



Chapter Six

ORGANISATION OF THE SEMINAR

SEMINAR ARRANGEMENTS

Origin of the Seminar

1. Commonwealth countries have, over the years, stressed the importance of book production as an educational service. The Third Commonwealth Education Conference held in Lagos in 1968 discussed this subject and recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat should examine the possibilities of establishing a Commonwealth Book Development Programme. Various proposals were submitted to the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Singapore in 1971, and these were referred to the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference in Canberra which met in the same year, and which discussed the subject at length. The Canberra Conference recognised the vital nature of book development to all educational systems and gave their full support to the proposals submitted by the Commonwealth Secretariat, further recommending that the Secretariat should be involved in training programmes for book personnel and the organisation of a Commonwealth Conference on Book Development. It also recommended the appointment of a full time officer in the field of book development, a recommendation which has already been implemented. The Regional Seminar in Delhi was therefore the second major practical step in the establishment of a Commonwealth Book Development Programme.

Purpose

2. The purpose of the Seminar was two fold - firstly, to provide elements of training in the various aspects of book development and secondly to discuss problems connected with the establishment of indigenous book industries and to make practical proposals for meeting these problems. It considered several aspects of publishing in the context of the needs and resources of the participating countries, and identified the major topics which would need to be considered in the formulation of policy decisions and development of national programmes for the production of books.

Preparation for the Seminar

3. The Commonwealth Secretariat submitted two working papers on which the major discussions at the Seminar were based. In addition a number of experts in the field of book production were requested to provide papers on various topics. Each participant contributed a country paper stating the book production situation in his own country.

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Much of the work of arranging for the Seminar in Delhi was done by Mr. Abul Hasan of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare and the success of the Seminar owes much to his hard work.

Participants

4. The Seminar was attended by 32 participants representing nine countries of the Asia/Pacific region. In order to establish links with the African and Caribbean regions where it is planned to hold similar seminars, one participant was invited from each of these regions. In addition, we had the services of two consultants, one from Australia and the other from New Zealand. A number of observers from India took part in the Seminar and contributed to discussions.

Formal Opening

5. The Seminar was formally opened by Mr. Romesh Thapar, former Chairman of the National Book Development Board of India and Director of the India International Centre. The Chairman at the opening ceremony was Mr. Kanti Chaudhury, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

Programme

6. The entire Seminar, which lasted from 21 February to 1 March 1973, took place at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The work of the Seminar was done at plenary sessions. In addition to training sessions and general discussions, visits were paid to a number of institutions connected with the book industry: The National Book Trust of India, The Children's Book Trust, The National Council for Educational Research and Training and Hind Pocket Books. An exhibition of books was set up by the Raja Ram Mohun Roy National Education Resources Centre. Contribution to the exhibition was made by several participants. There was also an all day visit to Agra.

Seminar Officer

7. The Chairman of the Seminar was Dr. S. J. Cookey, Director, Education Division, Commonwealth Secretariat and the Co-Chairman Mr. M. N. Rao, Leader of the Indian Delegation. The Secretary was Mr. A. Kamm and the Report Secretary Mrs. A. Krishnaswamy, both of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

AGENDA

Wednesday 21 February

- 1000 to 1030 OPENING CEREMONY
1130 to 1300 BOOKS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 (Abul Hasan)
1430 to 1730 NATIONAL NEEDS AND RESOURCES
 (Reports from delegates)

Thursday 22 February

- 0900 to 1030 NATIONAL NEEDS AND RESOURCES
 (Contd.)
1045 to 1300 THE NATURE AND FINANCING OF
 PUBLISHING (Professor R.J. Taraporevala)
1430 to 1530 THE ROLE OF THE EDITOR (A. Kamm)
1545 to 1730 MARKETING, SUPPLY AND BOOKSELLING
 (A. Bolton and R.L. Davis)

Friday 23 February

- 0900 to 1045 PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES AND THE
 ROLE OF THE PRINTER (A. Kamm)
1100 to 1230 BOOKS FOR NEW LITERATES
 (Professor S. Mathai)
Afternoon EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Saturday 24 February

- 0900 to 1045 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (A. Kamm)
 PROMOTING THE READING HABIT
 (Abul Hasan)
1100 to 1230 GENERAL AND POPULAR READING
 MATERIALS (D.N. Malhotra)
1400 to 1500 IDENTIFICATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT
 OF AUTHORS OF TEXTBOOKS
 (S. Gopinathan)
1515 to 1715 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY
 SERVICES (D.R. Kalia)

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Sunday 25 February

TRIP TO AGRA

Monday 26 February

0900 to 1015

THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION
(Professor V.V. John)

1030 to 1230

COPYRIGHT AND THE FLOW OF MATERIALS
(Discussion introduced by A. Kamm)

Tuesday 27 February

0900 to 1015

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL
BOOK DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS (Abul Hasan)

1030 to 1230

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTARY
EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL (P.R. Earl)

1415 to 1530

TRAINING OF BOOK PERSONNEL

1545 to 1800

REGIONAL AND COMMONWEALTH
CO-OPERATION

Wednesday 28 February

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Thursday 1 March

0900 to 1015

MULTILINGUAL PUBLISHING (M.N. Rao)

1030 to 1300

SUMMING UP AND APPROVAL OF
SEMINAR REPORT.

SPEECHES AT INAUGURAL SESSION

Mr. Kanti Chaudhury, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Welfare, Government of India and Chairman of
the Inaugural Session

In welcoming you all to the inaugural meeting of the Commonwealth Regional Seminar on "Priorities and Planning for the Provision of Books", I would like to thank on behalf of the Government of India and on my own behalf the Commonwealth Secretariat for holding this seminar in India. India, which has an important place among the largest book producing countries of the world, has over the years developed considerable expertise in planning and production of books. I am quite sure the Indian participants in the seminar will unreservedly make available their expertise, as the discussion proceeds.

I am indeed very happy that Shri Romesh Thapar has kindly agreed to inaugurate the seminar and that too at a short notice. I was, however, sure that book promotion being dear to his heart, he would accept the invitation to join us in the Seminar.

Books in their present form and shape, specially the educational literature, have been holding ground for many years. Books are regarded as important aid to the educational progress. I would briefly like to share with you our feelings regarding the transformation, which books in their present form will undergo in the near future with the expansion of educational technology. It is now possible with the new technology to take on a big programme of adult education and literacy. There will be vast demand for educational literature as support to literacy programmes; there will also be a very vast demand of literature for the neo-literates to sustain their enthusiasm. There would also be need for short informative pamphlets for dissemination of scientific information and technological information. Contents of books would be increasingly put in cassettes for language teaching or carrying culture to the masses. Services of writers having special skills for writing such pamphlets or for writing the script and putting it in the cassettes would be required. These requirements undoubtedly will be items of priorities in the provision of books. Nothing substantial in this field has yet been done either by the book trade or by the Government. I do hope that this aspect will receive adequate attention of this seminar.

Dr. S. J. Coockey, Chairman of the Seminar and Director,
Education Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

I am very glad to be in New Delhi to participate in this Regional Seminar on Book Development. The interest of the Commonwealth Secretariat in book development goes as far back as 1968 when the Fourth Commonwealth Education Conference recommended that proposals be formulated for a Commonwealth Book Development Programme. In a memorandum to the Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in January 1969, the Commonwealth Secretary-General reviewed the size of the need for books in the Commonwealth, indicated the major factors inhibiting the provision of adequate supplies, and suggested several possible areas for Commonwealth co-operation in overcoming the problem.

The Prime Ministers directed the Secretary-General to undertake further studies with a view to recommending a Commonwealth book programme. A working party set up by the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee made a report in August 1970 outlining the main needs to be met by the Commonwealth Book Development Programme. This report was the basis of proposals which the Secretary-General put to the Meeting of Heads of Government held in Singapore in January 1971. This Meeting directed that the Fifth Commonwealth Education Conference due to meet in Canberra the following month should study the proposals and recommend plans of action by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Among the many topics discussed at Canberra on the subject was the need in the developing countries for book development, and the training of personnel. It was agreed that as a short term measure, efforts should be made to facilitate a flow of books into developing countries but that long-term plans should be made to encourage the developing countries to establish machinery for producing their own books.

The question might be asked why the Commonwealth Secretariat should show so much interest in this question of book development. It is generally accepted that books constitute a basis and vital component of the educational process. It is therefore necessary that there should be an adequate supply of books not only for schools and other educational institutions but for general reading. It is a well-known fact that several factors help to restrict a free flow of books into some developing countries. Apart from lack of foreign currency and administrative delays, some countries impose customs duties on importation of books and materials.

On the other hand, however, an adequate supply of books will not be of much use to national educational programmes unless those books are relevant to the educational objectives of the countries concerned. Many developing countries have a legacy of foreign educational systems which they have been unable to shake off since independence. They have found it necessary to continue with these systems even though it is quite clear that they are irrelevant to their needs. Over the years, developing countries have been urged to review the curriculum content of their educational systems and make what is taught in their educational

institutions relevant to the needs of their society. In spite of this exhortation, many countries have found it very difficult to do anything to change their programmes because they are tied down to the use of imported books and to examinations based on those books. Efforts at curriculum renewal have often been thwarted by lack of suitable textbooks and other material necessary to teach the new curricula. It is evident therefore that unless relevant books are available in adequate supply, improvement in national educational programmes cannot be achieved.

These are some of the considerations which led the Canberra Conference to recommend that the Commonwealth Secretariat should speed up its efforts to establish a book development programme. It recommended that a Book Development Officer be appointed to the staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat, whose main job would be to identify specific needs of the various countries and to advise them on their book development programmes. It also recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat should compile and publish as comprehensive a list as possible showing training and scholarship opportunities in the book development field.

A Book Development Officer was appointed about a year ago. He is Mr. Antony Kamm who has been largely responsible for planning this Seminar. He has already visited a number of countries and has directed in a training programme for book development organised in Sri Lanka by Unesco. This is the first of a series of three seminars which the Commonwealth Secretariat intends to run in various regions of the Commonwealth.

We are particularly grateful to the Government of India for offering to host this Seminar; we could not have had a better venue. Few would deny that in terms of the size and activity of its indigenous book industry, India comes second only to Britain in the Commonwealth. Many of the problems affecting indigenous publishing, like authorship, printing, distribution, training of personnel and linking of textbook production with curriculum development, have already been tackled in this country and I am sure that all participants would wish to benefit from India's experience. India provides an excellent example of how success in this field can be achieved by co-operation between government and private enterprise. And there has recently been established at the University of Delhi a degree course in book publishing, the first in the Commonwealth, if not in the world.

The theme of this seminar is "Priorities and Planning for the Provision of Books". This theme has been carefully selected. Of the ten countries represented here from the Asia-Pacific region and the two from other regions, some would find it hard to establish and maintain a viable book industry. It is therefore necessary to plan carefully and to establish a list of priorities in tackling a book development programme. Co-operation between countries in a region would seem to be indicated. It is our hope that this Seminar will be able to arrive at some practical suggestions which would enable the various countries here represented to arrive at realistic plans.

In order to plan for book development, it is necessary to understand what is involved in the preparation, production, publication,

distribution and promotion of books. For this reason, we hope that this Seminar will discuss the whole structure of book development. A vital part of the activities will be a series of educational visits to organisations and institutions in and around Delhi which it is felt will help participants to see what is really involved in publishing and what one country is doing to meet the challenge of developing an indigenous book industry.

We are fortunate in having, among our participants, some consultants who have had experience in the publishing field. In addition to Mr. Bolton of Australia and Mr. Earl of New Zealand, we have as consultants and resource personnel a number of eminent Indians who have acquired considerable experience in the book industry. We would hope that at the end of the Seminar we shall be able to produce some concrete proposals and guidelines which can assist Governments who wish to do so to plan and establish their book development programmes. We also hope that we can indicate a pattern of Commonwealth co-operation in this field.

It would have been impossible for us to organise this Seminar but for the generosity of both the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation and the Commonwealth Foundation. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation has made it possible for us to meet the cost of fares and subsistence for participants, and the Commonwealth Foundation has provided funds for the expenses of our two consultants from Australia and New Zealand.

Before I end, I should like to express my appreciation of the excellent co-operation we have had from the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. Mr. Abul Hasan, Special Officer (Books), has been most helpful in making arrangements for the Seminar. He has been kind enough to make local contacts on our behalf, to reproduce documents and to make the necessary arrangements for accommodation and transport.

It remains for me, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, to welcome to this seminar the participants, consultants and observers. Among observers are representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the International Publishers' Association. Most of the participants are engaged in book development programmes in their own country and I am confident that together we should be able to make this exercise worthwhile.

Dr. Romesh Thapar
Ex-Chairman, National Book Development Board of India
and Editor of "Seminar"

The other day someone asked me "How do you inaugurate a workshop"? Well, I am now asking myself how does one inaugurate a seminar after two speeches have been made? A difficult situation to say the least.

Recently we were discussing the problem of introducing television in India. It was a very explosive meeting, attended by some 100 participants, many of whom were urging that if we could not throw the whole system into the sea we should not utilise it day and night. I was provoked by one of the participants who said that in this country, full use of television should be made particularly as we have a large mass of people who cannot read and write. He said that in this country there has never been a reading habit, not even among the literates. I hope you too are provoked as book-developers.

Let me try to uncover some of the thoughts that disturb me about books in our part of the world.

We are all children of a colonial past. A past which has robbed us of our mother tongues, our scripts and our authentic thought processes. It is a very tragic situation indeed. In addition, we are also part of the developing world and as is characteristic of all developing societies we are divided between the few ruling elites and masses of ordinary hopeful and hope-less people. This is the major problem, one which affects all sensitive men.

Pandit Nehru was always conscious of this and frequently sought advice from Mahatma Gandhi who understood this country; it was the combination of these two renowned men which opened understanding for us in India. But the problem remains with us very much. Whether it is economic activity or the cultural activities we are engaged in, or whether we are thrusting ahead in a particular direction or lagging behind in another, it is here in bridging the gaps among peoples and between peoples that those concerned with the sensitive area of books have to apply their mind.

The books we are here to discuss must be turned out in large numbers and in a variety of languages as authentic expressions of societies in traumatic change, societies which cannot cut themselves off from a rapidly shrinking world which is itself caught up in many-sided scientific and technological advances.

This is no ordinary challenge because we have limited resources. We are inexperienced and find it difficult to get at the real priorities. These priorities have to be sorted out in a complex situation. Take my country for instance. I am very grateful to Dr. Cookey for his complimentary remarks. Over the past 25 years, we have attempted many ambitious things, but, unfortunately, we are all dissatisfied with what we have achieved.

We have 550 million people speaking some 20 languages or more. Most of these languages have a most sophisticated script. Each language naturally seeks the knowledge of the world to be expressed through it. Just comprehend the sheer physical task of making the best books available to my people. In our lonely moments not surprisingly the best of us are demoralised.

And yet the job can be done. That is why seminars of this kind are of very great importance. I have had occasion to work down to the roots of the problems of our societies. Today, I would like to say categorically that we must make it tremendously rewarding to write, produce and market books. The three elements are inseparable and the effort has to be massive.

I use my words carefully. We cannot anymore tinker with the problem. We have not devoted adequate attention to this aspect of reward for creativity. It is extremely important that in these seminars and workshops we raise the voice of creative people to demand that there must be adequate rewards, otherwise, I am afraid, that in this competitive world we will not be able to meet this problem. If we go on avoiding this question of monetary reward, we would not be able to provide the books for our people.

As I said earlier, the effort has to be massive as the needs are massive. The funds for this effort should be self-generating. We cannot expect governments hard pressed for money continually to fund this operation. Marketing must be effective and costs must be within the reach of the literate. The scale must be such that it becomes worthwhile for the best of our minds to write books.

On the surface there are contradictions in what I say, but these contradictions can be ironed out. That is what a seminar like this should tackle, i.e. the specific characteristics of our situation and the need for money to flow into the pockets of those who write and teach. Of course, it goes without saying that the books must be cheap and well designed, and that they must be marketed in huge quantities. In other words, what I want to say is, do not allow yourselves to be pushed into narrow cautious equations. Such an approach does not spark the battle for the revolution in books and reading. I hope this plea makes sense, for with it I intend inaugurating this Seminar.

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