of quality could not be accepted. This was particularly so at the school stage and in general at university and higher levels.
- However, where a limit on expansion was accepted, qualitative programmes received priority and attention. For instance, in technical education, all expansion was practically stopped on account of increasing unemployment. During the period under review, therefore, an intensive and sustained effort was made to improve quality in technical education.
- The shortage of available resources and the increase in costs (including a rise in teachers' salaries) created a situation where the vast bulk of expenditure consisted mainly of salaries. At the primary stage, for instance, the expenditure on teachers' salaries (which ought to be about 70 per cent of the total) rose to somewhere between 90 and 98 per cent. The investment in buildings and equipment was drastically reduced.
- Between 1947 and 1965, the established trend was that while the hard core of selected schools increased in numbers, expanded their enrolments, and maintained or improved their standards, the common run of schools showed a deterioration of standards because their resources were curtailed when their enrolments were rapidly expanding. This trend continued unchanged during the period under review also.

A characteristic of the Indian situation is that there is a fair number of good teachers and good schools who are continuously striving to improve standards. But these efforts remain ad hoc, sporadic and individual and do not add up to a major drive for qualitative improvement as such. The Education Commission suggested that the problem of low standards is so serious that nothing less than a nation-wide movement for qualitative improvement would suffice. But as already stated, this recommendation was not accepted. The crisis in qualitative aspects of education may therefore be said to have continued throughout this period.
The Continuing Educational Crisis

Table IX.15 (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Other programmes</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cultural programmes</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total general education</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Technical education</td>
<td>8210</td>
<td>2410</td>
<td>6800</td>
<td>8050</td>
<td>18050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Total education</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Percentage to total plan outlay</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be seen that the financial outlays on education during the period under review were, on the whole, inadequate and continually declining in proportion. They could not achieve much by themselves; and no attempts were made to make up for the financial shortfalls through human effort.

The Education Commission recommended that the investment in education should reach six per cent of the national income by 1985-86. The Government of India accepted this view which has been embodied in the National Policy on Education (1968). During the period under review, the total educational expenditure increased from Rs.6,220 million in 1965-66 (or 3.01 per cent of the national income) to Rs.21,407 million in 1975-76 (or 3.42 per cent of the national income). The increase is hardly significant.

AN OVERVIEW

India has made a considerable effort to improve its educational system in the post-independence period; and if one compares the position in 1950-51 with that in 1977-78, one can certainly see progress—and commendable progress at that—on several fronts. But this observation is subject to two reservations. The first is that in every plan, the achievements have fallen far short of the needs of the situation so that the basic educational crises have continued to persist. The second is overriding class-orientation of the entire educational effort. The formal educational system is now a gigantic structure with about 700,000 educational institutions, 100 million students, more than 3.5 million teachers, and an expenditure of about Rs.25,000
million which is next only to that on defence. In spite of this expansion and all the changes made therein, however, the educational system still continues to benefit mainly the upper and middle classes for whom it was originally designed. It still makes only a marginal contribution to the education of the people, and especially of the poor people, who have only a limited access to it, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In fact, the total injustice of the system and its unpardonable discrimination against the poor can be highlighted by the following indisputable facts:

1. About 60 per cent of the people (age 10 years and above) are still illiterate and have received none of the benefits of this vast educational system.
2. About 20 per cent of the children, mostly the lowest of the lots, never enter the schools at all. They are born poor and continue to be poor and the formal system of education bypasses them.
3. Of those children that enter the schools, nearly half drop out by class V and nearly three-fourths drop out by class VIII; only about 15 per cent reach class XII, and less than one per cent get the first degree.
4. As pointed out above, the system accords very low priority to programmes such as adult education, universal elementary education, or non-formal education which would benefit the masses, especially the poor. On the other hand, it accords high priority to and invests the bulk of its resources in secondary and higher education which benefit mostly the top 30 per cent of the population.
5. The children from poor families get an unfair deal in the system whose entire ethos is oriented to the needs and aspirations of the upper and middle classes and which still continues to use English as the medium of instruction in higher education and thereby encourages the use of English as a medium at the school stage also.

It would, therefore, be incorrect to describe the existing educational system as an instrument for educating the people; the evidence adduced above clearly shows that it is more appropriately designed for not educating them. In fact, the primary objective of the system is not to spread education among the people, but to function as an efficient and merciless mechanism to select individuals who should continue to remain in the privileged sector or enter it afresh. It does not discharge even this task impartially and, as we shall see presently, functions in such a biased fashion that those who are already in the privileged sector find it easier to continue therein while the under-privileged find that the access to the privileged sector through the portals of education is becoming more restricted and increasingly dependent on chance rather than on merit. The main achievement of the system, therefore, is to condemn the bulk of the children of the common people as drop-outs and failures and to consign them to a life of drudgery and poverty which has hardly any parallel in the contemporary world or even in our own earlier history.*

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CHAPTER X

Lessons for the Future

In the preceding chapters, we briefly reviewed why the Education Commission was appointed (Chapter I), what its main recommendations were (Chapter II), the extent to which these recommendations were implemented (Chapters III–VIII), and their overall effect on the educational system as a whole (Chapter IX). In this concluding chapter, we shall address ourselves to one major issue: What has all this experience to teach us about educational reconstruction in the days ahead, say, between 1981 and 2000?

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Education Commission was fully justified in calling its Report, Education and National Development, to highlight the interdependence of education and development. It also tried to indicate how Indian education will have to be transformed, improved and expanded to promote national development. As the narrative in the preceding chapters has shown, this attempt was only a limited success and gives several pointers for making a second and better planned attack on the problem. Some of the important ones of these pointers are briefly discussed below:

(1) The Commission did not give a clear picture of “development”, that is, of the future society we should strive to create in the country and the steps to be taken to create it. This exercise has therefore to be taken up afresh. In fact, it is essential to maintain a nation-wide debate on the subject in the years ahead.

(2) While the Commission did prepare a fairly good blueprint of the national system of education, its Report did not highlight the close links between education and society. Nor did it elucidate how the dialectical process of education leads, on the one hand, to a strengthening and perpetuation of the status quo and on the other, to social change and development. The proposals to be framed in future for the creation of national system of education will, therefore, have to be clearly justified with reference to the new society we desire to create.

(3) A very persistent effort needs to be made to educate all concerned to realize that a radical reconstruction of education and a socio-economic transformation have to go together. It is often found that people believe that major educational changes can be brought about without attempting corresponding changes in society itself. Such illusions do a considerable harm and have to be dispelled.

(4) There is very little understanding about the price that society has to pay to create a national system of education. Not too infrequently, this price is highly underestimated. Very often, people believe that this price is essentially in terms of financial investment, say, six per cent of the national income. It is very essential to educate the people to realize that “money” is the least of all the different prices that society has to pay for creating a good educational system. Money no doubt is needed for educational reform; but money alone, whatever its quantum, can never achieve the goal. The more significant prices that society has to pay for education include the investment of “thought”; of dedication; of sustained hard work by teachers, students, educational administrators and others; of courage to make hard and unpleasant decisions; and above all of a willingness to change the society itself.

(5) It needs also to be emphasized that every citizen and every social group is an actor, with his or its own unique role, in the national system of education. While therefore different individuals and social groups have their own unique roles to play in education, a national system of education cannot be created by any one individual or social group or even by some of them working together. It can be created only when every individual and every social group plays his or its assigned role.

Of these five valuable lessons, the first three deal with a conceptual clarification of the problems involved and with the preparation of a broad revised outline of a national system of education. We shall consider them first. The last two deal essentially with implementation and will be discussed in a later section.

THE FUTURE SOCIETY

There are several ways in which the vision of the future society can be presented. We would however like to adopt a simpler approach to the problem, viz., to state the worst aspects of the existing social order which have to be eliminated as early as possible. This will indicate, not only some of the major features of the future society, but also a
programme of action. From this point of view, we consider three aspects of the present society as its worst evils.

(1) Elitism: The first weakness is the elitist character of our society in which all power—political, economic, and knowledge—is concentrated in the hands of a small elite which, despite its internal jealousies and quarrels, always keeps a united front vis-a-vis the masses of people who are marginalized and unable to assert themselves or to plan their own destiny. We created this elite structure of our society some centuries ago when all power was vested in the three upper castes (or social groups): the Brahmins who monopolized the power of knowledge, the Kshatriyas who monopolized political power, and the Vaishyas who monopolized the money power. These three castes were described as twice-born, their second birth being their initiation into the study of the sacred texts to which they alone were entitled. This designation, therefore, shows what united these castes together as well as what separated them from the vast masses of people—the Shudras who lived as slaves or workers and the Antyayas or the outcastes like the untouchables who lived precariously on the social fringe. Our society accepted this unjust organization, gave it a religious and social sanction, and created a philosophical base which reconciled the masses of people to their marginalized status in society and successfully prevented them from rising in revolt.

The advent of Islam did not change this picture materially because the Muslim society itself got divided into the similar elite groups and the masses of people and the overall society continued to present the same elitist model, the Hindu and Muslim elites joining hands, in spite of their internal rivalries, to keep the masses of people—both Hindu and Muslim—suppressed and marginalized. Even in the modern period, and in spite of the introduction of secular and democratic trends and the creation of a Western system of education, the same elitist model perpetuated. This is because the elite of the pre-modern period who had social status, economic power in the form of ownership of land, trade and industries, and political power in the sense of positions in government and the army were the first to see the advantages of modernization and get full benefit of the new educational opportunities that were being opened up. This suited the British also who saw in them a group of intermediaries and interpreters who might help to stabilize their rule. As education spread to wider sections of society and as secular and democratic forces became increasingly stronger, three main changes occurred in these elite groups: (i) the membership of the group ceased to be almost exclusively based on birth or caste and several individuals of the non-elite castes were co-opted into elite status through the educational system which, while promoting vertical social mobility, also acted as a great screening devise to show who should or should not be so co-opted; (ii) the ranks of the elites were considerably increased to accommodate the new arrivals who far outnumbered those that dropped out for some reason or the other; and (iii) the elite system was legitimized on grounds of “merit” and was no longer in need of any explanation in terms of previous births or karma. In the Indian society of today, therefore, the ruling elite consists of the top 20-30 per cent of the people who include the modern Kshatriyas or wielders of political power (e.g., the politicians, the bureaucracy, and the army, etc., who constitute the state), the modern Vaishyas or the wielders of economic power (e.g., the industrialists, merchants, etc., who constitute the commercial corporation),* and the modern Brahmins (e.g., the learned people or the intelligentsia who constitute the university system). The rest of the population which is 70-80 per cent of the total leads a subhuman existence, is purely marginalized, and is bereft of all power—political, economic or knowledge—and is deprived of education and all other good things of life.

The two main forces of modernization, education and science and technology, have allied themselves with the elite and helped them to improve their standards of living but have not done (or were not allowed to do) a corresponding service to the masses of people. The elite themselves had a brief honeymoon with the people in the pre-independence period to present a united front against the British and to drive them out. But once this goal was achieved, they returned to their original position of a ruling and exploiting group, notwithstanding the many populist slogans they had learnt in the meanwhile to mouth. In fact, this new society of a modernized elite ruling over a still traditional people is far worse than that of the past when both the elite and people were traditional, when neither of them had any access to modern science, when the gap between their standards of living was not so wide nor felt so keenly, and when the elite did not have access to all the modern means of tyranny and suppression.

(2) The second grave weakness of our society, which practically

* At present, this group will include the rich farmers who also control a good deal of economic power.
follows from this elitist character, is its hierarchical organization. It will be wrong to assume that the society is divided into only two groups—the elite and the masses. Actually, it is a highly fragmented society in which there are thousands of small groups (a situation which often gives it an appearance of a society which consists almost exclusively of minorities) each of which is trying to relate itself to others, not in a horizontal relationship, but in a hierarchical order on the basis of some real or imagined advantage. Even the lowest social group—the scheduled castes—is far from homogeneous: it is divided into several sub-groups all hierarchically arranged so that even the attempt to help the scheduled castes often ends in helping only those who are the most powerful among the scheduled castes. This hierarchical tradition which has gone deep in our blood is iminical to the values of democracy and social justice and is one of the major obstacles to progress.

(3) The third major weakness of our present social order is poverty which has few parallels in the world. The majority of our people live below the poverty line and a substantial proportion of them lead an almost sub-human existence. It is this colossal and degrading poverty that is at the root of most of the evils we see around us: low standards of nutrition, bad housing conditions, and inability to benefit from social services such as education or health. This is not merely a question of more production, though it is necessary and is made more difficult by growth of population. It is also a problem of the nature of production as well as of equitable distribution.

There are two other areas where recent trends give us cause for concern. We have rightly adopted the principle of secularism in organizing our public life. The Hindu tradition of tolerance and respect for other religions is a definite asset; and in the past 150 years, we have made considerable progress to develop a secular society and policy. But the recent upsurge of revivalist communal forces, both in the Islamic and the Hindu world, do not portend well. They can only generate tensions and conflicts and spell great danger to national stability and progress. The second is the rise of authoritarian trends which forebode ill to the delicate plant of democracy we have been nurturing and must continue to foster. Both these developments are recent and have begun to loom large on the horizon after the Report of the Education Commission. But there is no doubt that they will have to be very carefully watched in the days ahead.

Assuming that we are agreed on this analysis, what is the programme of development that we should undertake? Here a preliminary observation is necessary. The current debate on the subject of development in India is divided over two models: the capitalist model which we have actually adopted and which has the largest support, and the socialist model to which we pay a lip service and which is advocated only by a minority. One can have one’s preference between the two. We, on our part, do not believe that the capitalist model will meet our needs and between the two, would certainly prefer the socialist model. But many will not share this view and maybe, for equally good reasons. The point we would like to highlight in this context is that there can be a third model. The consumerist society that the Western nations have created, some through capitalism and others through socialism, has led to grave crises of environmental degradation, depletion of scarce and non-renewable resources, intense social and political tensions between and within nations and stockpiling of nuclear weapons which pose a threat to the very existence of man. Under these circumstances, it would be perfectly in order to turn away from both these models and seek a third model where sheer consumerism will not be equated with the quality of life and where a new appropriate technology will be developed in keeping with our resource endowment (including population) and our needs, without detriment to our environment. The discovery of this third model is a universal need. It is also a great possibility in India; and the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi can make a material contribution to it. It is in our best national interests to concentrate on the evolution of this third model.

To combat the elitist trends, in which a smaller number of people come to decide the vital issues affecting the lives of larger number of people, we need, first and foremost, the adoption of a new philosophy—faith in the common man. We must believe in his dignity, in his basic wisdom, and in his inherent capacity to manage himself. We must also be prepared to organize the society on the basic principles of individual dignity and autonomy, adjustments being made therein only when another person’s equal right to autonomy and dignity is affected. In other words, we must accept the need to transfer effective power from the elite to the masses. Here power means all the three forms of power—political, economic and knowledge—which are obviously interrelated. It should be clearly understood that this also implies a revolt against the growth of extreme professionalism in the modern society which results in a great restriction of individual freedom. In other words, we must equate the development of our country with the development of our suppressed masses and accept the view that the
best input into this development is the people's awareness of themselves, and of the social reality around them, a rekindling of their faith in themselves, and helping them to organize themselves to solve their problems. This new approach will liberate the oppressed masses and also elevate the elite by freeing them from the dehumanizing role of an oppressor in which they have trapped themselves. It is obvious that this readjustment of the present relations between the elite and the masses will not be smooth or easy. It may even become violent if the elite do not see the writing on the wall or take their own enlightened self-interest into consideration. A change of heart on the part of the elite is necessary. But it cannot be a prime mover. Nor can it be successful in the absence of counterpressures. Perhaps what is needed is a simultaneous effort for a change of heart among the elite and for organizing and strengthening the masses, with the state coming to the aid of the people where necessary.

The problems of inequality and poverty will have to be tackled together. A number of steps will be needed here. Perhaps the most fundamental are a rectification of the extremely skewed pattern of ownership in property and income: without this and without some drastic restraint on the wealth, income and consumption of the top 30 per cent of the population (which we have been unable to do), nothing worthwhile will be achieved. Equally important is the discovery and use of an appropriate technology which will be suited to the size of our population, to our resource endowment, and to the pressing problems of mounting pollution. Thirdly, we should concentrate on the production of commodities which the common man needs (rather than on the luxury goods required by the elite) and make these available everywhere at reasonable price, if necessary, through a public distribution system; and lastly, we should ensure a minimum standard of living for every individual through guaranteed employment at a wage which will enable him to meet all his essential needs. It is only in this way that effective economic power will be transferred to the people. On this foundation it will be easy to transfer political power by building organizations of the people to enable them to make effective use of adult franchise, and knowledge power, through programmes of universal elementary and adult education.

The third major programme will be that of social and national integration. This was a serious concern when the Education Commission wrote its Report. It still continues to be so; if anything, recent developments have made it even more serious. The fragmentation of political life and the non-existence of any party which can command loyalties on a national-wide basis poses a danger to the delicate process of nation-building which is well under way but far from being complete. Reference has already been made to the growth of authoritarian trends and communal revivalism. Regional rivalries and linguistic empire-building are also adding fuel to the fire. Social and national integration does not merely imply a negative action to counteract these evils. It also means the positive and the more difficult task of changing attitudes, teaching different groups to retain their identity and yet to live together in a society with shared common goals and programmes, and to create in every citizen, irrespective of caste, race, or religion, the sense of common Indian identity to which he will be loyal and for which he will be prepared to sacrifice. There is no doubt that, in the years ahead, a very major political concern will be to promote social and national integration and to deal firmly with all the forces that tend to subvert it.

It is of course granted that neither this vision of the future society nor the programme to create it will be shared by all. It should not be; and it is to be expected that there would be other visions of the future society we should have and other means of creating it. But what one regrets most is that there is not enough of national debate on the subject. One of our first concerns therefore should be to revive this debate among all concerned: the academics, the politicians, the teachers, the students and the general public. As this debate proceeds, the problems involved will become clearer; and what is even more important, the number of those who are committed to the radical socio-economic transformation we need will also grow. This will help us greatly in the task of bringing about the socio-economic transformation itself.

THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION: A REVISED BLUEPRINT

Quite obviously, every vision of a future society and the means of creating it will necessarily imply a vision of the national system of education which this future society will need. For, education and society are like two sides of a coin; one leads to the other and cannot exist without it. It is obviously not possible, nor is it necessary, to discuss all the different models of the future society we can imagine and their educational implications. Our purpose will be served if we discuss, as an illustration, some educational implications of the model of the future society we have outlined above. While doing so, we shall also indicate where the proposals made by the Education Commission
need a modification or future examination and why. Two preliminary words of caution would be in order here. Firstly, it should be noted that the ideas of the national system of education evolved between 1906 when the Indian National Congress adopted its Resolution on national education and 1966 when the Education Commission submitted its Report were conceived in very different social, economic and political contexts. These will not necessarily apply to the future where the problems we are tackling would be very different. For instance, the dominating concept between 1906 and 1947 has been that of winning political freedom; between 1947 and 1978 we were obsessed with bridging the gap between our elite and the international elite; and in future, we will be most concerned with creating a non-elitist people-controlled and people-oriented egalitarian society which would be based on the values adumbrated in the Preamble to the Constitution and which will eschew poverty, ignorance, ill-health and at least all the grosser forms of exploitation. We must therefore be prepared to give up or modify ideas that have outlived their utility. We must also be willing to adopt new ideas that have become relevant due to sheer impact of social changes. Secondly, it is also necessary to guard against the common tendency to adopt some Western model, or some preferred combination of such models. While the study of all available models is essential, one's final choice need not be restricted to borrowed models only. This is all the more necessary because it is not easy to transplant social institutions, and because we are also thinking of creating our own model of a non-consumerist society which implies the creation of our own model of education. A Swadeshi spirit is necessary in all reconstruction; more so in education.

(1) A New Educational Structure

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of the Education Commission was to suggest a radical modification of the existing educational structure (not in the arithmetical sense of $10 + 2 + 3$ with its single-point entry in class I at about the age of six, its sequential annual promotions, its insistence on full-time attendance, its almost exclusive dependence on full-time professional teachers, and its emphasis on teaching rather than learning. The Commission was also highly critical of the existing trend in favour of centralization and uniformity and of the dominance of external examinations which also made the system rigid and static and deprived schools and teachers of their autonomy. Nor was the Commission happy with the atmosphere of listlessness that generally prevails in the system, its minimal use of even the existing facilities which is almost a crime in a poor country like ours, the lack of integration between different stages and the utter isolation and atomization of individual institutions. The image of the national system of education which the Commission projected was therefore extremely forward-looking. According to the Commission, the national system of education

- should not divide life into two water-tight compartments of full-time education followed by full-time work, but should make it possible for all individuals to combine work and education throughout life;
- should not divide individuals into two rigid categories of (a) educated people who do not work with their hands, and (b) workers who do not receive any formal education, but should make all individuals educated persons and productive workers;
- should emphasize learning rather than teaching;
- should not be exclusively dependent on full-time and formal education, but should develop large-scale programmes of non-formal education and all the three channels of full-time, part-time and own-time education which should have an equal status;
- should not be exclusively dependent on full-time teachers and use all the teaching resources available in the community;
- should be decentralized, diversified, elastic and dynamic, and should provide large scope for experimentation and innovation by schools and teachers;
- should provide a period of part-time education and part-time work between full-time education and full-time work to make the transition smooth; and in addition, it should also provide a programme of recurrent and continuing education so that every individual shall have all the opportunities for life-long learning through a channel of his choice; and he may also return to the formal system or step off it according to his needs;
- should provide close linkages between different stages and between all educational institutions in a given locality so that it functions as an integrated system;
- should use as intensively as possible all the existing facilities and resources so that a climate of sustained hard work is created and maintained; and
- should create communities of dedicated students and teachers engaged in a joint pursuit of truth and excellence.

The value of this contribution is now being increasingly recognized.
In the years ahead, we have to carry these ideas to all concerned and evolve and implement concrete programmes based on these unexceptionable principles.

It is essential to note some important aspects of the school system which have to be highlighted to transform the existing educational structure to suit future needs. For instance, the existing school system was created in the early nineteenth century on the basis of a philosophy of liberalism and individual competition which then prevailed. These values still continue to dominate the system and the question is whether they are adequate or even appropriate for our future needs. It is true that one of the objectives of the educational system is to function as the social institution for the pursuit of knowledge. But it also functions as the social mechanism for grading and certification of achievement, eventually for selection for admission into different social strata. This raises two basic issues: (a) How far are these functions compatible with one another? and (b) Would it be better to separate them and assign each to a different institution? The present educational structure, borrowed from U.K., has all the characteristics of industrial production suited for the “knowledge” industry. How healthy are these characteristics and what modifications do they need? There is a “hidden” curriculum in our educational system as in all others. For instance, our curricula project, in a very subtle fashion, the values of consumerism, capitalism, and competition. How appropriate are these for the new society we desire to create? Many other issues of this type can also be raised. One of the major tasks of the years ahead therefore is to study these problems intensively and to develop further the concepts evolved by the Education Commission to create a new educational structure in keeping with our needs and aspirations and the future society we wish to create.

(2) Education of the People

If the creation of a people-controlled and people-oriented society is our social objective, our educational policies must give the highest priority to the education of the people. In fact, we should go further and create an educational system which may be described as education of the people, for the people, and by the people. It is only such an educational system that will suit the democratic society we wish to create. The creation of such a system has been our professed objective. But in our heart of hearts, we really desired to continue the elite dominated society. There is therefore little wonder that we failed; in fact, given our real social objectives, it would have been a surprise if we had succeeded.

What does this goal of education for the people mean in terms of concrete educational programmes?

(a) First and foremost, it means the liquidation of adult illiteracy and the development of a continuing programme of adult education. The basic objective of this programme should be to create an awareness among the adults about themselves and about the social reality around them. It should also give them confidence in themselves and organize them successfully to solve their day-to-day problems. This is precisely what Mahatma Gandhi meant when he insisted that political education is an essential component of all adult education. The desire for literacy and for further education will follow this basic orientation to development. The Education Commission has suggested that this task should be completed by 1985-86. There is no reason why we cannot still do it by then or at least a little later, say, by 1990-91. No amount should be considered too large for the purpose and under no circumstances should the programme be allowed to lag behind for lack of financial resources. It is however obvious that money will not be the bottleneck. The main difficulties are likely to be the lack of an adequate political will and the non-availability of dedicated and competent workers. It is these aspects of the problem that need the utmost attention.

(b) Side by side, more intensive efforts are needed to provide universal elementary education to all children, at least in the age-group of 6-14. Even this task is stupendous; and as was shown earlier, the present indications are that we shall not be able to reach the goal even by the end of the Seventh Plan, i.e., by 1987-88. Steps are therefore needed to speed up the programme and to complete it earlier if possible; and under no circumstances should the programme be allowed to go beyond 1990-91. It must also be noted that this target of universal education up to 14 years of age is already dated and that most developed countries provide not only elementary education but even secondary education on a free, universal and compulsory basis. Mahatma Gandhi had advocated only seven years' basic education for all (age-group 7-14). But as a good deal of this time was spent in learning English, and he was opposed to the teaching of English at this stage, he felt that it would be possible, even within this period of seven years, to give an education which will be equal in content to that of the matriculation examination (held at the end of class X) minus English
plus craft. This can only mean that Mahatma Gandhi really wanted a ten-year school to be made universal and compulsory. This is what the Education Commission also recommended as the long-term objective. It would be in the fitness of things if we make this the target to be reached by A.D. 2000.

(c) Some thought has to be given to the content of elementary education or education up to class VII which it is our object to universalize. The suggestion of the Commission on this subject that it should be undifferentiated general education emphasizing language and communication skills, science and mathematics, work-experience and social service, humanities and social sciences, physical education and the fine arts are still valid and will be more so as time passes. Its main objectives should be three: (1) to introduce the child to the best elements of the accumulated culture of all peoples, including that of his own country; (2) to stimulate curiosity and a desire to learn; and (3) to give the child a capacity to learn further by himself. This last objective which generally does not receive the attention it deserves, is extremely important. It implies that a person who has received such elementary education will be able to receive all post-elementary education he needs or desires on his own through non-formal channels. If these programmes of non-formal education are properly developed and if the formal system itself becomes more elastic and permits multiple-entry as emphasized by the Education Commission, so that any young person or adult may enter it whenever he likes and according to his needs, an educational system which provides opportunities of life-long learning to all can be created.

(d) There is one more important aspect which is often ignored. In the past, modernization was equated with a knowlege of the English language and with secondary and university education. This is why only those social groups which knew English and received secondary and higher education were modernized and that modernization was confined to the elite only. We are not using the expression “modernization” as equivalent to “westernization” although what happened to most people of the category described here is that they were only westernized without being modernized and that, very often, they only combined the worst features of both the East and the West. But even using the phrase modernization in its proper sense (i.e., of a person who retains the best of his own culture and combines it with the best he adopts from others and has a secular, rational and scientific temper and a commitment to the values adumbrated in the Preamble to the Constitution), there is no reason why the process of modernization should be restricted to those who have received secondary and higher education and know English. In fact, all education should help to modernize. The process should be an integral part of adult education and of elementary education. It should be continued at the post-elementary stage through all programmes of non-formal education so that it reaches all that vast sector of society which will still be outside the formal system of education at the secondary and university stages even in the year 2000. This is the only way in which we can modernize the people and thereby modernize the society as a whole.

(e) Since the objective of social policy is to bridge the gap between the elites and the people, there is no longer any justification for segregating the children of the elite from the children of the people as we now do. A major reform to be implemented here is the adoption of the common school system, with the neighborhood school concept being universally adopted for the age-group 6-14. All the children of this country must study in neighborhood schools (which should all maintain fairly comparable standards) and rub shoulders with each other, irrespective of their social and economic status, religion, caste, or race. There is no question of admissions on merit at this stage – these will come in the post-secondary and higher education. Similarly, there would no longer be any justification to maintain the public or special schools.

(f) If the programme of non-formal education is to be developed in a big way, it will not be possible to rely exclusively on full-time professional teachers as the formal education system does. It will therefore be necessary to utilize all the community resources available for educational purposes and use fully the services of non-professional part-time teachers to teach what they know best. In other words, the local communities will not only be planning and administering education, but they will also be actively participating in it. In fact, the non-professional participants in the programme will soon outnumber the professional teachers. The system will thus justify the appellation, education of the people, for the people, and by the people.

(g) The above proposals do not imply that the people are to receive only elementary education (up to class VIII or even class X) and that they will only be entitled to non-formal post-elementary education at the secondary and university levels. This is not correct; and it is essential to emphasize that the people shall have an adequate share of full-time secondary and higher education as well. At present, the top 30 per cent of the people occupy 70 per cent of the seats in secondary
education and 80 per cent of the seats in higher education. This skewed composition of the student body must be changed and the people should get at least 50 per cent of the seats at these levels. How can this be done? Perhaps the following steps will help.

(i) Of course, this assumes that we shall universalize elementary education on a priority basis. If that is not done and elementary education continues to be completed only by 25 to 30 per cent of the children, all talk of reconstituting the composition of the student body at the post-elementary stage is futile.

(ii) We shall further assume that we shall implement fully the recommendation of the Commission that there shall be a nation-wide programme for discovery and development of talent and that the top 5-15 per cent of the students at every stage shall be enabled, through scholarships and placement, to continue their education in good schools at the next stage. Let us assume that about 10 per cent of the seats will be taken up by this talented group. We will further assume that the selection procedures will be improved and based on merit and social justice so that at least half of these students will be from among the people.

(iii) The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are entitled to 21 per cent of the available seats on the basis of their population. But they actually avail themselves of 5 per cent seats only. While reservation on the population basis should continue for them, let us assume that, by A.D. 2000, they will occupy at least 15 per cent of the seats available.

(iv) There are three other aspiring and deserving groups to be considered: all children of poor parents (other than scheduled castes and tribes); all first generation learners, irrespective of social class and status; and all girls, also irrespective of social class and status. These groups have no assured financial support and no reservations. They occupy about 30-40 per cent of the seats (the girls coming mostly from the privileged classes). It is proposed that we may reserve this category for all children of the poor people (other than scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) only, with special encouragement for girls and first generation learners. This group should be given some assured financial support and about 40 per cent of the seats should be reserved for them.

(v) The privileged classes will thus get the remaining 35 per cent of the seats (which is out of proportion to their number) and the reserved but unutilized seats.

One need not insist on the precise figures used. They should be taken only as indicative of the direction in which we should move.

Lessons for the Future

If these results are to be obtained, it is necessary to emphasize two programmes. Firstly, we should provide liberal financial support to talented but economically handicapped children who do not belong to the scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. This problem has been neglected far too long and it is undoubtedly one of the most important issues we shall have to tackle in the days ahead. In fact, by A.D. 2000 we should be able to base our programmes of scholarships on economic considerations alone and delink it from birth or caste. Secondly, we will have to adopt the system of selective admissions. With reservations as indicated above, and with the use of improved methods of selection that will combine merit with social justice selective admissions will not affect the vertical mobility of the poor. An open-door policy will continue to support the privileged as it has always done in the past and will have to be abandoned.

It will be seen that the Education Commission has made several valuable contributions to the development of these programmes. This is another area where the recommendations of the Commission are valid and will continue to be relevant in future.

(3) Secondary Education

Secondary education has a crucial significance in the life of the individual because it is almost co-extensive with the difficult period of adolescence. It has also a significant role in the educational ladder because it provides teachers for elementary education and students for higher education. From the point of view of the needs of a modern society, it is secondary and not elementary education that is of crucial significance. That is why all the developed countries have provided universal secondary education and that is why the Education Commission also recommended that, in the long run, we should make the ten-year school universal. In spite of all this significance, however, secondary education in India has always remained the weakest link in the educational system. It has also continued to be comparatively neglected because it has lacked the prestige of higher education on the one hand and the popular appeal of elementary education on the other. What is even worse, it has not been studied adequately and its problems have attracted but little attention.

Some of its basic problems are historical in origin. The early secondary schools established in the early years of the nineteenth century were modelled after the grammar schools of England and provided only the academic stream which led, through the matriculation, to the
university. This early mould still continues to dominate the scene and even today 90 per cent of the secondary schools fall in this category. Diversification was recognized as the most needed reform nearly 90 years ago. But all attempts to diversify have yielded only meagre results. Vocationalization was also recognized as a major reform equally early. But the attempts to introduce vocational courses and make secondary education terminal for a majority of its students have only had a very limited success. Its relevance is being questioned for a very long time. Even as late as 1902, its main object was described as teaching the English language. That has now ceased to dominate the scene, and rightly so. But we have not yet been able to define new objectives for secondary education. It is therefore said that secondary education fits a student for entry into a college and almost qualifies him for everything else. This only shows how difficult, complex and intractable have been the problems of secondary education. It is because these are not solved that they multiply and become more difficult, more complex and more intractable problems of higher education.

One more point needs to be added. At present the size of the problems of secondary education is comparatively small because only 25 per cent of the students complete elementary education so that lower secondary education is availed of only by about 20 per cent of the age-group and higher secondary education only by about 8 per cent of the age-group. When elementary education becomes universal, say, by 1990-91, the proportion of students going up will increase and by A.D. 2000, full-time lower secondary education may have to be provided to about 50 per cent of the age-group 14-16 and full-time higher secondary education to about 20 per cent of the age-group 17-18. Moreover, part-time, non-formal secondary education will have to be provided to a substantial proportion of those who leave the school at the end of the elementary and lower secondary stages and enter the world of work. When the scope and size of the system of secondary education is so enlarged, its difficulty and complexity will increase in proportion. There is therefore no doubt that the proper planning and development of secondary education will present one of the stiffest challenges to the educational planners of tomorrow.

The contribution of the Education Commission to the solution of the problems of secondary education was useful in some ways but neither adequate nor free from controversy.

(a) Among the useful contributions, mention may be made of the proposal to divide secondary education into two sub-stages: a lower secondary stage of three or two years ending with class X; and a

higher secondary stage of two years (classes XI-XII). The adoption of the new pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 will be a distinct gain, especially if the + 2 stage is located in schools. The Commission has also undone the damage arising from the multi-purpose concept introduced by the Secondary Education Commission. The suggestion of the Commission that specialization should start later at the end of class X or at age 16 is now universally accepted.

(b) The Commission's proposals of an undifferentiated course of general education at the lower secondary stage has run into problems. Two criticisms levelled against the courses that came to be evolved to implement these recommendations were: they create too much of a uniformity to suit all types of talent and that the information load on students is unbearable (this was not of course a fault of the Commission). These issues were examined by the Ishwarbhai Patel Committee which simplified the curricula to some extent and also introduced some options of alternative courses.

(c) As was pointed out earlier, its proposals for vocationalization were not very realistic nor adequate.

(d) Its recommendations on the organization of courses of the lower secondary stage have now been modified considerably by the Adisesiah Committee as discussed earlier.

(e) A major comment on the proposals of the Commission has been that the courses it provides are not adequately diversified to suit all types of talent. It is recognized that the Commission allowed a much greater flexibility in the choice of subjects or in their combinations than the multi-purpose schools did. But the argument is that the reform does not go far enough. After all is said and done, the Commission has recommended only two streams: an academic stream (still based on the old grammar school model) for those who would like to go to the university and terminal vocational courses for the others. It is contended that we should have a still greater diversity in the curricula (the need for this will increase as secondary education expands and eventually lower secondary education becomes universal) and evolve something like a comprehensive secondary schools of the U.K.

(f) The Commission has not paid adequate attention to the problem of relevance. What is the precise use of the existing secondary education to those who do not go to a college? Is the existing secondary education relevant for our rural areas? This, it is contended, is the most crucial problem on which the Commission had little light to throw.
recommendations for improving selection procedures and raising the quality of teachers have not been implemented nor has its proposal of selective admissions been accepted as yet. This should of course be blamed on implementation than on the Commission. But it cannot also be gainsaid that the inadequacies of the proposals of the Education Commission on the reform of higher education have been too significant to be ignored. What is probably worse, it does not present any deep analysis of the factors which are responsible for the continuing crisis in which the system finds itself and it does not therefore make adequate proposals to resolve it. It also ignores the imperative need, which will become more urgent as time passes, to diversify higher education and to create a variety of models among which the classical model (on which the Commission relies almost exclusively) can be one. This subject therefore also finds hardly any treatment in the Report of the Commission. On the whole, therefore, one is left with the feeling that in tackling the basic issues of higher education in the days ahead, in making it relevant or linking it closely with national development and raising its standards, the proposals of the Education Commission provide only a partial answer. This is also an area where a good deal of fresh thinking, research and experimentation is called for.

Among the major issues that will have to be tackled in higher education in the years ahead, the following may be mentioned.

(a) The programme of using regional languages as media of instruction has to be developed further, with all the ancillary reforms needed to maintain standards.

(b) Continued effort will have to be made to introduce improved selection procedures that combine merit with social justice.

(c) Programmes have to be decided to ensure that all university teachers and students do effectively participate in meaningful and challenging proposals of national and social service. The present N.S.S. proposal is only a poor answer to this need and a bolder attempt is called for.

(d) A much greater expansion of non-formal programmes of part-time and own-time education is needed. The target suggested by the Commission in this regard that about one-third of the total enrolment in higher education should be in these courses by 1986 (para 12.22) is still far from realized.

(e) There is no justification for the continuance of the "dual" system which we operate in higher education, i.e. there is a core of high quality and prestigious institutions which are mostly availed of
by the privileged classes, surrounded by a large penumbral of
institutions which maintain poor standards and in which we offer
“open-door” access to the under-privileged groups and provide them a
seat in some institution, however poor, and in some course, however
useless. The Education Commission diagnosed a similar malady at the
school stage and suggested the concepts of the neighbourhood school
and the common school system. These cannot be extended to the
university stage. But some other measures will have to be adopted to
see that this dual system does come to an end. This problem was not
highlighted in the Report of the Education Commission. But it does
need careful study and close attention.

(f) In the present model of higher education, the two functions of (i)
producing, conserving and diffusing knowledge and (ii) grading and
certification, mainly for purposes of employment, are combined. It is
this combination that creates several problems. Is this combination
really essential? If it is not, how can we separate and organize the
grading and certification function independently of the universities?
This is really the programme of delinking jobs from degrees that is
now widely and rather loosely being talked of. On the other hand, if
the combination of these two functions is inevitable, how do we solve
the problems arising therefrom?

(g) At present, the system of our higher education is almost
exclusively dependent on the classical model (the agricultural
universities are one recent exception). The higher education of the
future will have to be provided through diverse institutional forms.
This is another field where a good deal of fresh thinking and
experimentation is needed and in which the Report of the Commission
provides little guidance.

(h) The problem of raising standards in higher education still
continues to baffle us. That concentration of resources is necessary for
improving standards is readily granted. But how much to concentrate
and where – this is still an unanswered question. Nor have we been
able to strike a proper balance between policies of concentration and
dispersal. We still know very little why institutions rise to heights and
then decline, and above all we are not able to add substantially to the
competent and dedicated leadership available in the university system
and not even able to make the best use of whatever talent is actually
available. In fact, the whole question of proper management of the
educational system from the point of view of improving standards is
wide open and this is an area on which we shall have to concentrate in
the years ahead.

Lessons for the Future

(i) The problem of students will become still more pressing as time
passes, particularly the problems of students from the scheduled
castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections who will come to
the universities with several handicaps and who will need a good deal
of remedial teaching. The students of the system of higher education
have long ceased to be a homogeneous body and we will have to learn
to divide them into separate groups and to deal with each group in
accordance with their needs and potential. Student services are weak
and the extent of student aid is limited at present. These will have to
be strengthened and expanded; and the challenging programme of
associating students with the governance of institutions of higher
education will have to be developed further.

(j) There is a first-rate crisis of management in the universities
which are not even able to do their routine jobs like holding
examinations on time and wherein the basic educational process itself
comes to a grinding halt all too frequently. Modernization and
improvement of university administration is one of the major
challenges of the future; and here also there is immense scope for
fresh thinking and experimentation.

It is hardly necessary to illustrate the point in greater detail. What
has been said already is enough to show that the proper development
of higher education is one of the major tasks which faces us in the
creation of a national system of education. In this area, as well as in
the development of secondary education, we shall have to go far
beyond the lead provided by the Education Commission.

(5) Administration and Finance

Finally, several modifications are needed to the proposals made by the
Education Commission for the administration and finance of the
national system of education.

In so far as management of education is concerned, the most
valuable contribution of the Education Commission is the suggestion
that all school education should be decentralized to the district level
and entrusted to specially constituted District and Municipal School
Boards with adequate provision for delegation of authority to the local
community. Another good contribution of the Commission is the idea
of evolving an integrated system wherein different stages will work
together and educational institutions will not be isolated or atomized.
But in so far as leadership, institutions and processes of educational
administration at the Central and State levels are concerned, the
Commission has no major contribution to make because it depended too much on the creation of the I.E.S. which is no longer a practicable proposition. We will therefore have to design good models of educational administration at all levels in which the universities, educational institutions, teachers, students and parents will be able to take part and which will be based on the principles of decentralization, diversification, elasticity and dynamism. This is again an almost virgin soil whose scope for fresh thinking and experimentation is almost infinite.

The Education Commission had recommended that six per cent of the national income should be devoted to education by 1985-86. This recommendation was accepted by Government and included in the National Policy on Education (1968). As stated earlier, the total educational expenditure needed for a national system of education with adequate coverage and quality will have to be worked out afresh. But on the basis of the experience of the past 12 years, it seems desirable to highlight the following issues.

(a) As we go from plan to plan, the committed expenditure on education increases rapidly. Therefore, the plan expenditure necessarily becomes proportionately smaller. In other words, we get into a situation where the educational tasks to be attempted increase from plan to plan while the plan allocations continue to decrease. If we were to depend upon plan allocation alone to bring about educational development (this is what we have generally done in the past) the task appears almost hopeless. Ways and means to utilize all education expenditure, both plan and non-plan, must therefore be found. This will make our task easier because total educational expenditure does increase rapidly from plan to plan.

(b) The levels of educational expenditures already reached are very high; and it is therefore becoming increasingly difficult to find additional funds for education in an overall situation of scarcity and in the face of severe competition from other sectors. It is therefore obvious that we can never have all the resources we need for a good national system of education. It therefore becomes imperative to reduce unit costs, to explore all possible methods of economy, to use facilities intensively and to bring down the total cost of the national system of education within practical financial limits. It is easy to argue that a poor country cannot have good and sufficient education. The challenge is to develop programmes which will enable even poor countries to have national systems of education of adequate coverage and quality.

Lessons for the Future

(c) Wasteful and ineffective expenditure is the order of the day in every sector and at every stage of education. This is a luxury which we could never afford. At any rate, we cannot afford it any longer.

(d) Intensive utilization of facilities is yet another way to make every available rupee go the longest way. In the years ahead, this intensive use should be emphasized even more than additional investment.

(e) While money is needed, no amount of money can solve every educational problem and money alone can never secure proper educational development. This will be even more true in the years ahead. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasize the non-monetary inputs in educational development (e.g., better planning, sustained hard work, dedicated efforts of teachers, students and educational administrators, etc.), which are of far greater significance than mere investment of additional monetary resources.

The tasks of educational development facing the country are extremely complex and difficult: to outline the national system of education suited to the new society we desire to create and transform, improve and expand the existing system so that it becomes the national system of education we would like to have. The success of our efforts will, therefore, largely depend on the dedication and expertise (including administrative and financial skills) that we shall develop.

IMPLEMENTATION*

In the preceding sections we discussed the two main tasks before us, viz. (1) to visualize the future society and (2) to prepare a blueprint of a national system of education suited for it. We shall now turn to the discussion of the third important task before us, viz. how to implement the proposals of educational reform that we may formulate in order to create the national system of education. One need not underestimate the significance of the first two tasks which are largely academic in character. But, obviously, an overriding significance attaches itself to the third which is action-oriented, especially as our largest failure has been, not so much in the generation of knowledge, as in its application to social situations. When the Education Commission met Dr. Zakir

*It is easy for a student of educational history to point out that the Report of the Education Commission was, on the whole, better received and better implemented than those of the earlier commissions of the post-independence period. This observation however is still valid.
Husain and sought his advice about its Report, he emphasized this aspect of the problem and said, “Just say three words: implement, implement and implement.”

From the narrative in the preceding chapters, it has become obvious that the recommendations of the Education Commission were not implemented properly. This was due, in many cases, to factors inherent in the individual recommendations; and these have been discussed in Chapters IV-VIII. But this poor implementation was also due, in a way, to the absence of a general atmosphere or infrastructure which could have helped to implement better. It is these general conditions which we shall now discuss in this concluding section. Incidentally, the discussion will also involve a consideration of the change agents as visualized by the Commission.

(1) **Wanted: A Nation-Wide Movement**

Two preliminary observations can be made. A programme for the radical reconstruction of the educational system must take the form of a nation-wide movement if it is to succeed. Individual participation is much better in a national movement: larger numbers of people are induced to participate and each participant also tries to make his best contribution. This national movement will have to be organized at the macro-level to provide guidance, and support; and at the micro-level, it should consist of thousands of experiments and innovations on the part of schools, teachers and students.

The second point is that a movement for a radical reform of education can succeed best only when it is accompanied by a simultaneous movement for a corresponding socio-economic or political reform. Before 1947, the movement for national education developed in the shadow of the struggle for freedom, and the ideas of national education drew their main sustenance from the movement for political independence. This movement came to an end in 1947. There has been no mass movement since then. But the ruling elite have been trying to consolidate and improve their position. Consequently, all programmes of educational reform which were meant for the ruling classes were successfully implemented on a priority basis. These include: expansion of agricultural, engineering and medical education; the development of elite institutions such as IITs and IIMs, large expansion of public and special schools, especially those with English medium, the expansion of “merit” scholarships most of which are bagged by their children, and so on. But there has been no movement to improve the standard of living of the poorer sections of the society and no movement to build up their awareness and their organizations to help them to come into their own. Consequently, all programmes of educational reconstruction meant for the people have languished (e.g., universal elementary education, liquidation of adult illiteracy, etc.).

The lesson is obvious: if we are keen to develop a programme of educating the people through adult education and universal elementary education, we must organize a nation-wide movement of organizing the poor and of helping them to raise their standard of living. In a broader context, it may be said that we should initiate simultaneous and direct political and economic action to create the new society if we really desire to succeed in creating a national system of education. In the absence of such coordinated joint action, it will not be possible to achieve meaningful results.

(2) **The Role of the Political Parties**

Another lesson of the past highlights the role of political parties in educational reform.

In the present situation, there is very little dialogue between educationists and politicians. A widely shared view is that education is meant for academics only and that politicians should keep their hands off it. When the Education Commission was appointed, Mr. M.C. Chagla boasted that it consisted only of academics and that he had not appointed a single politician on it. But this isolation makes educationists blind to many aspects of the educational reality which are basically political. For instance, I cannot see how an issue like selective admissions can be solved except jointly by politicians and educationists. On the other hand, politicians remain largely ignorant of basic educational problems because of this very isolation so that when they interfere with education – which they often do – they do more harm than good. In other words, the educationists desire full political support without any political interference (which is their concept of autonomy); and politicians interfere too frequently with education (which is their concept of responsibility to the legislature) without committing themselves to provide any support. A situation of this type does immense harm. What we need is better education of the politicians, the training of party cadres in education, and the preparation of an educational programme by each party to which it stands committed. This has not been done by any party so far. But this is the direction in which they will have to move. On their side,
the academics have to examine the political implications of all educational programmes so that they are able to formulate and implement their ideas better. They have also to strive to muster political support for desirable educational reforms.

It is unfortunate that the Education Commission did not highlight the role of political parties in educational reconstruction. But experience has shown that political interventions can distort or impede the implementation of good proposals and that it is the lack of political understanding and commitment that is mainly responsible for shelving some of the most valuable recommendations of the Commission. We should, therefore, strive our best in future to cultivate a dialogue with political parties on the need, content and consequences of a radical transformation of education.

(3) Role of Central and State Governments

The Education Commission placed the responsibility for creating the national system of education squarely on the Central and State Governments. As we saw earlier, they have not, by and large, risen to the occasion. Why is it so and how can we make them take greater interest in the programme in the years ahead?

Governments generally act in response to pressures, either from within or from without. A pressure from within can come from two sources – the party and the bureaucracy. As stated above, the political parties have generally remained ignorant of basic educational problems and take little interest except in such things as transfers, opening of new institutions, admissions, or grants (i.e., issues mainly dealing with patronage). The educational bureaucracy is on the whole weak and unable either to formulate policies or to implement them. There have been, therefore, few pressures on Governments from within to undertake and implement radical educational changes. Unfortunately even pressures from outside have been non-existent. Of course, all the interested groups have agitated, every now and then, for their individual or group demands. In fact, such demands have been almost continuous and Governments have been reacting to them in one way or the other. But there have been no pressures or demands for radical educational reforms as such. There are no agencies in the country for whom “education” itself is a constituency and for which they are prepared to fight. It is, therefore, obvious that our success in future will depend upon the extent to which we can create both internal and external pressures on Central and State Governments to carry

out radical educational changes. In particular, we will have to concentrate on organizing pressures from within the party and from outside the Government. Here again, the existence of a nation-wide movement can help a great deal.

(4) Role of Teachers, Students and Educational Administrators

The Education Commission expected the teachers, students and educational administrators to play a major role in creating a national system of education through their sustained and dedicated efforts. But this expectation has not been realized. We must find out the reason and suggest measures which will enable them to play an effective role in future.

If a national system of education is to be created, we must generate adequate knowledge: this is the task of the researchers. We must generate professional competence among the teachers which is a function of their quality as well as of their general and professional education. We must side by side generate good motivation among the students which is a function of their value system, of the teachers and of the ultimate social rewards. We must also generate managerial competence among educational administrators. But this is not enough; and the basic problems of a developing country cannot be solved by knowledge or technical expertise alone. They need, above all, a commitment to the country, a commitment to education, a proper perspective of socio-economic and educational transformation and a determination to bring it about. It has been our experience that this vision of a new society and education and the moral commitment to strive for their creation is lacking, by and large, in our teachers, students and educational administrators; and it is because of this that they could not play the role of change agents which the Education Commission assigned to them. We must strive, in the years ahead, to create this vision and commitment in them. It is here that a nation-wide movement for educational and social transformation is imperative.

The Education Commission probably erred in thinking that a movement for a radical reform of the educational system can arise within the system itself and can also be implemented largely by teachers, students, and educational administrators. This may be true in the case of pedagogic reforms which remain, more or less, within the system. But it does not apply to radical reforms whose impact goes beyond the education system and which have to be accompanied by corresponding social reforms. It is, therefore, necessary to highlight
the role of social and political workers who can generate a movement for socio-economic transformation and also support the educational reforms which would favour such transformation. The Education Commission did not take note of the valuable contributions which political and social workers can make indirectly to educational development. But this oversight must be corrected. These workers will have to be given insights into educational reforms and enabled to link them effectively with the socio-economic reforms to which they are committed. They will then be able to generate forces outside the educational system which will stimulate and support reform movements within the education system itself. In other words, it is the combined action of education-conscious political and social workers and politically conscious and socially committed teachers, students, and educational administrators that can unleash the forces that will help to implement plans of radical educational reform.

The creation of a national system of education is not an easy task; it involves the making of hard decisions, the provision of massive resources, the organization of a sustained nation-wide movement and a preparedness to alienate many a vested interest. The task becomes all the more difficult because it has to be accompanied by a simultaneous effort at a radical reconstruction of the society itself. The experience of the past thirty years has shown that we can succeed in this task only if

we make a big R&D effort to generate the required knowledge and expertise to plan radical educational changes and to implement them;

we educate all concerned on the need and implications of such educational transformation and the price to be paid for it;

we create and sustain a nation-wide movement at the macro- and micro-level to bring about radical changes;

we educate political parties and workers on basic educational issues and create strong pressures within the parties themselves in favour of the educational changes needed;

we organize a continuous campaign in favour of the educational reforms throughout the country so that sufficient pressures are generated from outside to make Governments sit up and take notice;

we harness the assistance of all political and social workers who should be made education-conscious and see the close relationship between their socio-political programmes and educational transformation; and

we create the necessary vision and moral commitment among teachers, students and educational administrators for the new society and the new education we need.

It is these measures that will create the social climate within which it will be possible to plan and create a national system of education suited to the new society visualized in the Preamble to the Constitution.
APPENDIX 1

Appointment of the Education Commission
(1964-66)

Resolution of the Government of India, No. F.413(3) 64-E.L.
Ministry of Education, dated 14 July 1964

AII.01 The Government of India, ever since the attainment of independence, have given considerable attention to the development of a national system of education rooted in the basic values and the cherished traditions of the Indian nation and suited to the needs and aspirations of a modern society. While some advances have been made in these directions, the educational system has not generally evolved in accordance with the needs of the times, and a wide and distressing gulf continues to persist between thought and action in several sectors of this crucial field of national activity. In view of the important role of education in the economic and social development of the country, in the building of a truly democratic society, in the promotion of national integration and unity, and above all, for the transformation of the individual in the endless pursuit of excellence and perfection, it is now imperative to survey and examine the entire field of education in order to realize within the shortest possible period a well-balanced, integrated and adequate system of national education capable of making a powerful contribution to all spheres of national life.

AII.02 The attainment of independence ushered in a new era of national development founded upon the adoption of a secular democracy, not only as a form of government but also as a way of life; the determination to eliminate the poverty of the people and to ensure a reasonable standard of living for all, through modernization of agriculture and rapid development of industry; the adoption of modern science and technology and their harmonizing with traditional spiritual values; the acceptance of a socialistic pattern of society which will secure equitable distribution of wealth and equality of opportunity for all in education, employment and cultural advancement. Greater emphasis came to be placed on educational development because of the realization that education, especially in science and technology, is the most powerful instrument of social transformation and economic progress and that the attempt to create a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice can only succeed if the traditional educational system was revolutionized, both in content and extent.

AII.03 Quantitatively, education at all levels has shown a phenomenal development in the post-independence period. In spite of this expansion, however, there is widespread dissatisfaction about several aspects of educational development. For instance, it has not yet been possible to provide
free and universal education for all children up to 14 years of age. The problem of mass illiteracy continues to be immense. It has not been possible to raise standards adequately at the secondary and university stages. The diversification of curricula in secondary and higher education has not kept pace with the times so that the problem of educated unemployment has been intensified on the one hand while, on the other, there is an equally acute shortage of trained manpower in several sectors. The remuneration and service conditions of teachers leave a great deal to be desired; and several important academic problems are still matters of intense controversies. In short, qualitative improvements in education have not kept pace with quantitative expansion, and national policies and programmes concerning the quality of education, even when these were well-conceived and generally agreed to, could not be implemented satisfactorily.

AII.04 The Government of India are convinced that education is the key to national prosperity and welfare and that no investment is likely to yield greater returns than investment in human resources of which the most important component is education. Government have also decided to mobilize all the resources of science and technology which can only be done on the foundation of good and progressive education and, to that end, to increase considerably their total investment in the development of education and scientific research. The nation must be prepared to pay for quality in education, and from the value attached to education by all sectors of the people it is clear that they will do so willingly.

AII.05 It is desirable to survey the entire field of educational development as the various parts of the educational system strongly interact with and influence one another. It is not possible to have progressive and strong universities without efficient secondary schools and the quality of these schools is determined by the functioning of elementary schools. What is needed, therefore, is a synoptic survey and an imaginative look at education considering it as a whole and not fragmented into parts and stages. In India, several commissions and committees have examined limited sectors and specific aspects of education. It is now proposed to have a comprehensive review of the entire educational system.

AII.06 While the planning of education for India must necessarily emanate from Indian experience and conditions, Government of India are of the opinion that it would be advantageous to draw upon the experience and thinking of educationists and scientists from other parts of the world in the common enterprise of seeking for the right type of education which is the quest of all mankind, specially at this time when the world is becoming closely knit together in so many ways. It has, therefore, been decided to associate with the Commission, either as members or as consultants, some eminent scientists and educationists from other countries. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has provided three members for the Commission, viz., Mr. Jean Thomas, Inspector General of Education, France, and formerly Assistant Director General of UNESCO, Prof. Shumovsky, Director, Methodological Division, Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education, RSFSR, Moscow, and Professor of Physics, Moscow University, and Prof. Sadatoshi Ibara, Professor of the First Faculty of Science and Technology, Waseda University, Tokyo, who have

since joined the Commission. It is expected that the collaboration of some eminent scientists and educationists, as consultants, with the work of the Commission, will also be forthcoming. Negotiations are in progress with some more specialists and additions of names of foreign consultants will be notified from time to time. In addition, the Commission has been authorized to invite from time to time such other consultants in India in relation to any aspect of its inquiry as it may consider necessary.

AII.07 For the purposes outlined in the foregoing paragraphs, Government of India have decided to set up an Education Commission consisting of the following members:

**Chairman**
1. Prof. D.S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

**Members**
3. Mr. H.L. Elvin, Director, Institute of Education, University of London, London.
4. Shri R.A. Gopalaswami, Director, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi.
5. Dr. V.S. Jha, former Director of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Unit in London.
7. Prof. M.V. Mathur, Professor of Economics and Public Administration, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur.
8. Dr. B.P. Pal, Director, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.
9. Kumari S. Panandikar, Head of the Department of Education, Karnataka University, Dharwar.
10. Prof. Roger Revelle, Dean of Research, University of California, USA.
11. Dr. K.G. Sahay, former Educational Adviser to the Government of India, New Delhi.
12. Dr. T. Sen, Rector, Jadavpur University, Calcutta.
13. Mr. Jean Thomas, Inspector General of Education, France, and formerly Assistant Director General of UNESCO.
14. Prof. S.A. Shumovsky, Director, Methodological Division, Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education, RSFSR, Moscow, and Professor of Physics, Moscow University.
15. Prof. Sadatoshi Ibara, Professor of the Faculty of Science and Technology, Waseda University, Tokyo.

**Member-Secretary**
16. Shri J.P. Naik, Head of the Department of Educational Planning, Administration and Finance, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona.
APPENDIX II

National Policy on Education (1968)

Education has always been accorded an honoured place in Indian society. The great leaders of the Indian freedom movement realized the fundamental role of education and throughout the nation’s struggle for independence, stressed its unique significance for national development. Gandhi formulated the scheme of basic education seeking to harmonize intellectual and manual work. This was a great step forward in making education directly relevant to the life of the people. Many other national leaders likewise made important contributions to national education before independence.

2. In the post-independence period, a major concern of the Government of India and of the States has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to national progress and security. Problems of educational reconstruction were reviewed by several commissions and committees, notably the University Education Commission (1948-49) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53). Some steps to implement the recommendations of these Commissions were taken; and with the passing of the Resolution on Scientific Policy under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the development of science, technology and scientific research received special emphasis. Towards the end of the third Five Year Plan, a need was felt to hold a comprehensive review of the educational system with a view to initiating a fresh and more determined effort at educational reconstruction; and the Education Commission (1964-66) was appointed to advise Government on “the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects”. The Report of the Education Commission has since been widely discussed and commented upon. Government is happy to note that a general consensus on the national policy on education has emerged in the course of these discussions.

3. The Government of India is convinced that a radical reconstruction of education on the broad lines recommended by the Education Commission is essential for economic and cultural development of the country, for national integration and for realizing the ideal of a socialist pattern of society. This will involve a transformation of the system to relate it more closely to the life of the people; a continuous effort to expand educational opportunity; a sustained and intensive effort to raise the quality of education at all stages; an emphasis on the development of science and technology; and the cultivation of moral and social values. The educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development. Only then will education be able to play its vital role in promoting national progress, creating a sense of common citizenship and culture, and strengthening national integration. This is necessary if the
country is to attain its rightful place in the comity of nations in conformity with its great cultural heritage and its unique potentialities.

4. The Government of India accordingly resolves to promote the development of education in the country in accordance with the following principles:

(1) **Free and Compulsory Education**: Strenuous efforts should be made for the early fulfilment of the Directive Principle under Article 45 of the Constitution seeking to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Suitable programmes should be developed to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools and to ensure that every child who is enrolled in school successfully completes the prescribed course.

(2) **Status, Emoluments and Education of Teachers**: (a) Of all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the teacher is undoubtedly the most important. It is on his personal qualities and character, his educational qualifications and professional competence that the success of all educational endeavour must ultimately depend. Teachers must, therefore, be accorded an honoured place in society. Their emoluments and other service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory having regard to their qualifications and responsibilities.

(b) The academic freedom of teachers to pursue and publish independent studies and researches and to speak and write about significant national and international issues should be protected.

(c) **Teacher education, particularly in-service education, should receive due emphasis**.

(3) **Development of Languages**: (a) **Regional Languages**: The energetic development of Indian languages and literature is a sine qua non for educational and cultural development. Unless this is done, the creative energies of the people will not be released, standards of education will not improve, knowledge will not spread to the people, and the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses will remain if not widen further. The regional languages are already in use as media of education at the primary and secondary stages. Urgent steps should now be taken to adopt them as media of education at the university stage.

(b) **Three-Language Formula**: At the secondary stage, the State Governments should adopt, and vigorously implement, the three-language formula which includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States, and of Hindi along with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking States. Suitable courses in Hindi and/or English should also be available in universities and colleges with a view to improving the proficiency of students in these languages up to the prescribed university standards.

(c) **Hindi**: Every effort should be made to promote the development of Hindi. In developing Hindi as the link language, due care should be taken to ensure that it will serve, as provided for in Article 351 of the Constitution, as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India. The establishment, in non-Hindi States, of colleges and other institutions of higher education which use Hindi as the medium of education should be encouraged.

(d) **Sanskrit**: Considering the special importance of Sanskrit to the growth and development of Indian languages and its unique contribution to the cultural unity of the country, facilities for its teaching at the school and university stages should be offered on a more liberal scale. Development of new methods of teaching the language should be encouraged, and the possibility explored of including the study of Sanskrit in those courses (such as modern Indian languages, ancient Indian history, Indology and Indian philosophy) at the first and second degree stages, where such knowledge is useful.

(e) **International Languages**: Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth but should also make her own significant contribution to it. For this purpose, study of English deserves to be specially strengthened.

(4) **Equalization of Educational Opportunity**: Strenuous efforts should be made to equalize educational opportunity.

(a) Regional imbalances in the provision of educational facilities should be corrected and good educational facilities should be provided in rural and other backward areas.

(b) To promote social cohesion and national integration the Common School System as recommended by the Education Commission should be adopted. Efforts should be made to improve the standards of education in general schools. All special schools like Public Schools should be required to admit students on the basis of merit and also to provide a prescribed proportion of free studentships to prevent segregation of social classes. This will not, however, affect the rights of minorities under Article 30 of the Constitution.

(c) The education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation.

(d) More intensive efforts are needed to develop education among the backward classes and especially among the tribal people.

(e) Educational facilities for the physically and mentally handicapped children should be expanded and attempts should be made to develop integrated programmes enabling the handicapped children to study in regular schools.

(5) **Identification of Talent**: For the cultivation of excellence, it is necessary that talent in diverse fields should be identified at as early an age as possible, and every stimulus and opportunity given for its full development.

(6) **Work-Experience and National Service**: The school and the community should be brought closer through suitable programmes of mutual service and support. Work-experience and national service including participation in meaningful and challenging programmes of community service and national reconstruction should accordingly become an integral part of education. Emphasis in these programmes should be on self-help, character formation and on developing a sense of social commitment.

(7) **Science Education and Research**: With a view to accelerating the growth of the national economy, science education and research should receive high priority. Science and mathematics should be an integral part of general education till the end of the school stage.
(8) Education for Agriculture and Industry: Special emphasis should be placed on the development of education for agriculture and industry.
(a) There should be at least one agricultural university in every State. These should, as far as possible, be single campus universities; but where necessary, they may have constituent colleges on different campuses. Other universities may also be assisted, where the necessary potential exists, to develop strong departments for the study of one or more aspects of agriculture.
(b) In technical education, practical training in industry should form an integral part of such education. Technical education and research should be related closely to industry, encouraging the flow of personnel both ways and providing for continuous cooperation in the provision, design and periodic review of training programmes and facilities.
(c) There should be a continuous review of the agricultural, industrial and other technical manpower needs of the country and efforts should be made continuously to maintain a proper balance between the output of the educational institutions and employment opportunities.

(9) Production of Books: The quality of books should be improved by attracting the best writing talent through a liberal policy of incentives and remuneration. Immediate steps should be taken for the production of high quality textbooks for schools and universities. Frequent changes of textbooks should be avoided and their prices should be low enough for students of ordinary means to buy them.

The possibility of establishing autonomous book corporations on commercial lines should be examined and efforts should be made to have a few basic textbooks common throughout the country. Special attention should be given to books for children and to university level books in regional languages.

(10) Examinations: A major goal of examination reforms should be to improve the reliability and validity of examinations and to make evaluation a continuous process aimed at helping the student to improve his level of achievement rather than at "certifying" the quality of his performance at a given moment of time.

(11) Secondary Education: (a) Education opportunity at the secondary (and higher) level is a major instrument of social change and transformation. Facilities for secondary education should accordingly be extended expeditiously to areas and classes which have been denied these in the past.
(b) There is need to increase facilities for technical and vocational education at this stage. Provision of facilities for secondary and vocational education should conform broadly to requirements of the developing economy and real employment opportunities. Such linkage is necessary to make technical and vocational education at the secondary stage effectively terminal. Facilities for technical and vocational education should be suitably diversified to cover a large number of fields such as agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, medicine and public health, home management, arts and crafts, secretarial training, etc.

(12) University Education: (a) The number of whole-time students to be admitted to a college or university department should be determined with reference to the laboratory, library and other facilities and to the strength of the staff.
(b) Considerable care is needed in establishing new universities. These should be started only after an adequate provision of funds has been made for the purpose and due care has been taken to ensure proper standards. Special attention should be given to the organization of postgraduate courses and to the improvement of standards of training and research at this level.
(c) Centres of advanced study should be strengthened and a small number of "clusters of centres" aiming at the highest possible standards in research and training should be established.
(d) There is need to give increased support to research in universities generally. The institutions for research should, as far as possible, function within the fold of universities or in intimate association with them.

(13) Part-time Education and Correspondence Courses: Part-time education and correspondence courses should be developed on a large scale at the university stage. Such facilities should also be developed for secondary school students, for teachers and for agricultural, industrial and other workers. Education through part-time and correspondence courses should be given the same status as full-time education. Such facilities will smoothen transition from school to work, promote the cause of education and provide opportunities to the large number of people who have the desire to educate themselves further but cannot do so on a full-time basis.

(14) Spread of Literacy and Adult Education: (a) The liquidation of mass illiteracy is necessary not only for promoting participation in the working of democratic institutions and for accelerating programmes of production, especially in agriculture, but for quickening the tempo of national development in general. Employees in large commercial, industrial and other concerns should be made functionally literate as early as possible. A lead in this direction should come from the industrial undertaking in the public sector. Teachers and students should be actively involved in organizing literacy campaigns, especially as part of the Social and National Service Programme.
(b) Special emphasis should be given to the education of young practise farmers and to the training of youth for self-employment.

(15) Games and Sports: Games and sports should be developed on a large scale with the object of improving the physical fitness and sportsmanship of the average student as well as of those who excel in this department. Where playing field and other facilities for developing a nation-wide programme of physical education do not exist, these should be provided on a priority basis.

(16) Education of Minorities: Every effort should be made not only to protect the rights of minorities but to promote their educational interests as suggested in the statement issued by the Conference of the Chief Ministers of States and Central Ministers held in August, 1961.

(17) The Educational Structure: It will be advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective should be to adopt the 10 + 2 + 2 pattern, the higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools. colleges or both according to local conditions.

5. The reconstruction of education on the lines indicated above will need
additional outlay. The aim should be gradually to increase the investment in education so as to reach a level of expenditure of 6 per cent of the national income as early as possible.

6. The Government of India recognizes that reconstruction of education is no easy task. Not only are the resources scarce but the problems are exceedingly complex. Considering the key role which education, science and research play in developing the material and human resources of the country, the Government of India will, in addition to undertaking programmes in the Central sector, assist the State Governments for the development of programmes of national importance where coordinated action on the part of the States and the Centre is called for.

7. The Government of India will also review, every five years, the progress made and recommend guidelines for future development.

APPENDIX III

Draft National Policy on Education (1979)

Preamble

1.1. An ideal system of education should enable individuals to know and develop to the fullest, their physical and intellectual potentialities and promote their awareness of social and human values, so that they can develop a strong character and live better lives and function as responsible members of the society. It is by transforming the human being that social transformation can be brought about.

Aim

1.2. The aim of education should be the growth of the individual through truthful life without detriment to the welfare and progress of society and our cherished ideals of freedom, equality and social justice. To this end it should strengthen values of democracy, secularism and socialism. Education should promote national unity, pride in our cultural heritage, and faith in the country’s future. The effort must be to inculcate scientific and moral values and to facilitate pursuit of knowledge.

Content

1.3. The content of education at all levels needs to be recast so as to make the education process functional in relation to the felt needs and potentialities of the people. Emphasis should shift from teaching to learning, the role of the learner being more crucial. Gandhi’s ideas and experiments in the matter of education, his introspective approach to all learning, his insistence on the correlation of hand and heart leading to complementarity of intellectual and manual work and on the social responsibilities of education have enduring relevance and are therefore vitally necessary and useful. Community service and participation in constructive and socially useful productive work should be an integral part of education at all stages so as to foster self-reliance and the dignity of labour. Moral education should form part of the content through inter-related curricular and co-curricular programmes in all subjects and should be the responsibility of all teachers and the entire institution. The content should also include the lives and teachings of great national leaders and the history of freedom movement.

System

1.4. The present system of education must be reorganized in the light of contemporary Indian realities and requirements. Subject to the nationally agreed basic concepts of freedom, equality and justice, the system should be flexible and responsive to varying circumstances. Every effort should be
made to pursue excellence, without losing sight of the ideal of equality. The system must endeavour to narrow the gulf between the educated classes and the masses and overcome feelings of superiority, inferiority and alienation. With flexibility in the choice, content and duration of courses, the student can choose his own time and channel of study and progress at his own pace. The educational institutions and the community should help each other, the teachers and parents cooperating in providing knowledge and skills and a better future for the children. The school should be closely associated with the development activities of the area.

2. UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Elementary Education for All

2.1. Highest priority must be given to free education for all up to the age of 14 as laid down in the Directive Principles of the Constitution. Education up to this stage should be general and not specialized, and should give pupils a confident command of language and tools subjects and inculcate a scientific attitude. Elementary education should be an integral stage.

Objective and Content of Elementary Education

2.2. The accent in elementary education should be on the development of personality and character. The content of elementary education needs to be restructured keeping in view not only the tradition and values that make up the country's composite culture but also the present realities and the vision of a common future. The content of education at this stage should include language, arithmetic, history, simple elementary sciences with special reference to environment, cultural values and physical education. The curriculum should necessarily include socially useful productive work through purposive manual labour contributing towards goods and services useful to the community. Wherever possible, provision must be made for agricultural or horticultural activity. Thus education will become functional and related to the lives of the people and the environment. It should promote a scientific temper which results in a capacity for self-criticism and a liberal and human outlook. Flexibility and room for innovation will help the teachers to meet the varying requirements of children.

2.3. There is need for a change in the approach to the learning process in the early years of elementary education. The accent has to be on more creative and joyful activities than formal instruction. Formal instruction must be reduced to the minimum and should not exceed three hours a day. No rigid academic year need be prescribed. The school session should be scheduled according to local needs.

Facilities for Elementary Education

2.4. While it is necessary to expand the facilities for formal education in elementary schools for all children in the age-group 6-14, it is also important to formulate schemes of non-formal education for dropouts and the older children in the age-group who have not had any schooling. The aim should be to cover all the children in the age-group 6-14 in the next ten years. Steps should be taken to prevent children giving up schooling without completing the course. The problem of wastage should be studied in detail and remedial measures taken.

2.5. The curriculum must be capable of catering to the requirements of a wide range of learners and learning circumstances and be built around local situations. There has to be a core of basic content for comparability of educational attainment and the acquisition of further skills and knowledge. The core should be minimum. Learning system may be organized through either formal or non-formal arrangements, which may be partly institutional and partly personal. The institutional arrangements should not be so rigid as to exclude those learners who wish to make use of them partially.

Incentives

2.6. Incentives such as mid-day meals, free textbooks, stationery and uniforms should be provided to poorer pupils. Special attention should be given to the education of girls and children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

School and the Community

2.7. The school should function as a focal centre for the development of the neighbourhood. The community in its turn should involve itself in the educational effort. Skills available within the community should be utilized for education programmes in the school.

Common School System

2.8. Beginning with the elementary stage, steps should be taken towards the common school system. The effort should be to provide education of good quality. It should be ensured that in all schools, the medium of instruction is the regional language and fees and rules of admission are uniform.

Neighbourhood School Plan

2.9. The neighbourhood school plan will be the main feature of the common school system by which the schools in the area will be required to enrol all the children in the neighbourhood. This will promote common interests and social integration.

3. ADULT EDUCATION

Need for Adult Education

3.1. It is estimated that 230 millions of our adult population are illiterate. These form mostly the poorest and the most neglected sections of the nation. Their contribution to national well-being could be far greater than it is, if they received some education. Their condition is such that they are not able to take advantage of the benefits available to them under the development plans and continue to be exposed to exploitation and social disabilities. The nation should deem it its solemn duty to impart education to them. The National Adult Education Programme, which has been organized, should be implemented with urgency and sustained vigour. The immediate target should
be to educate under this programme 100 millions in a period of five years so that universal literacy becomes a reality in our country within the shortest possible time.

Concept

The Adult Education Programme should mean not only acquisition of literacy and numeracy, but also functional development and social awareness with a view to cultivating the habit of self-education.

Revised Minimum Needs Programme

3.2. Adult Education is an integral part of the Revised Minimum Needs Programme (RMNP) whose thrust is (a) to reach to the poor people, (b) to coordinate all such programmes with developmental departments, and (c) to integrate them with area planning. The RMNP programmes, including Adult Education, cannot be the sole responsibility of one ministry, department or agency.

Agencies

3.3. Since this massive programme stipulates a large investment, its operational content has to be carefully worked out. The most important point to be kept in view is that the programme is community-oriented. Agencies and instruments for this programme have to be so identified that the maximum interaction takes place between the local community and the Government.

3.4. The programme will be conducted through multiple agencies with precedence to voluntary agencies in so far as they are available. The involvement of teachers, students, trade, industry, youth and women organizations, social workers, developmental departments, municipalities, panchayats and other local bodies will be ensured right from the beginning.

Emphasis on Rural Areas

3.5. Since the real problem of adult illiteracy exists in the rural areas, special efforts will have to be made to involve the rural community and the teachers in the rural areas to conduct this programme. A special effort should be made to active Mahila Mandal and Youth Organizations. Some input from the community would be desirable to make it a continuing programme.

Women Instructors

3.6. Since the programme is not only meant for removing illiteracy alone but its aim is also to create awareness about other problems, it would be desirable that such programmes as family planning, health and nutrition, child and mother care should be built into this programme. For this it would be desirable that the newly appointed instructors for this programme be women as far as is possible.

Skill Development

3.7. Besides removing illiteracy and creating awareness, adult education programme has to have some developmental content. It should also aim at improving the skills of the targeted groups so that their productivity can be improved. For this, institutions of vocational education should be pressed into service.

Post-Literacy Programmes

3.8. The adult education programme should include measures for continuing education to sustain the interest of those adults who have taken advantage of it and to enable them to develop knowledge and skills on their own. These measures would include low-priced books and literature, village libraries, material put out through the mass media, etc. The development of a rural library system is necessary to support the programme of continuing education.

4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

Improving Quality of Secondary Education

4.1. While the highest priority has to be given to the expansion of elementary education and promotion of adult education, it is equally important to improve secondary education so that on leaving school a student can enter life with self-reliance and confidence and take up work well equipped with general knowledge and relevant skills.

Diversification and Lightening of Academic Load

4.2. The curriculum of the secondary education should be diversified and its burden made lighter by shedding excess academic load so as to facilitate and help the development of the total personality. The curricular and co-curricular programmes, physical education, games, socially useful productive work and social service should be designed to help students acquire the knowledge and skills, attitudes and values, essential to a democratic, secular and socialist society with Gandhian values of life.

4.3. Diversification of education programme should take note of the pattern of diversified decentralized economy in rural areas where the accent is on rural industrialization, minor irrigation, rural health, rural electrification, rural housing and other programmes of rural development.

Role of Secondary Education

4.4. The entire educational system has to be seen as one chain. The central link in this chain is that of secondary education because it is through this that backward and forward linkages are established. Elementary education has to be so structured as to strengthen the foundations of secondary education and secondary education has to be so structured that students can be sufficiently equipped both in knowledge and skills to straightway join any part of economic life. Secondary education should be comprehensive both to be terminal for those who do not want or cannot proceed for further education, and to have a strong academic foundation for higher studies for those who show intelligence and aptitude for that education. Besides, the system should be so evolved that the students can opt out of one stream to the other as and when they desire.
Vocational Education

4.5. However, both streams in secondary education should have strong vocational component in the curricula and should be diversified to satisfy the needs of both the above-mentioned streams. Obviously, for terminal secondary education vocationalization would have much larger component than for the other stream. Foundations for vocationalization of secondary education will have to be laid even earlier through socially useful productive work with accent on practical work becoming an integral component of elementary school curriculum.

4.6. The vocational education spectrum will consist of a range of knowledge and skills, training in technologies, together with a study of the related sciences, farming and other practical work. For this purpose a systematic linkage should be established with the facilities available in the neighbourhood. The objective should be to give students fitness for employ- ment or a capacity for self-employment.

4.7. Introduction of programmes of vocationalization would have to be preceded by surveys which would indicate broad and qualitative assessment of emerging employment opportunities which are local and specific. Such surveys and assessments should be periodic so that vocationalization programmes are reviewed, modified and changed from time to time.

4.8. Vocationalization programme, by its very nature, will have to involve all development departments. However, there is need for one coordinated agency to look after various aspects of the programme like programme information, development of course, content, standards of achievement, liaison with employment agencies, identification of institutional courses, etc.

4.9. Efforts should be made to provide for vocational courses and opportunities for vertical and horizontal mobility through the provision of appropriate diploma and certificate courses through non-formal methods. The products of vocational courses should have opportunities for upward professional mobility.

4.10. Vocationalization for self-employment should reckon with the need for supplementary inputs like credit, market, etc. and should also aim at extending the scope of possibilities of effective tie-up with the district industrial centres and other institutions being set up in the country. The student completing the existing vocational courses should be given due recognition. To promote vocationalization, apprenticeship schemes should be extended to those courses also.

Community Involvement

4.11. The school and the community will have to be brought together. Involvement of the community in identifying the kinds of programmes and courses and provision of facilities by them in their enterprises and establishments will ensure success of the programme. This will also, among other things, throw up work opportunities for self-employment.

4.12. In view of the decentralization of economic planning where the thrust is on area development with improving the lot of individual families, the programme of vocationalization has to be decentralized and local bodies and communities involved in its formulation and implementation.

Appendices

Expansion of Secondary Education

4.13. Facilities for secondary education will have to be expanded in rural areas and the smaller towns in order to reduce the gap between rural and urban population. Special efforts will be made to provide access to the weaker sections. Access may also be enlarged by the introduction of correspondence, part-time and own-time courses of study and by allowing private candidates to appear in public examinations.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION

Importance

5.1. Though priority must be given to elementary and adult education and the improvement of secondary education, the importance of the role and contribution of higher education in national development must be fully recognized.

Relieving Pressure on Higher Education

5.2. The proliferation of colleges and universities with little regard to the need for them or the resources required for sustaining them at acceptable standards is a matter of concern. Measures will have to be devised to relieve pressure on higher education. Vocationalization of secondary education should help in this process. New recruitment policies and procedures with in-built pre-service training programmes and tests appropriate to specific job requirements, will also help to lessen the craze for degrees for securing jobs. The general run of jobs not requiring university education for their performance, should be de-linked from the requirement of a degree.

Facilities for Higher Education

5.3. Facilities for higher education may be expanded through correspondence courses, part-time and own-time studies and by permitting private candidates to appear in university examinations. Great restraint should be exercised in the establishment of new institutions. Admission to institutions of higher learning should be selective. Due safeguards, however, have to be provided to ensure accessibility of these institutions to first-generation learners, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other disadvantaged groups. Vigorous efforts should be made to improve the quality of higher education.

Undergraduate Education

5.4. It is preferable that the duration of the undergraduate stage of higher education is three years. This may be followed by courses of postgraduate study and research. Courses of study will be restructured and made interdisciplinary so that they can meet the varying requirements of students and also help in social transformation and national development. Participation in constructive programmes with a component of socially useful productive work should be made an integral part of the courses of study at the undergraduate stage.
Research

5.5. Efforts will be made to raise the quality of postgraduate education. Universities will be encouraged to undertake fundamental and applied research especially in sciences relevant to the needs of national development in collaboration with national research laboratories, industry and other organizations. The programmes of scientific and technological research should conform to the National Policy on Science and Technology.

Extension Programmes Linking Community with the Education System

5.6. The university system should assume increasing responsibilities for the development of the community and more particularly for the education system as a whole. The Universities should collaborate with the colleges which in turn may work with secondary and elementary schools in the neighbourhood and the entire complex should help to improve the standards of education at all levels. There should be close relationship of mutual services and support between the universities and colleges and the local community. Extension programmes in the universities should have the same status as teaching and research. Vacations should, where necessary, be curtailed and re-scheduled to enable students and teachers to lend a hand in programmes of rural and community development.

Centres of Excellence

5.7. Centres of excellence, whose standards should be comparable with the best in the world, are essential and every effort will be made to promote them.

6. STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

6.1. The educational structure will broadly comprise elementary, secondary and undergraduate stages of education. School education shall be of 12 years’ duration and will comprise the elementary and secondary stages. There will be a public examination at the end of the secondary education. The undergraduate stage of education may be of 3 years’ duration. However, where a university desires, it can have 2 years’ pass and 3 years’ honours course.

7. TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Manpower Needs and Technical Education

7.1. In the area of technical education, an efficient national manpower information system is necessary, which should be developed within the next five years. In view of the changed priorities of socio-economic development, a more balanced technical education system at all stages should be organized. The programme of technical education should be on a more efficient and meaningful basis.

Appendices

Restructuring of Courses

7.2. Technical education institutions, especially polytechnics, will form the focal points where problems of rural areas will be studied and solutions found. Programmes will be designed to ensure meaningful interaction and collaboration with industry. Laboratories and workshops should be strengthened and the quality of training should be improved. Technical education courses should be designed also to impart entrepreneurial skills. Courses in management education should be restructured to provide for managerial manpower for villages, small and medium-sized industries and also for sectoral needs such as transport, power, health, agriculture, cooperation and rural development. Appropriate courses in humanities and social studies should be provided in technical education institutions to promote a sound value system.

7.3. In view of the fact that the country has already achieved a highly diversified industrial structure, both in public and private sectors, industries should play a larger role in maintaining a balance system of technical education and in the optimum utilization of technical manpower in the building up of a research and development base.

Research

7.4. Emphasis in research will be on industrial and rural development. Institutions will be expected to undertake advanced research in areas of vital importance to the nation, such as energy resources and technology for rural development.

8. AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Courses of Study

8.1. Facilities for agricultural education should be expanded to meet the requirements of all States and should emphasize self-employment through diverse agricultural operations. Agricultural Universities wherever they exist should have State-wide responsibility for research in agriculture and allied areas. Every Agricultural University should have one strong centre of research in each agro-climatic region to do location-specific research. Agricultural Universities should also conduct advanced studies and basic research relevant to agricultural development. Agriculture Departments and faculties of other universities which have the necessary potential should also be assisted to develop complementary programmes of agricultural education.

Linkage

8.2. Linkages should be developed between Agricultural Universities and development departments to facilitate the transfer of new technology to villages. Agricultural Universities should also actively pursue programmes of non-formal education, including correspondence courses, for continuing education to meet the functional requirements of the rural community.
Krishi Vigyan Kendras

8.3. Agricultural Universities as well as suitable voluntary agencies should organize and run Krishi Vigyan Kendras to impart training to rural youth in relevant skills and also participate in programmes of adult education.

9. MEDICAL EDUCATION

9.1. In the field of medical education, the type of education imparted, particularly at the under-graduate level, is hospital-oriented and has little relevance to the actual overall health care needs of the country. As a result, while the modern medical system has, to a large extent, kept pace with the developments in the rest of the world, yet the graduates coming out of our medical colleges are unable to appreciate adequately the problems of the community and handle the problems and dilemmas at that level. Our medical education system, therefore, needs to be reorganized on a realistic assessment of the health manpower requirements of the country. Towards this end, the system has to be reoriented to bring it in tune with the needs and aspirations of the community.

9.2. At the same time, the indigenous (traditional) systems of medicine like Ayurved, Unani, Siddha, Yoga, Naturopathy and also Homeopathy have, after years of comparative neglect, started coming into their own. It is essential from the point of view of optimal utilization of national resources that all these systems, as well as the modern system, should realize their limits as well as potentials, should support each other mutually, and draw inspiration from one another.

10. CULTURE

Linking Culture and Education

10.1. A positive effort has to be made to ensure the integration of traditional and contemporary cultural elements with formal and non-formal education. The education system has so far not made full use of the rich and varied cultural heritage of the country and the vast cultural resources available in communities which are socially and economically backward. All these resources should be drawn upon and woven into the fabric of education, at all stages.

11. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education as an Integral Part of Education

11.1. Physical education, consisting of sports and games and athletics, including rural sports, indigenous games, yoga exercises and activities promoting a spirit of adventure, should form part of education at various levels. Efforts should be made to locate talent among boys and girls and facilities should be provided to enable them to develop their capacities and attain national and international standards of excellence in sports. Practical knowledge for maintaining one's health and physical fitness should be given at all stages.

Appendices

12. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Medium and Language Study

12.1. The medium of instruction at all stages shall be the regional language except at the primary stage where it will be the mother tongue.

12.2. Facilities will be provided in schools for teaching English or a foreign language so that pupils can have direct access to specialized and growing knowledge in the world in their chosen fields.

13. THREE-LANGUAGE FORMULA

13.1. The Three-Language Formula will be implemented at the secondary stage. It includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably a South Indian Language, in addition to Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States and of Hindi in addition to the regional language and English in non-Hindi-speaking States.

14. DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGES

14.1. Efforts will be made to improve the techniques of teaching languages.

14.2. Efforts will be continued and strengthened to develop Indian languages and literature.

14.3. Sanskrit has influenced in one way or another most of the modern Indian languages. Efforts will be made to popularize the study of Sanskrit.

14.4. Study of other classical languages will be promoted.

14.5. Programmes to promote the development and propagation of Hindi as a link language will be strengthened.

14.6. The study of Urdu will be accorded due recognition and encouragement.

14.7. The study of Sindhi will also be promoted.

15. EXAMINATION REFORM

Place of Examinations

15.1. Examinations, especially public examinations, should be made more objective and reliable. Evaluation should enable the teacher to see the effectiveness of his instruction and enable the pupils to judge the results of their learning efforts. It should thus act as an instrument of improving both the teaching and the learning processes including the content of courses and methods of teaching.

15.2. The mode of evaluation should encourage memorization and should be comprehensive enough to cover the total earning experience in the curricular and co-curricular programmes.

Public Examinations

15.3. Generally, there should be no more than three public examinations during the entire course of education till the end of undergraduate stage. These may be at the end of the elementary, secondary and undergraduate stages.
Internal Evaluation
15.4. All other examinations should be internal. Besides the annual examinations there must be regular periodical tests to evaluate the progress of students. A regular system of sessional evaluation should be followed so as to identify the pupils lagging behind and needing special attention.

Credit System
15.5. We must gradually provide for the credit system which facilitates multi-point entry and promotes an open learning system.

16. BOOK DEVELOPMENT

Textbooks
16.1. Efforts will be made to improve the quality and content of textbooks and to make them available at reasonable prices. The States and universities will be assisted to produce books and periodicals and other reference material in regional languages to facilitate the medium change-over.

17. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Problem of Disadvantaged Sections
17.1. While there has been considerable expansion in all sectors of education in our country, imbalances and inequalities still persist. Girls, scheduled castes and tribes, landless labourers, backward classes and urban slum poor generally continue to lag behind in education. Special effort must be made to identify the problems in these cases and to bring all such people into the fold of education.

Talent Search
17.2. Scholarships and fellowships based on merit-cum-means should be expanded at different levels of education. Some of these should be earmarked for rural and backward areas and weaker sections, to ensure that talented students from the weaker sections of the population are identified and helped to acquire good quality education.

Monitoring
17.3. Close monitoring of programmes intended for the disadvantaged classes will be undertaken at the State and national levels at all stages of education so that they may be enabled to reach levels attained by other sections of the population, with the next decade.

Pre-School Education
17.4. Pre-school education for children of first generation learners should be provided through existing schools system.

Public Schools
17.5. Some schools, notably “public schools” remain outside the system of public education. They should be brought under the purview of the laws and regulations that govern the system of public education especially those relating to fees and content of courses. They must have the regional language as the medium of education and uniform fees and rules of admission. These institutions should be integrated with the common school system of education with its neighbourhood plan. The special rights of institutions administered by minorities will be given due recognition.

Regional Imbalances
17.6. Certain States lag behind the rest of India in education. The Centre and States concerned must make special efforts to bring them on par with the other States in education generally and more particularly in universalization of literacy within the shortest possible time. It has been observed that educational development even within one and the same State is not uniform. Hence, close monitoring will be introduced during the next Plan period, and emphasis will be laid on area planning to ensure that all relatively backward pockets are assisted to raise their standards.

Education for the Handicapped
17.7. Every effort should be made to expand educational opportunities to cover all handicapped children. For the more severely handicapped children, education may be provided in especially suitable settings for the full development of the potential. The others could be placed in regular schools and provided with the requisite additional facilities. Appropriate curricula and techniques of teaching suited for handicapped children should be evolved through research and through study of techniques adopted elsewhere.

18. TEACHERS

Role of Teachers
18.1. Teachers have to play a pivotal role in reforming education at all levels. In order that they can play this role they should be inspired by creative idealism and feel pride in their professions. Suitable steps should be taken to improve professional competence of teachers at all levels. The academic freedom of teachers to conduct research and make experiments and innovations will be assured.

18.2. The teaching community should become increasingly aware of the crucial importance of their role in moulding the lives and character of the future citizens of the country. They should themselves be model citizens, committed to the task of national and social reconstruction.

Teacher Education
18.3. The curriculum of teacher-education at the elementary and secondary stages will be suitably changed in order to enable the teachers to play their proper role in reforming education. Pedagogical and professional preparations for teachers in higher education should also be provided. Facilities for in-service training will be expanded. Centres for developing
curricular materials and teaching aids will be established, especially for the benefit of teachers in rural areas and for both formal and non-formal systems of education.

19. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Local Community Participation

19.1. It is desirable to associate the local community with the schools in the area through the setting up of local committees which will improve the facilities in the institutions and help them to function more efficiently.

20. VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

20.1. Voluntary organizations will be encouraged to support and supplement the programme formulated to implement the national policy.

21. EDUCATION OF MINORITIES

21.1. Government are aware of the valuable contribution to the country’s composite culture that can be made by institutions run by religious and linguistic minorities and recognize and uphold their right to establish such educational institutions of their choice and administer them in accordance with law, in order that the goal of an integrated Indian community is achieved.

22. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

22.1. Government expenditure on education in the country has steadily grown. In the financial year 1950-1951, it was of the order of Rs.2,800 crore per annum. A larger outlay will be needed to implement the policy outlined above. However, efforts must be made to realize the objectives through exercise of economy, more effective utilization of existing resources, additional outlays and programmes such as “Food for work”.

22.2. Fees may be charged at secondary and higher education stages from those sections of population who are in a position to pay at rates which bear a reasonable relationship to the cost of providing education.

22.3. Support from local communities in cash and kind should also be encouraged on a wider scale than is done at present.

22.4. While financial inputs are an important part of the total effort required to implement the policy, even more important will be the human element, the intellectual and moral energy dedicated to the task. Without this human contribution, the transformation and expansion of the education system on the above lines and improvement of its quality will not be possible.

23. REVIEW

23.1. The Government of India will review every five years the implementation of the National Policy on Education and modify it in the light of experience.

APPENDIX IV

Adoption of the Regional Languages as Media of Instruction at the University Stage

Address of Dr. Triguna Sen to the Vice-Chancellors’ Conference, 1967

* * * *

I shall now turn to the subject which recently has been uppermost in the minds of all of us, namely, the medium of education. I am afraid the recommendations of the Education Commission on this subject have not received as careful a consideration as they deserve. With the result, that several misunderstandings have unnecessarily arisen. Thinking has also tended to be clouded by political considerations, which have been injected in the discussions. It is, therefore, necessary to restate the entire case comprehensively and in its proper educational perspective. I hope you will bear with me.

From the way the discussion on the subject is being conducted, one often gets the impression that at present, all universities are teaching through the English medium and that the Ministry of Education has come forward, with a new proposal, to rush all of them into a headlong and precipitate change-over into regional languages. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Let me point out that this process of change-over has already begun. As of today, 35 universities in the country allow a regional language as a medium of examination. In nearly 15 universities, the proportion of students opting for the regional language as a medium of examination is 90 per cent or more. In 17 universities, the regional languages can be used as media of education at the post-graduate stage also. It is even more important to realize that the pace of this change-over is being quickened by several factors, such as, the keenness of the State Governments to bring this change about, the adoption of regional languages for administrative purposes in the States, the virtual break-down of English as a medium of education in several situations, and pressures from the students who generally desire an easy way out. It will, therefore, be clear that a change-over to regional languages as media of education is not something “new”. It is a process which has already started, is now well under way and whose pace is being quickened. It is both inescapable and irreversible.

I am fully convinced that this is a change in the right direction and has to be welcomed. There are well known and academically irrefutable grounds for the adoption of regional languages as media of education. This reform will raise standards of higher education, release the creative energies of the people, spread knowledge to the masses, accelerate the process of modernization and reduce the gulf between the intelligentsia and the people. It has also had the support of all our great national leaders – Tagore,
Gandhiji, the Rajaji of earlier days, and has been blessed by the Radhakrishnan Commission, the Educational Integration Committee, the Vice-Chancellors' Conference of 1962 and finally by the Education Commission. Dr. K. L. Shrimati announced it as a policy of Government in Parliament.

But what pains me — and this was the finding of the Education Commission also — is the ad hoc and casual manner in which this change is being brought about. There is no plan behind it: no sizable attempt to produce the necessary literature; no programme to strengthen simultaneously the teaching of English as a language with a view to giving the student direct access to the growing knowledge in the world; and no effort to coordinate different State policies. In my view, it is this unplanned drift into the adoption of regional languages as media of education, which is sure to come about in the next few years, that spells great danger to the standards in higher education.

What is, therefore, the precise nature of the choice before the country? There is no question in my mind, as some seem to think, of not adopting the regional languages as media of education at university stage. Whether we like it or not, that change is going to come, sooner rather than later. The only choice before us, therefore, is twofold:

1. Either we drift into this change, under the pressure of unaccredited forces, without a plan, without adequate preparation, and without the essential safeguards and thus end in chaos or disaster;
2. Or we accept the desirable and inevitable writing on the wall, and carefully plan and implement the change, on a national basis, with vigour and firmness.

The choice is obvious. The Education Commission recommended that a planned programme should be evolved for this change-over with the basic objective of improving standards in higher education, I share this view. The only "reversal of earlier policies" which I am trying to make — I have not been able to make it yet — is to introduce this element of planning and orderly progress in a movement that is proceeding in a desultory and chaotic fashion. If this is a "sin", I plead guilty. But let it be clearly understood that this is a purely academic decision in the interest of higher education and is not influenced by any political considerations. I am happy that Government of India also stands by it and is prepared to provide the necessary resources.

How shall we set about this task? In my opinion, all our plans of change-over will have to be guided by certain basic considerations.

(1) The first is the need for an elastic gradual approach. The programme of change-over to regional languages as media of education will have to vary from university to university, from subject to subject, and even from institution to institution, in the same university. The criteria in each case should be that the change-over helps, at every stage, to raise standards. Moreover, the case of the Central universities or of those in the metropolitan cities will need special consideration and safeguards, on merits or in view of prior commitments. Adequate safeguards will also have to be provided to minorities, as laid down in Article 30 of the Constitution. In this flexibility...
development of the regional language. The Council hopes that while English would thus be an international link at all times, its place as an internal link will gradually be taken by Hindi as it develops. The Council, therefore, urges that at the university stage, the students should be equipped with progressively better command of Hindi, in addition to a good working knowledge of English such as would enable them to follow lectures delivered in that language." This is the accepted policy of Government.

(3) It is also essential to evolve a big programme for the production of the needed literature in all Indian languages. This will be a task basically for the universities themselves and the Centre will provide the resources. Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs.18 crores for this programme. It has been said, that this was done to buy over the States to this point of view. This is wrong – partly because the States had taken the decision to adopt regional languages as media long before the grant was made, and partly because, it exaggerates, beyond imagination, the capacity of the rupee to buy things. The main object of the grant was to assist the academic community and to raise standards. In this context, however, I would like to make two points:

(a) It will be wrong to argue that all the needed literature should be produced first, before the change-over begins. Like chicken and egg or getting into water and learning to swim, production and use will have to go on side by side. As the Education Commission has warned: “We should not get involved in the vicious circle of ‘no production because no demand and no demand because no production’.”

(b) But it must be clearly understood that no amount of production of literature in the regional languages, will ever be enough to keep our students abreast of all the growing knowledge in the world. It is, therefore, necessary that books prescribed or recommended for university courses should be in the regional languages. English and Hindi and, where necessary, even in the other languages like French, German, Russian, Japanese and Spanish. With adequate command over English and other literary languages which we expect the students to possess, this supplementary reading material will ensure that standards will be maintained.

(4) One of the major objectives of higher education is to cut across linguistic barriers. Simultaneously with the adoption of regional languages as media, therefore, an intensive effort is called for to establish institutions of higher learning which cut across the frontiers of regional languages and promote national integration. Several institutions of this kind already exist; and it is the objective of Government policy to increase, expand and strengthen them. These will adopt English and Hindi as media and care will be taken to see that students from no linguistic region are adversely affected in admissions to them.

These are some of the major programmes we are considering to ensure a planned and smooth change-over to regional languages as media in higher education. I believe that these have the support of the entire academic community. I look forward to your advice on this subject which will be of immense use to the Government.

It is unfortunate that this proposal, based on the recommendations of the Education Commission, has met with a good deal of criticism which is not justified. For instance, the entire controversy relating to the official language of the Union has been injected into this discussion, understandably, but unfortunately. It has also been alleged that this change-over will result in deterioration of standards. I have already shown that the essential purpose of this reform is to improve standards and that every care is being taken to ensure this. I would not like to take your time by discussing other criticisms. I shall, however, refer, in some detail, to only two issues: the mobility of teachers and students and national integration.

The mobility of teachers and students in the new set-up, will be facilitated to a very large extent, even in the special institutions which will be maintained and promoted for the purpose of cutting across linguistic barriers. Even in the institutions which use the regional languages as media, four steps would have to be taken to promote them. First, every teacher, as the Education Commission has recommended, should be expected to be bilingual, in the sense that he can teach in his mother tongue and at his option, either in English or in Hindi. Second, every student should be expected to use his mother tongue or regional language as medium and should be able to read books and follow lectures, both in English and Hindi. Third, special programmes should be developed in the Central sector to encourage the movement of teachers and students, so as not to leave these activities to mere chance; and fourth, special intensive courses of short duration, using the latest teaching techniques, should be available for students to learn regional languages other than their mother tongue. These measures, if felt, will adequately promote the movement of teachers and students.

Probably the strongest objection to the proposal is made on the ground that it will adversely affect the unity of the country. On this point, let me state categorically that, if this can be established, I shall be the first to oppose this proposal. However, I do not share these misgivings. National integration is of two types. The first is the integration between the intelligentsia and the masses in the same linguistic region and the second is the integration of the intelligentsia from the different linguistic regions. The adoption of the regional languages as media of education will secure the first type of integration which did not exist in the past and does not exist at present. This will be a great gain. But it raises the fear that the second type of integration between the intelligentsia of different regions may snap. We have a long tradition of this form of integration only, first through Sanskrit and then through English. We shall continue the dual link of English and Hindi and shall not allow this integration to snap. We also hope that, with the consent of the non-Hindi areas themselves, Hindi will one day be the link language. This policy will thus strengthen integration by retaining the integration of the intelligentsia in the different linguistic regions and adding to it a new dimension, i.e., integration between the intelligentsia and the masses in the same linguistic region. It is worthy of note that the proposal of adopting regional languages as media was made by the National Integration Council and the Educational Integration Committee whose primary objective was to strengthen national unity.

May I categorically state my faith on this issue.

(1) We must remember that, first and foremost, our loyalty is to good education or to the maintenance of standards, because the contribution of
education to national development depends essentially upon its quality.

(2) Language is, after all, a tool for education and not an end in itself. Therefore, while a language policy is an essential ingredient of a national policy on education, it would be a grievous error to equate this part with the entire policy itself.

(3) The language problem in education is difficult and surcharged with emotion. But we cannot hope to solve it by keeping mum or by running away. That way lies danger and chaos. What we need is an early envisagement of a long-term policy carefully devised on the basis of the best knowledge we have and in a spirit of give and take, so essential to the federal democracy which we have given to ourselves and its implementation in a vigorous and sustained manner.

(4) There should be no antipathy against any language, even the language of our enemies – past and present. In fact, we have to study more world languages in future and to study them in a more intensive way. Our objective is to get all knowledge, created in any part of the world, and in any language, as the Prophet of Islam has said: “Seek knowledge, even though it be in China.” China then having been looked upon as the remotest part of the world. Let us remember that there can be no barriers to the import of knowledge, except those which we impose upon ourselves. Such barriers can be imposed only at our own peril.

(5) We have to preserve and strengthen the gift of English. But let us not forget that English has unfortunately assumed, out of sheer historical accidents, two widely different roles in our midst. I welcome that English which serves me as a window on the world and helps me to enrich the languages of my country. But I have no use for that English which alienates me from my own people, makes 98 per cent of my countrymen foreigners in their land of birth, and has become the status symbol of a privileged and exploiting class. I have also a personal grievance against English. It brings “Sen” so close to “sin” that a small printer’s error can consign me to hell. But I will not press it.

My vision of national unity includes, not only a strong union of different States, but also a close intellectual collaboration with the progressive nations of the world. It has, therefore, a place for strong well-developed Indian languages, with one of the strong well-developed languages, I mean Hindi, as link language and with equally strong international links through the study, on an adequate scale, of English and other literary languages. Since it is necessary to retain English as an alternative or additional internal link, for certain practical considerations, we shall do till the non-Hindi areas agree to change. But my concept has no place for weak, under-developed Indian languages with an almost exclusive emphasis on “Indian” English as the sole link, whether internal or external.

APPENDIX V

New Pattern of School Education

Prof. S. Nurul Hasan

The adoption of the common pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes has been an important reform whose implementation has long been overdue. The reform was first recommended, about 55 years ago, by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19). At that time, the Matriculation Examination, which marked the end of the school course and also constituted an entrance examination to the universities, was held in different provinces at the end of 10-12 years of schooling. But in spite of this large variation of the duration of the school stage, these examinations, though conducted by different agencies, were regarded as equivalent to each other in all parts of the country. The Matriculation Examination was followed by a two-year intermediate course at the end of which another public examination, the Intermediate Examination, was held. Then came a two-year period of undergraduate education after which the First Degree Examination was held. All these three examinations – Matriculation, Intermediate and First Degree – were held by the universities. The Commission examined in depth the content of education at the intermediate and the undergraduate stages and came to the following conclusions:

1. That the intermediate stage was really a part of the school course and that the students at this stage could be more effectively taught by school methods than by those which were appropriate at the university stage and proper sphere of education was so poor that the first degree in India was not really comparable to the first degree in the advanced countries.

The Commission, therefore, recommended that:

1. The dividing line between the university and the secondary courses is more appropriately drawn at the Intermediate Examination than at the Matriculation;
2. That the duration of undergraduate course for the first degree should be increased to three years; and that;
3. A Board of Secondary and Intermediate Education should be established for the purpose of reorganizing high school and intermediate education on the lines recommended by it and for holding the Matriculation and Intermediate Examinations. The universities would thus be left to their proper sphere, namely, the provision of undergraduate and postgraduate education and the holding of examinations for the first, second or research degrees.
The recommendation made a deep impression on Indian educational thought and, for a time, it appeared to be on the verge of universal acceptance. But ultimately it was implemented only in one province, namely, the U.P. and that too, in a modified form. No steps were taken to increase the duration of the first degree course to three years, nor were any effective steps taken to vocationalize the intermediate stage.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) under the Chairmanship of Radhakishan had, therefore, to take up the discussion of the problem once again. After examining the problem from all points of view, this Commission also came to the conclusion that it was necessary to adopt the uniform pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes. The Commission felt that this pattern would make it possible to vocationalize the secondary stage of education so as to divert students into different walks of life at the end of secondary school and thus reduce pressures on university admissions. It also felt that the lengthening of the undergraduate course to three years, preceded by an intensive preparation at the earlier stage of two years, would result in a considerable improvement of standards in higher education. Unfortunately, steps were not taken to implement these recommendations.

The problem came up for consideration once again when the Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Mudaliar submitted its report (1952). The stage was now ripe to re-organize school and university education together, on the lines recommended by the University Education Commission and the Secondary Education Commission and to adopt a common pattern for school and college classes. At this time, throughout India, the duration of the post-Matriculation course leading to the first degree was uniformly four years and it was uniformly divided into two stages—two years of Intermediate and two years of undergraduate education. The simplest reform, therefore, would, therefore, have been to add one year to the degree course and to transfer the two years of the Intermediate course to the school stage. But for various reasons, and mainly for financial considerations, this was not done. Instead the recommendation of the Sargent Report of an eleven-year higher secondary school followed by a three-year course for first degree was revived and the pattern of 8 + 3 was adopted. The Intermediate course was therefore broken up into two parts and the first year was either added to the school stage or converted into a pre-university course of one year and the second year was added to the two-year undergraduate course for the first degree to create the three-year degree course. This was an unfortunate decision dictated by the compulsion of economy rather than the logic of academic reform.

The entire position was reviewed once again by the Education Commission (1961-66). It found that, as a result of the decisions taken after the Report of the Secondary Education Commission, there were at least four different patterns of schools and colleges in the country which may be stated as follows:

1. Kerala was the only State where the pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 had been adopted, with the two-year stage being located in junior colleges.
2. The pattern of 10 + 2 + 2 prevailed only in Uttar Pradesh where a ten-year school was followed by a two-year intermediate course and a two-year course for first degree.
3. The pattern of 11 + 3 prevailed in the Delhi Union Territory and the State of Madhya Pradesh where an eleven-year higher secondary school was followed by a three-year course for the first degree; and
4. The pattern of 10 (or 11 or even 12 in some cases) + 1 + 3 was followed in the other States where a school stage of 10 to 12 years was followed by a year of pre-university course and a three-year course for the first degree (alternatively, the pre-university year was often added to secondary schools which were then designated as “higher secondary”).

The Commission examined this situation from all points of view and came to the conclusion that, on sound academic considerations, detailed in its Report, it would be highly desirable to adopt the uniform pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes in all parts of the country. The Commission was also definitely of the view that the school stage should consist of 12 years (10 + 2) and that every effort should be made to vocationalize the higher secondary stage so that, ultimately, 50% of the enrolments at this stage would be in the vocational courses. The Commission also recommended a detailed programme for bringing about these important changes.

These proposals of the Education Commission have found general support in the country. Even before the Report of the Commission was submitted, the National Integration Committee appointed by the Ministry of Education under the Chairmanship of the late Dr. S. Sampurnanand recommended that, from the point of view of national integration, the uniform pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 should be adopted for school and college classes in all parts of the country. This recommendation was also supported by the Committee of Educationists and student leaders appointed under the directive of the National Integration Committee and also by several conferences of students’ organizations. The Central Advisory Board of Education has also unanimously supported the proposal and expressed the view that it should be implemented on a priority basis and that, at any rate, the programme should be completed in all parts of the country by the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan. The Resolution of the Government of India on the National Policy of Education also supports the uniform adoption of this pattern.

The pattern has since been introduced in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Steps have been initiated to introduce the pattern in the States of Maharashra, Gujarat and West Bengal. Several other States have set up committees to examine the issue and it is hoped that they will also follow suit in the near future.

Basic Academic Considerations

While due weight must be attached to this series of weighty recommendations of important Commissions and Committees and the steps already taken to implement them, it is also necessary to examine these proposals on academic

grounds and to satisfy ourselves that they are in the best interests of the country. This is what I shall now proceed to do.

The first point to be decided, on academic grounds, is the stage or age at which a student should be deemed to be fit to enter the university system. In all the advanced countries of the world, a student entering the universities is expected to be 18 years of age or more. It is only then that he can be adequately prepared for entering upon a course of higher education and also be mature enough to study on his own and to profit by the methods of teaching which are appropriate to the university stage. This necessarily implies a total duration of at least 12 years for the school stage (including elementary and secondary education), because the age of admission to the school system is generally six years. At present, when the total duration of the school stage is sometimes only 10 or 11 years, and the age of admission to the school system is five years or even less, very young students aged 14-17, often enter the university system. They are really children who deserve to remain at school and continue to be taught by methods appropriate to the school stage rather than young persons who are mature enough to profit by a course of higher education. This is bad for the schools that lose in their stature by a cut in their total duration. It is bad for the universities because it adversely affects their standards. What is even more important is that it is not good for the students themselves. If this situation is to be improved, it follows that the total duration of the school stage (including elementary and secondary education) should be not less than twelve years. This was the recommendation of the Education Commission and I am sure it will find general support in this gathering.

The second consideration to be discussed refers to the duration of the secondary education course. The duration of elementary education is eight years in some States such as Uttar Pradesh, and seven years in others such as Maharashtra. If the total duration of school stage is to be twelve years, it follows that the duration of the secondary course would be four years in some States and five years in others. The Education Commission had an open mind on this issue and did not insist on a uniform pattern of seven or eight years for elementary education. It was, however, very emphatic on one point: secondary education should not form an integrated continuous course, but should preferably be broken up into two sub-stages: the lower secondary and the higher secondary. It further recommended that the elementary and lower secondary stage should cover the first ten years of school and that the higher secondary stage should cover the last two years. It is necessary to understand the reasons which led the Education Commission to make these recommendations.

The Education Commission found that whenever the course of secondary education is made continuous and unbroken, as in the higher secondary schools of Delhi or Madhya Pradesh, two undesirable consequences follow. The first is that the expansion of secondary education is much larger than necessary or desirable. This is because the principle of selective admissions cannot be introduced at the beginning of the stage (Class IX) when the students are too young and because every student who enters the stage has to continue till the very end because of the continuous character of the course. Such a system therefore prevents the students from leaving the school at the end of Class X, although they would be eligible for admission to many vocational courses at this point. Secondly, the continuous character of the course compels the student to decide upon his future career at a very premature stage when he is entering Class IX and is about 13 or 14 years old. This is academically undesirable and, in fact, Dr. D.S. Khait has condemned it as a system of "child marriage". The Education Commission was therefore strongly of the view that the secondary stage should be broken into two parts at the end of Class X, that the students should continue to receive general education till the end of this stage, and that in the next higher secondary stage of two years, two distinct streams should be introduced, one stream preparing the students for admission to universities and the other preparing them for different vocational courses which would be terminal in character. The Commission also felt that the enrolment in courses of a vocational or terminal character should be as high as 50 per cent of the total.

It must also be pointed out that the Education Commission was not happy with the existing higher secondary pattern of 8+3 which provides seven different streams: Humanities, Science, Technical, Commercial, Agriculture, Fine Arts and Home Science and requires every student to join one stream of his choice. The vocational courses provided in this pattern have one major weakness: their vocational content necessarily remains weak because the total time available is limited. These courses, therefore, do not become terminal and do not prepare the students for the pursuit of a vocation at the end of the secondary stage. In fact, they do not even prepare them for admission to the corresponding vocational courses at the university stage. The vocational courses in this stream have therefore never become a popular or terminal. Since the programme of vocationalization of secondary education is extremely important and since it is obviously urgent to divert a fair proportion of students into different walks of life at the end of the secondary stage and thus reduce the pressures on university admissions, the Education Commission rightly came to the conclusion that the existing higher secondary pattern of 8+3 should be replaced by the proposed higher secondary pattern of 10+2.

Two important points must be mentioned in regard to the proposed reorganization of school education:

1. In the old days, and even in the multipurpose system introduced by the Secondary Education Commission, science and mathematics were often neglected. They were studied only till the end of Class VIII, and thereafter the student had the option to omit them if he so desired. In many secondary schools, even the provision for the teaching of these subjects did not exist. The net result was that more than 50 per cent of the students at the secondary stage were deprived of basic education in science and mathematics. Adequate teaching of science and mathematics is essential in the modern world based on science and technology. It is equally necessary to improve the quality of education and to avoid the dangers resulting from a dichotomy of the "two cultures" of science and of humanities. Above all, a society like ours, which is committed to the ideals of socialism, has to ensure vertical mobility to the manual workers, whether engaged in industry or agriculture. For this purpose, it must
provide the necessary grounding in science and mathematics to every person as a part of his school education because, without this, vertical mobility is not attainable. The Education Commission, therefore, rightly recommended that the teaching of science and mathematics should be obligatory till the end of Class X.

2. While a student should ordinarily be expected to decide whether he will go in for a vocational course or into the university stream at the end of Class X (when he is about 16 years of age), it goes without saying that such decisions would be tentative and that some young persons may like to change from one stream to the other at a later stage. The Central Advisory Board of Education, therefore, specifically recommended that such later transfers from one stream to the other should not only be permitted but also facilitated by due provision for transfer of credits on this account.

The importance of this recommendation is obvious.

I have already pointed out that, even as early as 1919, the Calcutta University Commission had recommended that the course leading to the first degree should have a duration of three years. With the passage of time, the opinion on the subject has now become even stronger for three main reasons. Firstly, there is now a much greater demand for specialization on account of the explosion of knowledge and, at the same time, there is also a demand for greater general education to enable the younger persons to face successfully the complex societies of the modern period. Secondly, there is now a much greater demand for inter-disciplinary courses (including inter-faculty ones) and for the provision of greater elasticity to the students to choose subjects of study to match their individual capacities and interests. Thirdly, there is also a greater emphasis on providing practical experience for field work and project-oriented studies at the undergraduate stage to improve the standards of education and to bring the system of higher education in close contact with the community around, through programmes of social and national service. If these important purposes are to be satisfactorily achieved, it goes without saying that a two-year duration is extremely inadequate for the undergraduate stage and that the new courses for the first degree will need a minimum duration of three years.

The foregoing discussion will show that the new pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes is an educational reform of great significance, that it is based on several important academic considerations, and is vastly superior to the alternative patterns that now prevail and that its universal adoption in all parts of the country will bring in several advantages, among which the following may be mentioned:

1. The school stage will be strengthened and its standards will improve because of its lengthening to twelve years and because of the inclusion, within it, of the intermediate stage which will bring in better teachers and better facilities.

2. The two-year higher secondary stage will have several advantages. It will enable us to control expansion to some extent because an element of selective admission can be introduced at this point. The students will also be mature enough when they enter Class XI to make a tentative decision about their future career and to embark upon some programmes of pre-specializations. It will enable the schools to prepare their gifted students intensively for the university and also to provide remedial action for any shortcomings arising from weaknesses in earlier education. Above all, it will be possible to vocationalize this stage intensively so that a fair proportion of students (ultimately as large as 50 per cent) can be diverted into different walks of life, thus reducing the pressures on university admissions. An important and necessary innovation at this stage would be to provide for transfer of credits to a student who may desire to change from one stream to another.

3. The standards in higher education will also improve as the students going into the university stream will now be better prepared and more mature.

4. The three-year degree course would be a definite improvement on the existing two-year course for the first degree. With this longer duration, it will be possible to meet the demands of specialization as well as of a broad-based general and inter-disciplinary education and to make adequate provision for practical experience, field work and project oriented studies. The introduction of problem-oriented inter-disciplinary courses at the Master's degree level would also be greatly facilitated with the adoption of 10 + 2 + 3 formula.

Some Misconceptions

In spite of all these academic considerations in favour of the uniform adoption of the common pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes, it is really unfortunate that there are several misconceptions on the subject which interfere with a proper implementation of the programme. It is necessary to clear these misconceptions if the programme is to succeed.

There is an unfortunate tendency, in certain quarters, to regard the arithmetic of the pattern (whether it is 11 + 2 + 2 or 11 + 1 + 3 or any other combination) as far more important than the substance of the reform which consists of the vocationalization of the higher secondary stage and improvement of standards, both in school and university education. I would like to state it categorically that the arithmetic of the structure is of no consequence whatsoever and that even the structure of the educational system is of little importance. We should not, therefore, look at this proposal of adopting a new pattern of school and college classes on a uniform basis throughout the country either as an arithmetical problem or even as a purely structural problem. We must regard it as a fundamental educational reform for strengthening both the school and university stages of education and of making the secondary stage terminal through a programme of vocationalization.

If these basic objectives are not emphasized and achieved, a mere adoption of some other arithmetic or a different structure will not serve any useful purpose.

Another common misconception is that, in adopting a common pattern of school and college classes, we must look elsewhere for precedents and support our argument with illustrations from other countries. This is hardly necessary and in fact would be an incorrect procedure. I have had the opportunity to study the pattern of education in many friendly countries. I have
found that there is no uniform pattern of school and college classes in the different countries of the world, and not even in the socialist countries whose educational systems tend to be uniform. Each country has evolved its own pattern in accordance with its own peculiar circumstances. It is therefore not desirable to change our pattern of school and college classes on the basis of the patterns prevailing in other countries. The Education Commission rightly emphasized that we must outgrow this imitative attitude and should introduce changes in our pattern slowly "on the basis of our own indigenous thinking after taking into account what is happening outside, but without being dominated by it."

Yet another misunderstanding, which is often propagated by certain vested interests, is that the adoption of the new pattern will adversely affect the interests of school and college teachers. Nothing can be farther from truth. The school teachers have everything to gain by the adoption of the pattern because more posts will be created at the school stage at higher levels. Even the college teachers have nothing to lose because we have insisted that in spite of a temporary setback in enrolments, there should be no retrenchment. The setback in enrolments also will be more than made up in three or four years by the natural increase in enrolments that will necessarily take place from year to year. What is even more important, the teachers in higher education will have much better job satisfaction because of the qualitatively better students that will now be entering the university system.

There is also a misunderstanding that the new pattern can be implemented quickly in a year or two. This can only be disastrous. The Education Commission pointed out that a good deal of careful preparation is needed for the adoption of the new pattern and that the programme will have to be phased over a few years. That is why, in the Delhi Union Territory, it is proposed to introduce the new syllabus in Class IX in the first instance and then to revise the syllabus for subsequent standards year after year. A good deal of preparatory work is also needed to identify vocational openings appropriate to this stage, to prepare fairly reliable estimates of manpower needs or opportunities, to prepare the curricula and to set up the essential institutional structure for vocationalization. The preparation of teachers for the higher secondary stage is also important and will consume considerable time and resources. Due attention will have to be paid to all this preparation if the programme is to succeed and result in improvement of standards.

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*Report of the Education Commission, para 2.05.

APPENDIX VI

Convocation Address, Nagpur University (1977)

Dr. P.C. Chunder

I am grateful to the authorities of the Nagpur University, and especially to its Vice-Chancellor, for inviting me to address this Convocation. I have accepted the invitation in deep humility. It is a great honour of which I shall always feel proud.

In 1913, when we had only four universities in India at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Allahabad, the Central Government decided to establish, in a gradual phased programme, one university in every Province. Accordingly, the University of Patna was first established (1917) for the erstwhile Province of Bihar and Orissa, and the University of Nagpur for the erstwhile Central Provinces and Berar (1923). The Nagpur University is thus one of our older and more developed universities: it has recently celebrated its golden jubilee and has carved out a distinctive place for itself on the academic map of India. This is mainly due to the dedicated labours of the staff and students of the University and to the well-deserved support it has received from the State Government and the University Grants Commission. I am sure the University will continue to rise to greater academic heights and make even more valuable contributions to national development in the years ahead.

Following the university tradition, I shall speak this evening on the new pattern of school and college classes (10+2+3) in the context of our national policy on education. I hope you will bear with me for a few minutes when I shall try to share my ideas with you on this subject which is figuring rather largely at present in the national debate on education.

A Brief Historical Background

It is a curious but important fact of history that we have always had a uniform pattern of higher education in our country, right from 1859 when the first matriculation examinations were held. This pattern may be described as follows:

1. The access to higher education was provided by the matriculation examination, which was the first public examination to be held at the end of the school stage. The standards to be attained at this examination were broadly comparable and the equivalence of the examination itself was recognized throughout the country and by the Central and State Governments.

2. The duration of higher education leading to the first degree was four years; and this was divided into two sub-stages – the intermediate stage of two years and the undergraduate stage of two years.
The standards to be attained at the intermediate and first degree stage were again broadly comparable and the equivalence of the examination itself was accepted throughout the country and by the Central and State Governments.  
This pattern of higher education remained unchanged till 1952. But the pattern of school education, where the Provincial Governments had the freedom to make variations to suit local traditions, needs, and conditions, was never uniform and by 1952 the following three different patterns had emerged:

1. In some areas (i.e., Assam), the school consisted of Infant A, Infant B, and classes 1-X (or twelve years in all) so that it took a student sixteen years to take his degree.

2. In some areas (i.e., Madras, Bombay, Bihar, and Orissa), the duration of the school stage was eleven years so that a student took fifteen years to take his degree.

3. In some areas (i.e., Punjab, U.P., and Bengal), the duration of the school stage was ten years so that a student took fourteen years to take his degree.

The Secondary Education Commission (1952) supported the view, which had been gaining currency in the country for several years, that the duration and pattern, not only of higher education, but of school education as well should be uniform throughout the country and that every child should be eligible to get the first degree after a school and college education of equal duration. On the basis of its recommendations, it was decided to introduce the following uniform pattern of school and college classes (11 + 3):

(1) The school stage should consist of eight years of elementary education and three years of secondary education (eleven years in all) and that diversified secondary education with seven optional streams should begin in class IX (or roughly at the age of 13 or 14 for the child).

(2) The matriculation examination (which was in existence from 1859) should be abolished and replaced by the higher secondary examination at the end of eleven years of schooling; and

(3) The duration of higher education for the first degree should be three years.

This “reform” created so much of trouble and so many problems. The matriculation examination should not have been abolished. It was equally wrong to break up the intermediate stage which smoothed the transition from school to university and helped to improve standards. It was also not desirable to begin “streaming” in secondary education in class IX so that each child was required to decide his future career at the early age of 13 or 14. Consequently, there was considerable opposition to the reform which never got fully accepted. It was only in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh that the new pattern was fully adopted. In other areas, the matriculation continued to be held either by itself or side by side with the higher secondary examination at the end of class X. Several States like Bombay or Madras refused to adopt the higher secondary pattern. Uttara Pradesh refused to break up the intermediate stage in two; and in spite of all the expense, trouble and dislocation caused by this proposal, the time taken for the first degree continued to vary from 14 to 16 years as in the past. In fact, this attempt to create a uniform pattern of school and college classes was a total failure; it could not create a uniform pattern for school education; it destroyed the uniform pattern of higher education which the country had since 1859; and what is even worse, it created an unprecedented diversity of patterns in the country: 12 + 1 + 3 as in Assam, 11 + 3 as in M.P., 11 + 1 + 3 as in Gujarat, a simultaneous existence of 10 + 1 + 3 or 11 + 3 as in West Bengal, Rajasthan or Punjab and 10 + 2 + 2 in U.P.

It was at this point that the whole situation was re-examined by the Education Commission (1964-66). Subject to certain general principles to which I shall refer later, the Education Commission recommended the adoption of the following pattern of school and college classes:

(1) The matriculation examination should be continued (or revived) and held at the end of ten years of school education;

(2) There should be a diversified higher secondary stage of two years which, on the one hand, would provide access to university and would qualify, on the other hand, about half of the students to enter the world of work. This will need the addition of one year where the first degree course started after eleven (instead of twelve) years. This reform may be carried out in a phased programme of about 20 years; and

(3) The duration of the first degree stage should be continued undisturbed.

While adopting these proposals, which found general support, the debate centred round two main issues:

1. What should be the status and location of the higher secondary or intermediate stage?

2. Should we raise the time required to take the first degree compulsorily to 15 years even in those States where it can at present be taken in 14 years?

On the first issue, there was total agreement that the higher secondary or intermediate stage should be recreated and treated as a school stage outside the purview of the universities. But opinion was divided as to whether the higher secondary or intermediate classes should be in schools only, or in colleges only, or even in separate institutions called intermediate colleges.

On the second issue, the general opinion was that ultimately we should move in the direction of 15-year period for degree and that the States where the degree is now being given in 14 years should be allowed some time to reach this goal.

The decision finally taken and incorporated in the National Policy Resolution (1968) was as follows:

The Educational Structure: It will be advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective should be to adopt the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, the higher secondary

*Here the Commission was mostly reiterating the earlier recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19), the University Education Commission (1949), and the National Integration Committee (1962).

**This had already been increased to three years in all areas except Uttar Pradesh and the city of Bombay.
stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions.

In this context, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) has recommended that a pass degree may be permitted at the end of a two-year course. But students who do the pass degree will have to put in an additional year for the honours degree (preferably by private study or correspondence course) to qualify for admission to M.A.

This reform has now been under implementation for about ten years. It has been fully implemented in the States of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in the sense that students have already completed the first degree course under the new pattern. It has been initiated and is at various stages of progress in the States of Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat, J&K, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and in the Union Territories of Delhi, Goa, Damann and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry, Arunachal Pradesh and Chandigarh. In the remaining States and Union Territories, either decisions have not been taken or, if taken, the implementation is yet to begin. *

Need for a Review

It is at this stage that the Janata Government has come in and the first question raised is whether this policy should or should not be reviewed. I am clear in my mind that a review is called for. The Janata Party is committed to review all the policies of the earlier Government. I have received hundreds of representations on the subject, either complaining about the policy itself or about the hasty, unplanned and defective manner in which it is being implemented. The revision of the scales of pay of college teachers has created difficult and significant issues regarding the location of the higher secondary stage which were not even dreamt of when this policy was laid down. What is equally important, the National Policy Resolution itself provides for a quinquennial review which is long overdue. I therefore feel that it is our duty to review this policy comprehensively and objectively and to make such modifications therein as are justified. The sooner we do this and the more definite we are in our decisions, the better for all concerned.

Where No Change is Needed

Let me however make a categorical admission that I do concede the need of a national policy with regard to the structure of the educational system and that I do subscribe to the following aspects of the existing policy on the subject which I do not desire to change:

(1) The matriculation examination should be held at the end of ten years of school education and that it should have broadly comparable standards and equivalence in all parts of the country. This, let me make it clear, is not opposed in any way to the idea of having eight years' universal elementary education for all children as directed in Article 45 of the Constitution. It also implies that the first two years of secondary education (included in the ten-year school) will be undifferentiated although it may have optional vocational elements and that a student will not be required to decide his future career till he completes class X or reaches the age of about 16. This, in my opinion, is a healthy reform. I am also glad that this reform has now been implemented in most parts of the country.

(2) It is extremely important that the next stage—call it intermediate or higher secondary—should be of two years and that it should have the twofold objective of preparing the student for the university as well as for entry into the world of work and that the latter objective should have a prior claim. I also concede the point that this stage should be outside the purview of the universities; although for administrative considerations, it may be located, at least to begin with, in schools, colleges, or both. I am also prepared to accept the position of the Education Commission that it should be gradually transferred to the schools through a carefully planned, phased and long-term programme.

(3) I agree with the CABE that a State which so desires should be allowed to retain a two-year course for the first degree which may be called the pass degree. There may be an honours course of one-year after this degree or a three-year integrated honours course after the intermediate or higher secondary stage. In all these matters, I would leave the option to the State Governments.

It will thus be seen that I do subscribe to the statement in the National Policy Resolution with the rider added by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) that the country should move in the direction of adopting, over the years, a broadly uniform pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 for school and college classes, fairly comparable standards being reached at the end of class X, class XII and the first degree.

Where Changes Are Needed

All policies are a blend of stability or continuity and change. While I thus indicate the areas of my concurrence and support, and hence of continuity, I shall also indicate where I differ and where I think some major changes are called for.

In my view, the worst aspects of the implementation of this policy (or of the recommendations of the Education Commission) are those that relate to content or curriculum. I find that, in the name of raising of standards, the curricula are being increased and made bigger than ever. The number of compulsory subjects taught has increased. The content of each subject has been enlarged. There are more textbooks than ever before; and each textbook is bigger than all its predecessors. The whole programme is based on the concept of the "banking" system education, i.e., education whose objective is to deposit (and to draw at will) as much information as possible in the mind of the child which is assumed to be a vacuum of infinite capacity. The programme also ignores the large variety and plurality of this country's educational education to be meaningful, has to be closely related to the local environment. I am quite convinced that this attempt at creating little "memory machines" out of all our children is wrong, educationally,
psychologically and socially. We are burdening young children beyond their capacity, and almost to the point of cruelty. We are also increasing the physical load they have to carry, the cost to parents, and probably misusing scarce paper which can be put to several alternative uses. We are over-emphasizing the imparting of information which is only one and a minor objective of education. Let us not forget that mere information does not necessarily lead to knowledge and even less so, to wisdom. Let us also not forget that there are other and more important objectives of education (such as teaching skills or cultivating values) which we are ignoring and that this policy of ours has, in the past, contributed to producing a generation that does not know what to do when or how to do it. The result has been a generation of people who do not know how to learn and do not know what to learn.

(1) The entire curriculum proposed by the NCERT for classes I-X should be reviewed and a definite attempt made to reduce the number of subjects and the load of content under each subject. This attempt is to be done, partly to reduce the overall crushing load of book-learning on children, but partly also to find adequate time for such programmes as work-experience, games and sports, community or national service, and development of creative thinking.

(2) While broad guidelines will be laid down by the Centre regarding (1) comparable achievements to be reached at a few given points such as the end of class X, class XII, and the first degree course, (2) certain things which ought to be included (e.g., teaching of science), or (3) certain things which should not be done (i.e., anything that harms national integration), a large and real freedom would be left to the State Governments to decide the curricula to suit local needs, conditions and traditions. In fact, even a State is too large and too diverse a unit; and we should see that the responsibility for framing the curriculum is more and more decentralized and the school studies are related, as closely as possible, to the physical and social environment in which the students live.

The NCERT would be requested to work on the basis of these guidelines without any delay.

(3) The policy regarding the plus two stage also needs a review. There will have to be a greater emphasis on work-experience and on vocationalization, with proper bridges between the different courses that may be offered. Steps will also have to be taken to ensure vertical mobility in the vocational courses at this stage. All available resources will have to be fully utilized for the development of vocational courses. The States will also have to be advised and assisted to prepare and implement careful plans for the location of this stage and for its eventual transfer to the school. The preparation and training of teachers for this stage, both on the academic and vocational sides, will need attention on a priority basis. All these problems will be taken up for consideration and follow-up action with the State Governments.

(4) At the university stage, a good deal of attention will have to be paid to the planning and organization of pass and honours courses for the first degree and of the courses for the second degree. Faculty development will need the highest attention and the emphasis throughout will have to be on the improvement of standards, on making higher education meaningful and relevant, and on the intensive use of available time and facilities. I do hope that, when the reorganization of the courses is complete, the new M.A. or M.Sc. degree will reach the same levels as the M.Phil. degree so that the duration of higher education is reduced from the present seven to five only. I propose to request the UGC to examine action on these lines, and especially in view of constitutional responsibility of the Centre for coordination and maintenance of standards.

Overall Considerations

This policy on the common pattern of school and college classes is based on some important overall considerations which were laid down by the Education Commission itself but which unfortunately seem to have been ignored. These will be the basis of all our policies in this regard. I would stated them categorically as follows:

(1) The broad pattern of education in the country is still in the nature of an exotic plant. There is hesitation and reluctance, and sometimes even fear, about making any radical changes unless they are on the model of what is happening abroad. We have to outgrow this attitude and to begin regarding the educational pattern as our own; and we should introduce changes in it on the basis of our own indigenous thinking, after taking into account what is happening outside but without being dominated by it.

(2) While the basic objective of the reform is to raise standards, let us not forget that the structure, which may be regarded as the skeleton of the educational system, is of the least importance. Standards will depend essentially on the intensive use of available facilities and creating a climate of hard and dedicated work by teachers and students. The attempts should be not so much to increase time as to learn more in less time. There should be liberal facilities for students who work hard to complete a course in a shorter time; and we should not increase duration unless we are fully satisfied that all available time has been fully and intensively used.

(3) The curricular reform which aims at raising standards should not only mean giving more information. Its basic objective should be to extend the principles of basic education to all stages and to emphasize them adequately. If improved standards do not mean closer relationship with productivity, greater identification with the people, development of creativity, capacity to think independently, improved problem-solving ability, or better health and greater skill in games and sports, they are not worth the trouble.

(4) The concern for the pattern should not make us distort our priorities and side-track the fundamental issues in educational reform such as provision of universal elementary education, liquidation of illiteracy, equalization of educational opportunities, and transforming the educational system to become a powerful instrument of socio-economic transformation.

2Ibid, para 2.02.
3Ibid, paras 2.33 to 2.42.
4Ibid, para 2.03.
Indian culture is essentially one of unity in diversity. The States provide the diversity and the richness which is important and for which we should give them the necessary freedom. But the Centre has to provide the unity which is equally essential; and it should do so, not by dictating, but by working together, by evolving a federal partnership, and by providing a stimulating rather than a coercive leadership.

These are the challenges that face us all— the Centre, the States and the people. Let us be up and doing and stop not till our goal is reached.

To the Students

To the young men and women who have got their degree and distinctions today, I give warm felicitations. I wish them a long and happy life in the service of their country. They belong to a generation which has to play a crucial role in bringing about a socio-economic transformation in our country. I would appeal to them to make their best contribution to this great task of national development and thus justify the heavy investment that the country has made in their higher education.

JAI HIND

ANNEXURE

ADOPTION OF 10+2 PATTERN OF SCHOOL EDUCATION BY STATES/UNION TERRITORIES

States/Union Territories, which are having the 10+2 Pattern of School Education (the year in which the first batch under the new pattern appeared/is likely to appear in class X examination is given in the parenthesis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States/Union Territories</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Andhra Pradesh (1969)#</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar (1981)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir (1977)#</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala (1960)</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur (1986)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa (1982)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu (1978)#</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal (1976)#</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &amp; N Islands (1977)</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli (1976)</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa, Daman &amp; Diu (1975)#</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondicherry$#</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
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<td>Assam (1976)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujarat (1976)#</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Maharashtra (1975)#</td>
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<td>Sikkim (1977)</td>
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<td>Tripura (1976)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delhi (1977)#</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakshadweep***</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# These States/U. Ts. have introduced Vocational Spectrum at plus 2 stage
* Kashmir Province Nov. '76 and Jammu Province March '77
** Introduction of +2 stage has been deferred as neighbouring States of Haryana and Punjab have not switched over to 10+2 Pattern of School Education
*** Following Kerala Pattern
$ Pondicherry and Karaikal Regions following Tamil Nadu Pattern
Yamun Region following Kerala Pattern
Yanam Region following Andhra Pradesh Pattern

States/Union Territories, which have yet to adopt the 10+2 Pattern of School Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States/Union Territories</th>
<th>State</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Meghalaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These States/Union Territories have 10-year school followed by 2-year Pre-University/Intermediate
### APPENDIX VII

**Educational Statistics in India**  
*(1965-66 and 1975-76)*

#### Table A.VII.1: Number of educational institutions by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of institution</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities</td>
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<td>101</td>
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<td>2. Institutions deemed as universities</td>
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<td>3. Institutions of national importance</td>
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<td>4. Boards</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>5. Research institutions</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>6. Colleges for general education</td>
<td>1,673</td>
<td>3,667</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P.G. degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Colleges for professional education</td>
<td>2,775</td>
<td>3,276</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P.G. degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
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<td>8. Colleges for other education</td>
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<td>1,405</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P.G. degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Schools for general education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) High/Hr. Secondary schools</td>
<td>27,477</td>
<td>43,054</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Middle/Senior Basic schools</td>
<td>75,798</td>
<td>106,571</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Primary/Jr. Basic schools</td>
<td>391,064</td>
<td>454,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) Pre-Primary/Pre-Basic schools</td>
<td>3,235</td>
<td>5,658</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (a + b + c + d)</td>
<td>497,574</td>
<td>609,553</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Schools for vocational and professional education</td>
<td>2,775</td>
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<td>11. Schools for special education</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>358</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Schools for other education:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Social (adult) education</td>
<td>217,912</td>
<td>17,774</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Oriental studies</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>2,764</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Others</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (a + b + c)</td>
<td>220,800</td>
<td>20,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>727,262</td>
<td>641,663</td>
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The Education Commission and After

### Table A.VII.1: Number of teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of institution</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Universities/deemed to be universities/institutions of national importance</td>
<td>9,271</td>
<td>18,981</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Research institutions</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>815</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Colleges for general education</td>
<td>58,057</td>
<td>128,082</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Colleges for professional education</td>
<td>53,972</td>
<td>78,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. College for other education</td>
<td>6,675</td>
<td>8,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Schools for general education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) High/Hr. Secondary</td>
<td>479,060</td>
<td>758,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Middle/Senior Basic</td>
<td>527,754</td>
<td>777,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Primary/Junior Basic</td>
<td>944,377</td>
<td>1,247,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Pre-Primary/Pre-Basic</td>
<td>6,832</td>
<td>9,951</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Schools for vocational and professional education</td>
<td>17,785</td>
<td>15,237</td>
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<td>8. Schools for special education</td>
<td>28,576</td>
<td>2,758</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Schools for other education</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>21,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,132,928</td>
<td>3,069,359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes in column No. 8.

### Table A.VII.4: Expenditure on education by heads of charge (Rs. in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads of charge</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities and teaching departments</td>
<td>320,537</td>
<td>995,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Institutions deemed as universities</td>
<td>31,614</td>
<td>124,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Institutions of national importance</td>
<td>37,349</td>
<td>222,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Boards of examinations</td>
<td>48,316</td>
<td>203,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research institutions</td>
<td>18,234</td>
<td>36,066</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Colleges for general education (P.G. degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
<td>383,357</td>
<td>1,756,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Colleges for professional education (Postgraduate degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
<td>446,547</td>
<td>1,508,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Colleges for other education (P.G. degree and undergraduate standard)</td>
<td>12,128</td>
<td>31,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Schools for general education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) High/Hr. Secondary</td>
<td>1,376,926</td>
<td>4,935,622</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Middle/Senior Basic</td>
<td>842,827</td>
<td>3,409,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>(c) Primary/Junior Basic</td>
<td>1,287,230</td>
<td>4,463,148</td>
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<tr>
<td>(d) Pre-Primary/Pre-Basic</td>
<td>11,377</td>
<td>33,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(contd.)

### Appendices

#### Table A.VII.4 (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads of charge</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Schools for vocational/professional education</td>
<td>76,611</td>
<td>134,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Schools for special education</td>
<td>9,376</td>
<td>29,427</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Schools for other education</td>
<td>15,484</td>
<td>42,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct</strong></td>
<td>4,937,913</td>
<td>17,925,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Indirect</strong></td>
<td>1,282,323</td>
<td>3,212,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>6,220,236</td>
<td>21,047,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage to national income</strong></td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.42</td>
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</table>

#### Table A.VII.5: Distribution of government expenditure (Rs. in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of charge</th>
<th>1965-66</th>
<th>1975-76</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Universities</td>
<td>161,185</td>
<td>635,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Deemed to be universities</td>
<td>29,035</td>
<td>95,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Institutions of national importance</td>
<td>34,464</td>
<td>214,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Boards of examination</td>
<td>0.577</td>
<td>14,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research institutions</td>
<td>16,217</td>
<td>33,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Colleges for general education</td>
<td>154,186</td>
<td>1,078,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Colleges for professional education</td>
<td>346,744</td>
<td>1,173,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Colleges for other education</td>
<td>7,256</td>
<td>20,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Schools for general education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) High/Hr. Secondary</td>
<td>781,600</td>
<td>4,278,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Middle/Senior Basic</td>
<td>661,850</td>
<td>3,017,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Primary/Junior Basic</td>
<td>1,069,735</td>
<td>3,936,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Pre-Primary/Pre-Basic</td>
<td>3,094</td>
<td>11,445</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Schools for vocational and professional education</td>
<td>65,008</td>
<td>115,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Schools for special education</td>
<td>7,604</td>
<td>25,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Schools for other education</td>
<td>11,145</td>
<td>34,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Direct</strong></td>
<td>3,355,609</td>
<td>14,687,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Indirect</strong></td>
<td>1,018,909</td>
<td>1,835,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>4,374,518</td>
<td>16,523,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage to total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>78.5</td>
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<td>Centres of Advanced Study</td>
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<td>Chunder, P.C. Convocation address ( Nagpur Univ.) 241-8</td>
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