NEWSLETTER
ANTRIEP

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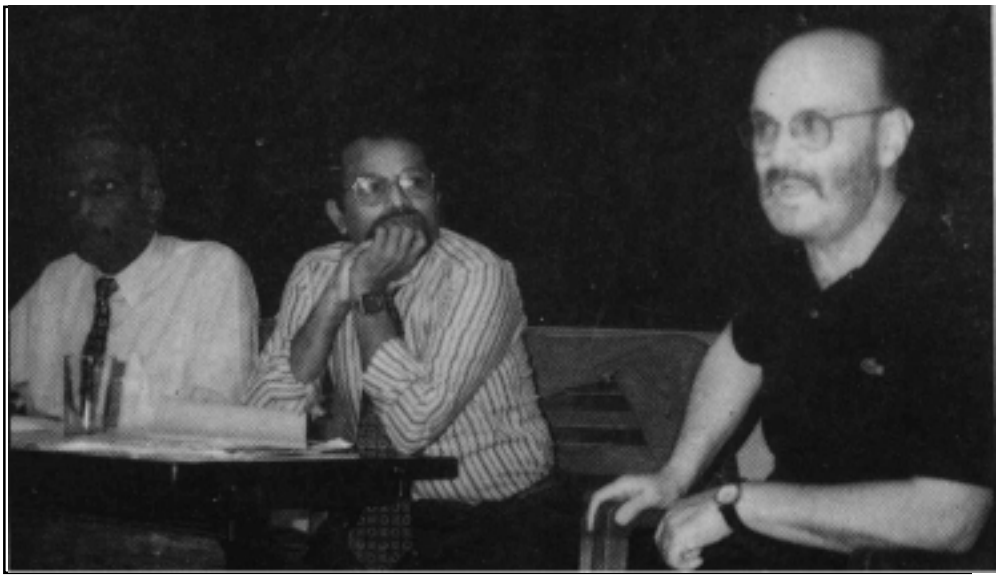
The Third ANTRIEP Annual Meeting

The Third Annual Meeting of the ANTRIEP member institutions was held at NIE, Colombo, Sri Lanka on 18 December, 1998. The proceedings of the one-day meeting started at 1000 hrs. Representatives from 13 member institutions, i.e., NAEM and BRAC (Bangladesh); SIHRD (China); NIEPA, CMDR, and SIEMAT (India); IAB (Malaysia); Batlibung Dikbud Centre for Policy Research (Indonesia); KEDI (Korea); CERID and NCED (Nepal); NIE (Sri Lanka) and IIEP (Paris), participated in the meeting.



Left to right: Professor Lakshman Jayatilleke, President of the Network; Dr. N.V. Varghese, Focal Point, NIEPA; and Mr. Gabriel Carron, IIEP,Paris in the Third ANTRIEP Annual Meeting organised at NIE, Colombo, Sri Lanka

In this Issue....

According to the normal procedure for the Annual Meetings, the President of the Network delivers the inaugural address. Unfortunately, the current President of the ANTRIEP Dr. Byong-Sun Kwak, the Acting President of KEDI, Korea, could not attend the Annual Meeting. His message and best wishes for the Annual Meeting were read out by Mrs. Hyun Sook from KEDI, Korea. The Chairperson of the Network changes at every Annual Meeting and as per practice the head of the institution hosting the Annual Meeting becomes the President of the Network till the next Annual Meeting takes place. Accordingly, Professor Lakshman Jayatilleke, Chairman,

National Education Commission and Director General, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka, took over as the new President of the Network and the proceedings of the ANTRIEP Meeting thereafter were conducted under the chairmanship of the new President of the Network.

On behalf of the Focal Point, Dr. N.V. Varghese, NIEPA, New Delhi presented a detailed report of the ANTRIEP activities during the year 1997-1998 which was circulated among the members. The report highlighted the activities of the Network and identified areas for priority action in the coming years. It underlined the need for closer interaction between member institutions and the respective governments and policy making authorities in the respective countries, initiating more bilateral arrangements among member institutions in the area of research and training, the need for initiating steps for bringing larger number of institutions to the Network as associate members, especially from those countries which now have many member institutions and also to bring new member institutions from countries which are not represented in the Network. The complete text of the report is published in this issue of the Newsletter.

This was followed by discussions on the report on future activities of the ANTRIEP. Mr. Carron of IIEP, Paris, highlighted some of the problems confronting the Network and the probable avenues of promoting the Network activities. A summary of the discussions of the Third Annual Meeting is also published in this issue of the Newsletter.

The Meeting ended with a vote of thanks proposed by the Focal Point where the contributions made and the continued support extended by the member institutions to activate the Network was reiterated. Mr. Carron IIEP, Paris, informed the member institutions that he will not be able to attend any forthcoming Annual Meetings of the Network. All member institutions remembered with a feeling of gratitude that he was the major force to direct and guide activities of the ANTRIEP from its very inception. Everybody assured him that Network activities which he initiated will be continued vigorously and the ANTRIEP will soon become self directed in the near future as envisaged by him.

The Annual Meeting was preceded by a Seminar on **Improving School Efficiency**. This issue of the Newsletter carries a report on the Seminar. The Annual Meeting suggested that the Newsletter needs to include more information sharing on the research and training activities of member institutions. The Focal Point requested member institutions to send information on such activities of the individual institutions. We have received encouraging responses from various member institutions which are also included in this issue. We are planning to continue this column - **News from Member Institutions** - as a regular feature in the subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

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A Report on ANTRIEP Activities*

The Network

The educational system, especially at the primary level, has expanded remarkably in many countries of the Asian region in the recent decades. Provision of schooling facilities and other necessary teaching-learning inputs, no doubt, helped faster expansion of the system. A gradual shift in emphasis from expansion to improved educational outcomes demands efficiency in operation of the educational institutions and effectiveness in classroom transactions. The level of competency of educational functionaries to plan and manage, directly influences the operational efficiency of the system.

Decentralisation and school improvement are common themes of recent educational reforms in many developing countries. Decentralisation increases the number of functionaries involved in the planning and management of education. Similarly, improving institutional efficiency requires greater autonomy to the institutions and improved managerial capacity to organise academic and non-academic activities in schools. All these contribute to an increasing need for capacity building in educational planning and management.

Pedagogical training is an important area which is traditionally emphasised by educational systems in most of the countries and hence one may find a direct relationship between expansion of the educational system and expansion in the capacity of institutions to provide teacher training. However, the number of institutions providing training in educational planning and management has not increased in proportion to the increase in the number of educational planners and managers. Hence, educational planning and management capacities are not readily available in many countries. Institutions imparting training in educational planning and management are not only limited in number but are also situated in centralised locations. In other words, even when decentralised planning is emphasised, the institutions entrusted with the responsibility of capacity building are centralised. This acts as a constraint on the very process of decentralisation. Therefore, there is an increased demand for diversifying the decision making processes and expanding the institutional arrangements for capacity building in this area.

Most of the countries in the Asian Region have some organisational arrangements to develop capacity in educational planning and management. However, these institutions operate in isolation with limited scope for interaction with similar institutions in other countries of the region. There exists no mechanisms to facilitate such professional interaction on a regular basis. This forms the basis for initiating the Network in the region.

The idea of developing the Network in the region was conceived at a workshop in Kathmandu in December, 1994 and was concretised and finalised at a workshop in Delhi in December, 1995. The Delhi meeting brought together 12 institutions from 8 Asian countries and this formed the beginning of the ANTRIEP Network. In this sense, the Network was born in December, 1995.

The overall objective of the Network is to create a forum for interaction between the participating institutions located in different countries of the region to respond to the growing and diversified needs of capacity building in the area of educational planning and management. It is envisaged that this objective will be facilitated through exchange of information among member institutions on specific issues related to educational planning and management, through continuous up-gradation of knowledge and skills among professionals of member institutions essentially based on learning from each others experience, and through cooperative research and training activities in the areas of common interest. The Network also brings out a Newsletter twice a year.

Organisational Arrangements

Initially started as a network of 12 institutions from 8 countries and IIEP, Paris, the Network is open to all training and research institutions of the Asian region involved in educational planning and management. The Network does not charge any fee and any institution

willing to become a member of the Network, becomes its member by requesting the Focal Point. More than one institution from the same country can become member of the Network.

It was unanimously decided at the First Annual Meeting held in Delhi in 1995 that the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris would provide special and continued support till the Network became self-sustained and self-directed; that the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi would act as the Focal Point of the Network during the initial years, and that the Presidentship of the Network would be on a rotation basis. The Network continues to operate with the academic guidance and other support from the International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi continues to act as the Focal Point.

The Presidentship of the Network changes at every Annual Meeting. Normally the host of the Annual Meeting becomes the President. The first President of the Network was the Director, NIEPA, New Delhi which organised the first Annual Meeting. The current Chairperson of the Network is President, KEDI, Seoul, which hosted the second Annual Meeting. The Chairperson normally presides over the Annual Meeting, examines applications for the new membership and provides guidance to the Focal Point to facilitate the Network activities.

At present the Network has 16 member institutions from 10 countries in addition to the International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris. The Network encourages new institutions from the existing countries or from new countries to become members. For example, four institutions from India are members of the Network. Similarly, three institutions from Bangladesh have become members of the Network, and Nepal too has two member institutions. During 1997-98 the number of members increased from 13 to 17. Of these, two members were from countries which already had the membership in the Network, namely, BRAC from Bangladesh and CMDR from India. The other two members were from countries which did not have membership earlier in the Network (IAB, Malaysia and SEAMEO-INNOTECH, Philippines). We are sure new members from more countries of the region would join soon. The Second Annual Meeting of the Network made a request to each of its member institutions to contact and encourage similar institutions in their own countries to become members of the Network. Any member institution remains a member by its active contribution to the activities of the ANTRIEP.

ANTRIEP Activities during 1997-98

The Brochure

The Network in its initial stage brought out a Brochure containing information on each of the member institutions and also a leaflet explaining the objectives and working modalities of the Network. Whenever any new member institution joins the Network, a brief profile of that institution is published in the following issue of the ANTRIEP Newsletter. This process helps member institutions to get familiarised with the new institutions joining the Network. The leaflet originally brought out in 1996 on the objectives and areas of concern of the Network was revised and a new leaflet was brought out in 1998.

Exchange of Documents and Information

One of the common arrangements to familiarise the members with the developments in member institutions is the exchange of documents and information pertaining to their various activities. Therefore, it was felt during the Annual Meetings that the member institutions should exchange information among themselves. At times, some of the institutions do send copies of studies and reports on their activities to the Focal Point. It is expected that such exchanges and correspondence with other member institutions are taking place on a bilateral basis. However, during the previous Annual Meeting, it was found that regular exchange of information and documentation did not take place on a regular basis. One of the reasons was that some of the member institutions were not bringing out many of their publications in English. Since the regional language of one country may not be understandable in another country, it serves very little purpose in exchanging documents which are not in international language. However, all member institutions do bring out many of their research studies and other reports in English. Therefore, the request is to exchange, at least on an institution-to-institution basis, those documents which are brought out in English or any other international language. Our own experience in the past shows that there is immense scope for improving these activities among the institutions in the region.

Exchange of Personnel

Research and Training activities can be promoted only when professionals working in these areas interact more closely and frequently. To facilitate such close interactions between professionals of member institutions, a need for bilateral arrangements was left. Non-availability of funds acts as a major constraint to facilitate such regular exchange of professionals. During the previous Annual Meeting, some institutions in the Network offered boarding facilities for the faculty members from other member institutions. Such an arrangement cannot be generalised, since many institutions do not have their own residential facilities. In fact, very little professional exchange has taken place in the present context. However, members visiting other member institutions are not very rare. Some members have visited member institutions located in other countries while being on short term assignments in that country.

Collaborative Studies

One of the strong points of any institutional collaboration is in the area of research studies. While collaboration in training programmes may be confined to a short duration, that in research activities is more of long-term in nature and helps establish better academic linkages among member institutions. However, collaborative research has not yet been sufficiently developed as part of the activities of the Network. The IIEP had initiated a research study in the Asian region on Improving Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education. Many of the ANTRIEP member institutions participated in this study and contributed towards enriching the collaborative research in a selected area with their own experiences.

Based on the discussions in the Second Annual Meeting, three areas were specifically identified for collaborative arrangements :

i) Developing a Database for Educational Planning. The CERID, Nepal was initiating this activity and we had shared the information through the Newsletter encouraging member institutions to respond to CERID for collaboration.

ii) Another area was on School Based Management. This is an area where KEDI, Seoul has done considerable amount of research work. It was expected that member institutions will be contacting KEDI for further information and possibilities of continued interaction and collaboration.

iii) Another area was suggested by the Aga Khan University with respect to research methods for impact evaluation.

Collaborative research studies involving many member institutions from different countries need substantial funding support which may not be forthcoming from the national governments. However, studies on specified area involving one or two member institutions may be a more feasible proposition in the present context. This requires bilateral negotiations between member institutions on an institution-to-institution basis. The annual meetings can be reliable forum for discussions on identifying possible areas of collaborative research. It seems that bilateral collaborative research activities need to be initiated even when funding support for regional projects can be mobilised.

Workshops and Training Programmes

Apart from the annual meetings, there is a need for close collaboration among member institutions of the Network in training programmes. In fact, some of the member institutions are conducting regional programmes and programmes for educational functionaries from other countries. In 1997-98, NIEPA organised specific programmes for Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, apart from its regular programme of International Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration. However, these programmes are not organised by the Network.

The IIEP, Paris in collaboration with NIEPA, New Delhi organised a Regional Workshop on the Use of Indicators in Educational Planning. Many educational functionaries from the member institutions participated in this workshop. Similarly, KEDI, Seoul, in collaboration with PROAP (UNESCO), Bangkok, organised a Workshop on Educational Planning where many of the participants were from the member institutions of the Network.

This shows that a number of training programmes are being organised by member institutions where participants from the countries of the Asian region participate. However, many of these programmes cannot be categorised as a Network activity. Perhaps, the member institutions in the countries which organise such regional programmes need to closely interact with the government to get associated with the organisation of such programmes.

The organising of training programmes provides immense scope for collaborative efforts among member institutions. For example, most of the countries, from where the member institutions are drawn, have externally funded primary education projects. Some of these projects focus on decentralized systems of management and on local capacity building. Some of the member institutions get requests for organising training programmes for other countries. These requests need not necessarily be coming through the Network. Through continued and concerted efforts, the Network can become a medium to facilitate such programmes so that capacity building activities in the area of educational planning and management are strengthened. What is needed is a close interaction with the government of the respective countries so that the member institutions play an active role in designing and organising these training programmes as collaborative arrangements between member institutions. This will also help making the content and nature of the training programmes more country-specific and relevant. This is an area which provides good scope for bilateral collaboration which is not constrained by issues related to funding support.

It can very well be argued that the cost of training programmes that can be organised in the Asian region and among the member institutions is relatively less than sending people for training from these countries to countries located in the North. However, this idea has not yet been accepted widely by the decision-makers in the respective countries. This again, implies the need for member institutions to work with the policy makers in the respective countries.

Exchange of Personnel in Training Programmes can be of various forms. These can be exchange of personnel to gain training and expertise in the selected area, as also in the form of requesting another member institution to organise a training programme either within the country or outside. In many cases a professional from one member institution can act as a resource person in regional programmes organised in his/her country or outside.

Annual Meetings

Annual Meetings have become a regular feature of the Network. These provide a forum for representatives of the member institutions to mutually interact more closely and regularly. Many a time, annual meetings are organised as a follow-up to a seminar initiated and organised by the IIEP. This strategy provides a good opportunity for the member institutions of the Network to meet without substantial financial implications. The second Annual Meeting of the Network was held in KEDI, Seoul as a follow-up to the Network Research Seminar on Teacher Supervision Services. The Third Annual Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka was also organised as a follow up to the Seminar on School Efficiency. We are grateful to NIE, Sri Lanka in taking the initiative of organising the Third Annual Meeting of the ANTRIEP.

One positive feature of this arrangement is that the Annual Meetings get organised in different countries. In general, discussions regarding ANTRIEP activities, including holding of subsequent Annual Meetings, are held during the Annual Meetings. The major share of funding support for the Annual Meetings is now provided by the IIEP, Paris. However, in some cases the funding support for member institutions is mobilised from other sources. This is a positive trend that is to be explored further. If the Network is in a position to initiate collaborative research and training programmes, the possibilities of resource mobilisation for Annual Meetings can be increased.

Newsletter

It was decided in the First Annual Meeting that the Focal Point would take the responsibility of bringing out a Newsletter on a regular basis. Accordingly the Newsletter activities started from 1996. The Network has already brought-out Newsletters for the past three years. Over a period of time, the Newsletter has become a convenient and regular arrangement to facilitate dialogue on selected aspects of management of primary education in different countries. Most of the issues of the Newsletter are devoted to a selected theme. The themes for the various issues of the Newsletter are discussed during the Annual Meetings. The Newsletter immediately following the Second Annual Meeting focused on the Annual Meeting itself. This was followed by two other issues, which focused on Teacher Supervision and Recent Reforms in Primary Education in the region. Normally 10 copies of the ANTRIEP Newsletter are sent to each of the member institutions so that they can send them to other institutions of their choice. The next issue (July-December 1998) of the Newsletter focuses on School Autonomy and School Efficiency, which will be based on articles provided by various authors who are closely associated with such activities in the member institutions of the Network. On

the whole, the Newsletter is published without delay. It has almost become a regular activity of the Network.

The Focal Point has received suggestions from some of the member institutions that the Newsletter may also provide information on various activities of the member institutions. Some of the issues of the Newsletter attempted to provide such information on regional programmes organised by various member institutions. This could not be continued since the information was not forthcoming on a regular basis. However, this is an area which needs to be explored and exploited fully.

Areas of Priority Action

There is a need for closer interaction by the member institutions with the government and policy makers of the respective countries. This may help influencing many decisions regarding capacity building activities in educational planning and management by the member institutions. Once a member institution gets associated with decision makers at the national level, its capacity to convince them on the advantages of the Network increases.

There is a need for improved bilateral arrangements if the Network has to take deep roots. The bilateral arrangements require less funding support and provides greater scope for regular academic interaction. The bilateral arrangements may be in the area of exchange of professionals, participation in training programmes, organisation of joint programmes or collaborative research activities. Wherever possible, exchange and interaction between institutions need to be encouraged. At times faculty members from member institutions visit other countries; these opportunities may be made use of to further improve interactions among member institutions.

Annual Budgets of the member institutions may indicate specified amount for bilateral arrangements. Perhaps, a reliable mechanism may be to meet the funding requirements on account of travel from the respective countries and subsidised stay arrangements in the host countries. Such provisions will encourage bilateral interactions. The Focal Point may be informed about these arrangements while such bilateral exchanges take place.

It seems that the Network is reaching a stage whereby we may have to think in terms of local level (country based) Networks. In other words, it implies that each member institution in the respective country needs to have a leadership role in organising Network activities. Perhaps, one may encourage other institutions in a particular country to be Associate Members of the Network. The existing member institutions may co-ordinate these Network activities in that particular country. This may not involve any additional financial liabilities for the member institutions. The in-country Network may help create a larger number of institutions involved with capacity building activities in the area of educational planning and management.

The ANTRIEP Newsletter can become a forum to exchange information on such in-country Networks and on various research and training activities initiated by the respective member institutions and institutions becoming Associate Members. The advantage with associate membership, keeping one of the existing member institutions as a coordinating agency, is that the Network will have a wide spread in the same country. This may help keep closer interaction with policy makers and to influence their decisions.

Although, many activities are taking place under the aegis of the ANTRIEP, still more needs to be done to develop the Network as an acceptable and credible arrangement that can be relied on for capacity building activities in the area of educational planning and management in the region.

On behalf of the Focal Point of ANTRIEP, may I take this opportunity to thank the IIEP, the President of the Network, and all the member institutions for their sustained guidance and continued support to the Network activities which kept the Network alive and active.

N.V. Varghese
on behalf of
The Focal Point, NIEPA, New Delhi

A Summary of Discussions on the Report

The discussions that followed the presentation of the Report took into consideration the activities that could be carried out and which could not be carried out by the Network. Many of the participants pointed out the constraints under which the Network activities were being carried out in their own institutions. A major share of the discussions, however, was devoted to issues related to future direction of ANTRIEP activities.

The possibility of member institutions getting involved in regional research projects was an important issue for discussion. It was felt that the possibilities of funding for regional projects may be forthcoming. However, it was felt that Network activities should not be confined to regional projects. Therefore, the need for continuation of bilateral arrangements to strengthen Network activities was underlined. The issue of organising collaborative research activity was also linked to the organisation of the next Annual Meeting.

It was tentatively decided that the Seminar preceding the next Annual Meeting may be on a theme related to School Management. Many suggestions regarding the specific theme came up during the discussions. Themes like Evaluation and Quality, Structural Adjustment and Education, Education Vision for the Next Century were discussed. Many member institutions felt that a theme focusing on Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Education in the broader context of improving school management may provide a thematic continuity to the previous seminars held in the context of ANTRIEP Meeting.

The present pattern of organising ANTRIEP Annual Meetings along with a seminar on a substantive theme was appreciated by the members and they felt that the same procedure may be followed for the next Annual Meeting also.

Two member institutions, i.e. SIHRD, Shanghai and IAB, Malaysia offered to host the next Annual Meeting. The representatives from SIHRD, had already received the consent of the Director of the Institute to host the next Annual Meeting. Therefore, the next Annual Meeting might be organised in SIHRD. However, a final decision in this regard will be arrived at after further negotiations with the Institute.

Many participants felt that a collaborative project involving researchers from member institutions in an area related to the Seminar theme may be initiated. Towards this end, it was suggested that the member institutions may send a brief note on what they consider could be the issues to be incorporated in the project on School Management, to the Focal Point or IIEP. The IIEP, based on the notes sent by the member institutions and in consultation with the Focal Point, will develop a research project proposal to be submitted for funding support.

Many members felt that the Network has reached a stage where it needs to develop an ANTRIEP logo. Everybody welcomed this idea. All member institutions are requested to send their suggestions in this regard at the earliest so that the logo for the Network can be finalised.

Most of the members felt that the Seminar proceedings may be brought out as an ANTRIEP publication, containing a report on the Seminar and the selected contributions.

Many participants felt that a new brochure may be brought out by the Network containing profiles of all the member institutions, including those who have joined the Network after the first brochure was published. The member institutions agreed to make necessary changes and modifications in the earlier brochure and intimate to the Focal Point or to the IIEP.

Another major issue that came up for discussion was on the Newsletter. The participants noted with satisfaction that the Newsletter reaches all the institutions on a regular basis. However, they felt that there was a need to introduce changes in the content and out-look of the Newsletter. While the present pattern of having thematic coverage was important, there was a need for incorporating more news related to activities of the member institutions. More importantly, it was felt that research publications brought out by the member institutions in English should be mentioned in the Newsletter. Similarly, news items related to visits of members to other member institutions, MOU's signed between member institutions, involvement of institutions in the projects, and at times information regarding future programmes to be organised by the member institutions needed to be reported in the Newsletter. The editor on behalf of the

Focal Point welcomed these suggestions and assured the members that efforts will be made to introduce the suggested changes in subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

The Annual Meeting also discussed probable themes for the forthcoming issues of the Newsletter. It was decided that the next issue of the Newsletter (January-June, 1999) will focus *on the **ANTRIEP Meeting*** and a report on the ***Seminar on Improving School Efficiency***. The July-December, 1999 issue of the Newsletter may focus on ***Community Participation in Improving Educational Management,*** and the January-June, 2000 issue may focus on ***Evaluation and School Quality***. The Fourth Annual Meeting, to be held during the first half of the year 2000, will decide themes for the subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

Focal Point
NIEPA, New Delhi

ANTRIEP Seminar on Improving School Efficiency

The Third Annual Meeting of the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) held on 18 December 1998 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was preceded from 15 to 17 December, by a seminar on *Improving School Efficiency*. The seminar brought together 45 participants from 12 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka). They included representatives from 14 member institutions, nine Ministries of Education and of four donor agencies (JICA, SIDA, UNICEF and the European Commission) and other experts.

The seminar, inaugurated by the Deputy Minister of Education and Higher Education of Sri Lanka, covered four themes, namely, School Autonomy, Supervision, Evaluation and Assessment, and Teacher Management.

Why the Focus on School Efficiency ?

It is now widely recognised that reform measures in the past did not contribute sufficiently to effect changes at the institutional level and hence they could not lead to improved school outcomes. This was due to various factors.

Firstly, educational reforms in the past focused more on changes and interventions at the system level than on improvements at the institutional level. It was assumed that public policy and provisions would lead to an impro ved performance at the institutional level and hence reform measures placed very little emphasis on issues related to the functioning of the school. However, this expectation was belied as the schools failed to deliver the goods.

Secondly, they focused too strongly on inputs in the system (e.g. facilities, textbooks) and not sufficiently on the processes of teaching and learning and on decision-making, in particular at the school level. It is increasingly realised now that those process variables (variables relating to school organisation and practices) are crucial in explaining variations in quality.

Thirdly, any reform in the past tried to focus on isolated components at the school level. For example, the teacher was seen in an isolated fashion and competency development programmes were envisaged for teachers, independent of the teaching- learning conditions in schools. Now it is recognized that improving efficiency of individual components may not automatically and directly lead to improving the efficiency of an organization. Processes are contextual and their improvement depends upon the capacity of each school to become an effective organization.

Fourthly, interventions were not sufficiently adapted to the - sometimes very varied - needs of the individual schools, characterised as they were by a general, system-wide strategy. The traditional hypothesis, underlying many plans of action, that all schools function in more or less the same way is not realistic. There is often not much in common between schools in a developed urban and a remote rural setting. Similarly, the standardized supervision services which exist in most countries rarely adapt their strategies to the needs of specific schools.

These different arguments have led a growing number of governments to concentrate their efforts on improving the efficiency of schools, by taking into account the holistic characteristics of school as an organisation. In many instances, this policy has taken the form of giving more autonomy to schools and is generally known as the trend towards school-based management. The implementation of such a strategy in countries which have been characterized by fairly centralized and standardized education systems, manifestly implies a reorganization of the management structure as a whole and a redistribution of roles between different levels and actors.

The discussions in the Seminar started with evolving an operational definition of school efficiency. This was followed by discussions on the themes of **supervision**, **evaluation and assessment**, and **teacher management**.

Defining School Efficiency

The concept of school efficiency is defined with reference to three commonly found factors. Firstly, efficient schools are those which obtain good outcomes, in terms of examination results. This operational definition makes it easy to quantify efficiency because examination results are a measurable entity. However, it may have negative implications as far as the school process is concerned. It implies that schools, to be efficient, need to be examination oriented which is, especially at the primary level, hardly a welcome feature. Secondly, efficient schools are those which are well managed. This definition focuses on the internal management of the schools. It starts from the belief that any school is efficient where the interaction between different stakeholders is cordial and mutually reinforcing so that the teachers are happy to come to school and teach, parents are willing to send their children to school, and children enjoy the learning process. Thirdly, efficient schools are those which give good results at a reasonable cost, affordable to the society as a whole and to the different individuals in society. In this definition, it is the cost and equity considerations which are dominant. A closer look at these definitions indicates four dimensions of efficiency, namely, focus on outcomes, favourable internal management, cost-effectiveness and equity. Needless to add, all these four dimensions should be integral aspects of an efficient school.

(i) School Efficiency and School Autonomy

School autonomy implies the relative independence of an institution in its operation, to carry-out commonly agreed goals with a view to making its functioning more efficient and effective. Three points need to be stressed here. The policy to offer schools more independence is essentially seen by its advocates as a mechanism to improve school efficiency, although both literature reviews and country experiences have shown that such a link is elusive, at the least. Secondly, public central authorities will continue to provide a framework and play a regulatory role in establishing norms for provision and quality assurance. Interventions to improve efficiency will need to be introduced at the school level. Thirdly, independence of schools is relative and contextual. The level of development of a country and the type and size of a school are among the more obvious factors to consider. The conclusion should be that there is no optimal locus for decision-making on education, which applies to all countries or all schools. Nowhere, school autonomy implies total independence. It generally implies operational freedom to organize and galvanize school and community resources to make its functioning more efficient and cost effective. But the translation of this principle into reality leads to many different scenarios. The varied terminology created in the wake of the school autonomy movement – school-based management, school-site management, local level management, self-management of schools – shows the wide spectrum of experiences.

While many governments now toy with the idea of autonomy for schools, very limited effort has been made to operationalize the idea, and in particular to offer a comprehensive answer to the key question: which level will be responsible for which issues? At present, the existing circulars are more constraining than enabling. It seems that, if schools are to be made more autonomous and responsive to local requirements, decisions in three crucial areas become important : (i) curriculum; (ii) examination and performance evaluation; and (iii) finances.

Local level curriculum development would allow for a more relevant, more adapted school and would enable teachers to become still more active partners. The case of the State of Victoria in Australia shows that curriculum development at the local level is feasible. However, many other countries face at least two fundamental problems. Given their multi-cultural and multi-racial composition and the resulting diversities, the curriculum content is a sensitive issue, not least politically. Public education precisely is expected to play the role of uniting the nation and therefore a strict curriculum framework is imposed. Moreover, many countries do not have adequate local capacity to facilitate curriculum develop-

ment at the local level.

Autonomy in curriculum development is evidently linked to the issue of examinations and, in wider terms, performance evaluation. The backwash effect which national examination systems can have on classroom teaching is too well known to receive, much comment here. Keeping the examination system centrally designed and directed immediately restricts the freedom of schools. On the other hand, such a restriction might well be necessary when schools receive more autonomy, so as to effectively control their quality. The issue of school evaluation will be returned to later in this report (Theme iii).

School autonomy does not mean withdrawal of funding support by the state. In fact many of the educationally backward regions are also economically deprived regions and hence these regions will not be in a position to mobilize sufficient resources to provide quality education to all its population. Therefore, the continued funding support by the state is a necessary condition for making these schools more efficient and functional. Only the state can look into concerns for equity from a broader perspective. In other words, the state has to continue with the funding support precisely when one is arguing for school autonomy.

The extent of autonomy that can be enjoyed by a school depends upon the head-teacher of the school. The efficiency and authority of the head-teacher depends upon the process of selection of the head-teacher. In some of the countries, head-teachers are selected based on their seniority in the system with little regard towards their efficiency and competency. However, a trend noticeable in most of the countries in the recent past is that, in the selection process, teaching experience remains an essential requirement but seniority need not be an overriding criterion. Such a change has been introduced, for instance, in Malaysia, as part of the programme "*Making schools effective*", where, in addition the head-teachers after recruitment are given orientation training in issues related to institutional planning and management. In the context of school autonomy, it is very important that the head-teachers are in a position to provide academic leadership to their staff on school development plans and that they are trained in budgetary processes so that the school activities can be prioritised, initiated and closely monitored. This is all the more important in a situation where autonomy also implies freedom to operate the funds allocated to schools.

Of crucial importance will be the head-teacher's capacity to bring the whole school staff together around one objective: to improve the school in all its aspects. The existence of such a positive school climate should not be taken for granted, neither should the resistance within schools themselves against more autonomy be underestimated. In some cases, head-teachers are apprehensive in front of the additional authority they receive and especially the accompanying accountability. In other cases, teachers do not look forward to seeing an increase in the power of the school principal, especially in the field of teacher supervision and discipline. While training undoubtedly is needed, arguably more important will be a change in mindset among all the partners, in and around the school.

Community participation is another crucial element influencing the efficiency in the functioning of schools. There are some, where community involvement is more easy, evident and prevalent, for instance, financial and/or resource contribution and the supervision of teacher attendance. But even these are not without problems. The possibly negative impact on equity of the first strategy is well known. With respect to the second strategy, one can wonder what purpose it serves to allow communities to supervise teacher assiduity, if they cannot take any disciplinary action. When asking communities to play a role in curriculum development or teacher recruitment, problems become still more evident. On the other hand, the separation between the school and the community is in some ways an artificial one: parents are also educators and as such should be involved in schools. The question was asked if it would be possible and desirable to define a line of demarcation, beyond which communities should not go.

When referring to levels of involvement, we can distinguish between: information, consultation, negotiation and decision-making. There is little controversy about the need to keep the community informed (although for instance the publication of supervision reports is so far acceptable in few countries) or to consult with it regarding some decisions, such as the location of a new school. The fundamental question, which is raised but is far from being resolved, concerns the decision-making power which communities might be given.

Participants agreed that in any context, communities can play a positive role and that so far their potential has not been fully exploited. To ensure stronger school-community relationships, with a positive impact on school effectiveness, national authorities should take action in

these fields.

(ii) School Efficiency and School Supervision

At present, the control and visit-oriented supervision have almost no impact on the schools most in need of this support. Demanding a change in approach and in attitudes is nothing new. Supervisors have been blamed for their authoritarian attitude since ages. It is better understood now that such a change will not happen automatically through raining, but requires also a reform in the type of activities which supervisors are expected to undertake. Presently, the main activity on their job description – and the one by which their performance is judged – is school visits.

Even if external supervisors adopt a more developmental behaviour, their impact on schools will remain limited, because of their inherent external character. They remain outsiders. Supervision and support should, therefore, start within the school. Head-teachers evidently play a crucial role, but the peer support which teachers can give each other is just as important. Research has indeed shown that teachers learn easier from each other than from outsiders. This might demand a change in the internal management structures of schools. Secondary schools in many cases already adopt such an approach, by setting up departments with their own heads, for groups of subjects. More problematic is the introduction of such a strategy in smaller primary schools, where at times there is not even an official head-teacher. Many countries have, therefore, set up the well known school clusters.

Many of the problems with which supervisors struggle at present, will not be resolved if the strategic and structural changes are not accompanied by a commitment to give these services the minimum of funding they need to be functional. The most evident need of supervisors is transport. In the absence of vehicles or of the necessary allowances, supervisors are condemned to remain in their offices. This is sadly regularly the case and not surprisingly, supervisors in such a situation lose commitment and motivation. To this deplorable picture, a positive message can nevertheless be attached: the additional funding needed is marginal compared to the overall education budget, while the benefits that it would bring could be important.

(iii) School Efficiency and School Evaluation

There is a need to make a distinction between self-evaluation and external evaluation. School based evaluation for school improvement and for actions to be taken at the school level needs self-evaluation. The overall evaluation efforts made at higher levels may be useful to effect system level changes. This may need evaluation of several schools and may be initiated by people other than those at the individual school levels. Such external evaluation will rely on a standard, externally designed evaluation format. Indicators on performance of schools can be used to compare different schools at any given points of time or to monitor school activities over a period of time, if data on major activities are collected at regular intervals. When schools undertake self-evaluation, this can be done on the basis of a self-selected set of indicators, limiting the possibilities of comparison, or with reference to an externally determined set, may be compelling the school to focus on matters which it does not consider the most important.

This leads to the issue of indicators. As the most common mode of evaluation is student performance in the examination, exam results are the most popular indicator to judge the efficiency of a school, by parents and by the system, if not necessarily by the teachers. Teachers' resistance is not an expression of a corporatist attitude, but the reflection of a realization that examination results are a poor indicator of a teacher's quality. While they are an important aspect of evaluation of school activity, school evaluation obviously should not be confined only to student performance in the examinations. One has to develop other reliable indicators for assessing school efficiency and monitoring progress.

Ideally, one should look for indicators which can assess at the same time system level efficiency and school level efficiency. Such indicators should evaluate both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative indicators provide a comparative picture and relative position of the school in a given administrative unit. Indicators like enrollment ratio, learner achievement levels, qualification and training levels of teachers, attendance rates, etc, are among the quantitative indicators, which are available in most countries. However, process indicators, which reflect more accurately what goes on in the classrooms and are qualitative in nature, are more difficult to find. One of the challenges lies in identifying qualitative indicators which can be quantified. Therefore, methods of evaluation will have to focus not only on quantitative data collection but also on qualitative information collected through discussions, observation, interviews, etc. At the school level these discussions

and interactions may become more important than quantitative data to arrive at decisions regarding functioning and efficiency of schools.

(iv) School Efficiency and School Management

Even in a decentralized context, where decisions on teacher recruitment and promotion are taken at a district or local level, there will remain a need for a general framework for a set of checks and balances at a national level. Even in the most decentralized situations, such as in Victoria, the public authorities continue to employ teachers and to pay them along national salary scales.

Political interference in teacher management, in particular in recruitment and posting, is a problem encountered in many countries. The mechanisms and strategies to reduce such interference, are context-specific. This implies that decentralization, allowing local involvement in teacher management, will not automatically turn around this reality. In several countries, it might actually make the situation worse.

The recruitment at local level of teachers belonging to the community, might lead to an increased sense of belonging and a greater commitment among these teachers. This seems to some extent conditioned by two factors. These teachers , if they feel abandoned, once appointed, might lose quickly such commitment. It is important that they are given an opportunity to improve themselves and to grow professionally, e.g. through in-service training. Secondly, the usefulness of such a strategy also depends on the economic context. Where few job opportunities are available for secondary school or university graduates, it might be easier to attract some to the teaching profession than when there is a scarcity of teachers. (Further details on the paper presented in the Seminar and on the participants are available from the IIEP, Paris).

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