

## CHAPTER 2

# The Formal School: Aims and Objectives

1. The group responsible for examining the role of the formal school in rural education accepted that the aims of the formal school should include providing the child with the skills of communication in language and mathematics, and a knowledge and understanding of the environment in which he lives, including recognition of the interdependence of man in his various activities upon his fellow men and the physical world around him. To these provisions should be added such basic attitudes as tolerance, independence, flexibility of mind, humility in the face of the wonders of nature, and a respect for manual work. The objective of the education process should be to enable the child to develop independence, confidence and self-reliance.

### THE CURRICULUM

2. The curriculum which embodies these aims should be designed to encompass the development of a child as a whole person, living within, and interacting with his rural environment, but prepared and ready to meet the rapid changes, political, social and economic which are likely to continue to beset him. Most people in schools now and in the future are likely to have to adjust themselves constantly to changes in modes of thought, occupation, leisure and, hopefully, increases in income. The education which they receive must prepare them for making these adjustments.

3. The curriculum must be relevant to the child and to his environment, and he must be able to recognize and appreciate this relevance. Up to the present, with some exceptions, the curriculum has been dominated by an approach through subjects, often seen in isolation one from the other. New needs will require that the curriculum must be looked at as an entity. To this end the curriculum must be developed so as to cover broad areas such as communication, environmental studies, practical skills and aesthetic activities and the school so organised that

the learning-teaching reflects the unity of the education provided. As the curriculum must be intimately related to the physical and social environment in which it is to operate it must be developed by the country itself and should not be imported from elsewhere. Principles on which the curriculum is developed are more important than content. The community as a whole should be actively concerned with curriculum development and planning, and deliberate steps towards this end should be taken by administrators and educationists.

4. Any curriculum for a child in a rural area should help him to synthesize his environment. It should be taken into account what children are like and that they learn actively and individually. The curriculum should recognize that for a large majority of children for many years to come primary education will be terminal. However, it is stressed that in rural areas education should not attempt agricultural or vocational training. Rather it should be general, laying an appropriate foundation for the more specific job training that properly comes after leaving school.

5. It has been argued, with considerable economic justification, that rural development, and, particularly, agricultural development, should precede educational development. We cannot subscribe to this. Each requires the other. As the UNESCO Conference on Community Schools in Developing Countries says, "the success of any programmes of development must depend in very large measure on the skills and even more on the attitudes of the human being involved"(1).

6. The demand for universal primary education is insistent and quickening in pace. Experience in the past has shown that even if formal education leads to a drift of population towards the towns and to increased unemployment, it cannot be halted. The best we can do is to lessen its impact. The primary and secondary education of the rural population must be used as a positive and constructive force in rural development.

7. The importance of the teacher to the effective introduction of any new curriculum cannot be stressed too much. We can only ask of teachers what they can implement. Teachers themselves should be active participants in the curriculum development process.

### TEACHER TRAINING

8. Since the role of the teacher is fundamental to what can be achieved in schools, then appropriate training, both pre-service and in-service, is vital in any education system. This is

particularly true in a period of rapid change such as the present, when long established traditional methods are giving way to child-centred methods, making much greater demands on the imagination and the intellectual powers of the teacher.

9. Within the training of teachers recognition must be made of the dual role of the college, namely that of education and training. Education provides the teacher with a body of knowledge and understanding and prepares the teacher for change, for flexibility, for adaptability, whilst teacher training gives skills and abilities to respond to the demands which the teaching-learning situation places upon him.

10. The present educational qualifications of recruits for primary teacher training are unsatisfactory and present serious problems for those responsible for their education and training in the time available.

11. Curriculum development and research, the training of teachers for both primary and secondary schools in rural areas should not be confined to teachers' colleges. Universities, Institutes of Education and Schools and Colleges of Education have an important role to play. The latter should provide leadership in research, in in-service training and in special courses for training teachers who become tutors in teachers' colleges. They can assist materially with teachers' college students' education. The increase of interest of such institutions in primary and secondary education most certainly should be encouraged.

12. The appointment of the right people as tutors to teachers' colleges is vital. At present, in general, two types of people are being appointed. Either they are teachers with long experience in the field but with little academic background who tend to perpetuate themselves in their students and are concerned largely with established teaching techniques, or they are graduate teachers with mainly academic knowledge and interests with little or no experience of primary schools or of the nature of young children. The graduate teachers often have ideas, but not always the experience to perceive their practicability or otherwise in the school situation in rural schools.

13. Possibly one of the greatest gains in primary education would be made by an improvement in the morale and a change in the attitudes of the teachers. Attitudes of tutors in colleges are vital to those of teachers. In teachers' colleges the mode of recruitment and appointment of tutors needs revising. The skills and

qualities needed by tutors should be identified. There is a need for seminars and workshops for teacher trainers, managers, administrators and heads of schools. An improvement in the attitudes and morale of the teacher in the school cannot be expected until the colleges of education, the school supervisors and the administrators are able by their example to give confidence to the teachers.

14. Attitudes of staffs are largely a matter of group dynamics. The teachers' colleges and administrators will need to pay attention to the possible methods of modifying attitudes.

15. There should be an intimate relationship between the theoretical and the practical aspects of teacher preparation. The methods used to train teachers should correspond to those which the teacher is expected to use with children. Thus tutors should work with their students, not only in classroom situations, but in informal situations outside classrooms. There are a variety of ways in use for giving practical training. Among these are a three-year course in which the second year consists of practical teaching; internship in schools near the University during the fourth year, with attendance at the University on Saturdays, and the use of special schools with specially selected staff and headmasters capable of supervising practice teaching. In Malawi, a year's teaching in schools is sandwiched between two vacation terms of theoretical study. In all cases the college staff as well as the schools should be involved and it is important that they should recognise each other as members of the same team working together for the benefit of the students and the ultimate welfare of the children in the schools.

16. In some cases training courses have given teachers a paper qualification which attracts a higher salary, but it is often difficult to distinguish the trained teacher from the untrained on the classroom floor. This probably points to two things, either that training courses are often not sufficiently related to the actual needs of the teachers in the teaching situation, or that there are not sufficient incentives to reach for improved professional efficiency.

17. Since so many teachers are untrained, poorly trained, or poorly qualified, in-service training programmes are vital. But teachers require continuous in-service training over their whole teaching career. The primary teacher often lacks academic breadth. Yet he is expected to teach all subjects. The continuous revision of courses, introduction of new courses such as new mathematics, new science, and new social studies are difficult for

the best of teachers. While it is recognised that ideally a teacher capable of covering the whole field of primary education is desirable, under present conditions in many countries a degree of specialisation may be appropriate. Teachers with special aptitudes could be trained to introduce the new materials and ideas and to help their colleagues to become familiar with them. However, if there is to be integration of the curriculum as a whole, such specialisation poses difficulties. Younger children may feel insecure where specialisation involves contact with several teachers. However, by organising for co-operative and team teaching the special talents of teachers can be used to good purpose.

18. The level of teachers in primary schools in some rural areas is such that little can be done by irregular in-service courses. Something more comprehensive and continuous is needed. Special schemes are being introduced in different countries. For example, in Botswana groups of untrained but experienced teachers are brought into a special college for six weeks and then returned to schools, but with regular assignments for a further ten months. This is repeated in the following two years for each teacher. In addition a special four weeks' course for headmasters is being initiated.

19. Professional bodies of teachers themselves have played an important role in providing in-service training for teachers. They should be encouraged to expand this role as such voluntary training is generally enthusiastic and successful.

20. There is difficulty in retaining outstanding primary teachers in rural areas. The rewards and conditions for such people are not great enough. In rural areas the teacher was once looked to for help and advice on many matters which are now a responsibility of other service organisations, resulting in a decline in the status of the teacher. New ways of involving teachers in the community and thereby strengthening their social status must be devised. Additional qualifications frequently result in the loss of teachers to primary schools. Other factors which add to this loss include frustration through lack of materials, equipment, books and facilities, and the isolation he now notices.

## INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS

21. The isolation of teachers, their lack of training and background, their great need for in-service training, point out the importance of the inspector of schools. Inspectors have three

main functions, namely (a) ensuring the efficiency of the school in its organisation, teaching, use of resources and equipment, and in carrying out its intended role in the community, (b) advising, guiding and leading, (c) acting as a catalyst of ideas and giving inspiration and leadership to his teachers. The emphasis given to any one of these functions depends upon the stage of development of the system under consideration. Inspectors are vital to the whole system of primary and secondary schools for they are the essential link between isolated teachers in rural areas and the administrators whom they keep advised of the quality of the schools and of the teachers, and the needs and the requirements of the schools. It is they who must interpret policy and bring ideas to teachers. Theirs is the task of breaking the isolation. As frequent visits are necessary to do this, priority must be given to the provision of adequate transport and reducing the size of the inspector's district.

22. It has been stated that for teachers to give of their best, promotion based on performance is necessary. Such a scheme requires assessment, and this would be a function of the inspector. If too frequent assessments are made and reports written then this inhibits the advisory role of the inspector. Some educational systems have changed the name from inspector to avoid the fear of the assessment functions from the past. If the inspector adequately fulfils his other roles there should be no fear. The name inspector is well respected in the community at large.

23. The need for inspectors to carry out assessment is sometimes questioned. Before advice can be given, however, assessment of the needs must be made. In addition the administration has a duty to parents and children to see that schools are as efficient as possible within the resources available. Unfortunately not all teachers are truly professional in their approach. The inspector represents the Administration in rural areas. But many inspectors seem to have little or no authority. If they are to be effective in their work authority needs to be given to them to make some on-the-spot decisions.

24. Inspectors need to be outstanding persons and great care should be taken in their selection and training. They, like teachers, need to be kept abreast of new ideas and developments if they are to lead. On appointment they should be given well-planned induction courses. They need from time to time courses in new subjects and teaching techniques, conference with their fellows, stimulation from the Chief Inspector, and above all they need to be kept in touch with what is going on. This is especially

so for the inspector in isolated areas .

25. Some apprehension has been expressed from time to time at the appointment of senior civil servants without experience in education as heads of Ministries of Education.

### EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT

26. In the development of an educational system in which the child is recognised as an individual reacting with and contributing to his ever widening environment, evaluation and measurement can play an important part. Evaluation may be of the suitability of the curriculum and the educative processes, of the effectiveness of the teaching, of the pupils' progress and ultimate level of achievement. It can also be diagnostic or prognostic in purpose and be concerned with both cognitive and affective factors. To be of the greatest usefulness the measuring instruments - the tests - must be clearly identified with the purpose they are intended to serve.

27. While the objectivity and accuracy of the instruments for measuring psychological factors and the results of educational processes cannot be compared with those of the instruments for measuring physical quantities, evaluation and measurement in education can play a beneficial role, so long as their limitations are recognised. The trend to be encouraged should be away from selection procedures and terminal testing towards that of a positive classroom tool that will enable the teacher to best serve the individual needs of his pupils. Thus new forms of evaluation to identify and measure the important but somewhat intangible aspects of education, including special aptitudes and abilities and emotional factors such as attitudes, should be developed and used to supplement and gradually replace existing testing procedures.

28. As there is unequal opportunity for selection for secondary school under the present examinations at the end of primary school for children in rural areas, possible methods of equalising their opportunity should be investigated. Some form of weighting is sometimes used. It would, however, be better to improve the selective procedures rather than try to equalise opportunity by weighting. Political and social considerations would need to be taken into account in seeking solutions to this problem.

29. In allocating secondary places the only really valid criterion is that of the child's ability to profit from secondary

education. A highly valid and reliable series of prognostic lists combining the ideal of aptitude, attainment and attitude tests with continuous teacher assessment is necessary for this purpose. To attain this teachers would need pre-service and in-service training of evaluation and measurement procedures, of their possible uses, and of their limitations.

30. In the immediate future, if the curriculum using the environment of the child in the rural area is to be followed the examinations must take account of it. Parts of the tests should have direct relevance to the rural environment as well as common areas of knowledge and skills suitable for both rural and urban children.

31. Earlier it has been stated that the curriculum should be relevant to the rural environment. If the examinations are not similarly relevant, then teachers will neglect the environmental studies. To avoid this, curriculum planners who are cognizant of the basic aims and objectives, should be represented on examination boards to make certain that the examinations reflect these objectives. The curriculum should have its own evaluation as an in-built factor.

32. An intermediate aim should be the addition of suitable aptitude testing and cumulative records from schools. However, it is believed by some that the level of teacher competence is not generally sufficiently high to introduce this at present. Therefore, high priority should be given to in-service training courses on evaluation and testing.

33. At present many examinations are trying to test both achievement and aptitude for secondary work. It is not possible for the one test to do both.

34. A number of the most desirable aspects in education are very difficult to test. Such aspects include attitudes, judgment, honesty, etc. The communication skills should be encouraged but they are difficult to assess. We must encourage the skills of listening and speaking which are so difficult to evaluate.

35. The testing of students completing teachers' college courses should be reviewed to see to what extent assessment methods of both theoretical studies and practical activities might contribute to the preparation of the students and as a means of measuring their attainment.

36. It is clear that at present our instruments in use are tentative and crude. They are biased in favour of urban children. We need to research the results of our selection with their achievements in secondary school. Efforts must be made to refine examinations in the ways suggested and work towards improved procedures using aptitude testing, cumulative records, teacher evaluation etc. Feedback is necessary with the implementation of new ideas and methods.

37. Finally it is often the case that schools in rural areas are not adequately equipped and have unequal facilities and opportunities when compared with urban schools. Some of the weaknesses in the present examination system would automatically disappear if priority was given to raising the standards of schools in rural areas.

### EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

38. Books of various kinds are probably the most universally acceptable and useful of the media available. Perhaps it would be better at this stage to refer to reading material, as a distinction can be made between course books, reference books and books used for pure enjoyment, while at the same time there is a vast field of printed matter such as newspapers, magazines, catalogues, and advertising material which serve not only to provide reading matter but help to bring the school closer to life in the wider community. The school should exploit all the opportunities provided by reading material of all kinds.

39. Teachers in the past have relied unduly upon course books which may meet the need of a stereotyped static curriculum but which are less well adapted to the new methods of teaching which emphasise a more individual approach closely related to the immediate environment from which they work outwards with the view to widening the pupils' horizons. For this purpose a wider range of small reference or resource books is preferable in sets of three or four for class and for class library purposes. The induction of the habit of turning to books for information and enjoyment is one of the major aims of primary education.

40. In developing countries difficulties in the supply of books are encountered because of the cost and also the poor quality and unsuitability of many of the books at present available. Some teachers when free to do so change their textbooks too frequently and sometimes choose unsuitable material. To meet this difficulty some countries have set up textbook committees which review and

approve books for use, but these committees are subject to heavy pressures from publishers and other interested parties. Here, as in so many other things, a suitable balance must be held between the economic use of the available finances and the encouragement of initiative on the part of the teacher.

41. Wherever possible, books should be written and produced within the country in question and expert advice should be sought to ensure accuracy of content and adequacy of treatment. Always the need of the pupil should be paramount. Needless to say course books must be in line, both in content and method, with the long term aims and short term objectives of the curriculum.

42. At the present time, many schools in rural areas are so short of equipment and the financial stringency is so severe that priorities of supply need to be set up. Even books may not be the top priority since the teacher may have to produce his own reading materials, in which case supplies of paper and writing materials are possibly the first need. Certainly the wisest use of the funds available is essential as also is the exploitation of all the educational material obtainable cheaply from outside sources.

43. Books for use in schools should include material reflecting both rural and urban environments and particularly the inter-relationship that exists between them.

44. It is suggested that the Commonwealth Secretariat should prepare a directory of persons and agencies from whom accurate information can be obtained and to whom written material and illustrations can be referred for checking for accuracy and appropriateness.

45. Many primary school leavers rapidly revert to near illiteracy. Unquestionably the lack of suitable reading materials in sufficient supply and easily accessible is the major factor in this regrettable state of affairs. Community resources centres should be set up to make newspapers and books available to the community and the school. Indeed the primary school itself is probably the best place for such a resource centre. Such centres should be supplemented and assisted by the use of mobile library facilities and the employment of book boxes. International agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO should be encouraged to aid developments along these lines.

46. Teacher centres or resource centres should be established to assist teachers. Such centres should be concerned with

simple equipment which could be made by the teacher and children, they should be places where the teachers could seek guidance and come together to share experiences and to learn from one another. Such centres would not necessarily mean new buildings but could be established in primary schools, secondary schools, or primary teachers' colleges in rural areas. If established in the teachers' colleges they would involve the college staff with practising teachers from the schools, to the mutual benefit of both. It is important that a distinction should be drawn between curriculum centres which are involved in the production of new ideas and curricula, and the teacher centres which are more concerned with curriculum implementation.

47. Mrs Coppen, in her paper, "Educational Media for the Development of Rural Education" says, "What I have in mind is the establishment in selected village schools of Educational Materials Workshop Centres to which teachers and community workers at all levels could come for instruction and help in making their own teaching materials, such as simple wall charts, flannel-graphs, cut-outs, matching cards for language work and apparatus for practical mathematics. None of these materials needs much artistic skill, but most primary school teachers and most adult education workers need help and inspection to get started, and in most developing countries they lack facilities in their homes where they could make simple educational aids"(2). Such centres should be established in rural communities.

48. To enable them to function properly technically trained personnel should be available. These personnel could be teachers who have received training in this field.

49. There is an increasing variety of educational aids of all kinds becoming available. Care should be taken that these aids do not dominate the teaching. Teachers should not use educational media and ideas merely because they are fashionable and are being used in other countries. There must be co-ordinated planning between all ministries concerned with the use of educational media and centres. Not only must the initial cost and supply be planned but provision must be made for technical personnel, maintenance and replacement facilities. There must be co-operation with producers of broadcasts, films and television programmes.

If audio-visual aids are to be used in rural areas they should be transistorised and simple to use and handle.

51. Educationists must be prepared to convince their ministries of the proper educational priorities, and the need to spend

available funds on such priorities .

52. To supplement resources special requests could be made to agencies and foundations for assistance with specific projects which need not necessarily be dramatic .

### THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

53. The school, if it is to use the environment of the child, cannot function effectively in isolation from the community of which it is integral part. Teachers need to identify themselves with the community in which they teach. They should accept leadership roles which are given to them by the community. Teachers should encourage the community to participate in the life of the school. This can be done through formal parent-teacher associations, local school boards, etc., but more is needed. The school could become the local centre for the cultural and educational activities of the rural area. Attendance at Speech and Sports Days is not sufficient. There should be developed a concept of community involvement in curriculum and the educative process .

54. The need for community involvement means that the teacher must remain long enough in his school for leadership to be established and for him to be accepted by the community. As Houghton and Tregear say in the UNESCO report, "Many of the present methods of rewarding success are, to put it mildly, quite cockeyed, involving as they do the removal of men and women from work in which they excel to roles for which they sometimes have no gift whatever"(3).

55. Communities have responsibilities to their teachers. They need to provide adequate accommodation in keeping with the professional status of the teacher and assist wherever possible in the development of the school. The style of school buildings should be changed to take this concept into account.

56. The proposals suggested in these discussions look forward into the future. Many of them are still not fully implemented even in the most developed countries. Difficulties of implementation are great, and cannot be hurried. Advances can only be made slowly, and within available resources. Stress is laid on the use of pilot schemes which can be evaluated before there is any attempt at general introduction. Such schemes could involve clusters of schools centred round teachers' colleges. The concept of the child active in his rural environment is a thesis propounded over a long period of time, the consequences of which

are only now becoming clear. In developing countries this change in direction constitutes a revolutionary concept of the role of the teacher. It calls for the dissemination of information and a change of attitudes of administrators, teachers' college tutors and teachers alike, but hopes are high that the rural child may find satisfaction in his environment and opportunities for gainful employment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Curriculum

1. The curriculum in rural areas should be reorganised to cover broad areas such as communication, environmental studies, practical skills and aesthetic appreciation. It should be relevant to the environment of the child and should equip him to meet change.
2. Countries should develop their own curriculum intimately related to their physical and social environment.
3. Although basic skills would be included, the primary school should not be thought of as vocational training for rural areas. Many of the children will later leave their rural area and will need to be equipped for life in urban areas.
4. The community as a whole should be actively concerned with curriculum development and planning.
5. The assistance and co-operation of Universities, Institutes of Education and Schools and Colleges of Education should be given to primary and secondary schools through re-search, curriculum development and the training of teachers.

### Teacher Training

1. Urgent consideration needs to be given to the appointment of people with the right qualities as tutors in teachers' colleges.
2. Untrained teachers need training. Schemes such as those being tried in Botswana and Malawi offer fresh approaches which might be capable of replication elsewhere.
3. In-service training programmes both for the poorly trained teacher and the experienced trained teacher should be improved and increased in number and should be more systematically organised.
4. The professional bodies of teachers could be encouraged to arrange their own in-service training courses.
5. Seminars of administrators, teachers' college staff and heads of schools should be held on ways of improving teacher attitudes.

## Inspectors of Schools

1. Inspectors should be given more authority in their areas. It should be possible for them to make on the spot decisions where policy is known.
2. Adequate transport needs to be provided for inspectors in rural areas to be able to carry out their full function.
3. Consideration should be given to reducing the size of inspectors' districts to further their effectiveness.
4. Inspectors should undergo induction courses on appointment, and should have the opportunity of regular conferences and attendances at courses.

## Evaluation and Measurement

1. Terminal tests in primary schools are often used as a measure of achievement and as a selector for suitability for secondary education. Ways should be found to separate these roles.
2. Teachers' college courses should include a study of measurement and evaluation procedures.
3. The early introduction and use of student records and continuous testing is recommended.
4. Present terminal tests place the child in rural areas at a disadvantage. Such tests should include material common to urban and rural children, but should also have material specifically related to the rural environment.
5. Curriculum developers who are fully aware of its aims and objectives should also be on the examination boards which do the testing.
6. A review of the methods of assessing the competence of students training to be teachers on completion of their courses is recommended.

## Educational Media

1. Ministries need to check on the quality and suitability of the many books being made available.
2. Books for use in schools should include material reflecting

both rural and urban environments, and particularly the inter-relationship that exists between them.

3. The Commonwealth Secretariat should prepare a directory of persons and agencies from whom accurate information can be obtained, and to whom written material and illustrations can be referred for checking for accuracy and appropriateness.
4. To prevent a reversion to secondary illiteracy by school leavers suitable reading materials should be made available, possibly through the schools. The extension of mobile libraries and book box schemes is an urgent need. These could be projects for assistance by agencies or foundations.
5. Teachers Centres should be established along the lines suggested in paragraph 16 of the paper "Educational Media for the Development of Rural Education"(2).
6. Before educational media are introduced planning should ensure adequate technical assistance, maintenance, and the co-operation of all relevant Ministries.
7. There should be a proper estimation of priorities in education for rural areas, and these should be followed.

#### The School and the Community

1. The schools in rural areas should become the focal centres for the cultural and educational activities of the area.
2. There is a need for rural communities to provide adequate housing for teachers if they are to stay in the community.

#### References:

- (1) Houghton, H. and Tregear, P.(eds): Community Schools in Developing Countries, Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg, 1969, page 10.
- (2) Coppen, H.: Educational Media for the Development of Rural Education, (Conference document CRE(70) A/4).
- (3) Houghton, H. and Tregear, P.(eds): op.cit. page 22.