

**HIGH POWER EXPERT COMMITTEE ON
TEXT BOOK REVIEW**

REPORT

Dr. K. N. PANIKKAR

Chairman

**Planetarium Buildings, Science & Technology Museum Campus,
PMG Junction, Thiruvananthapuram - 33**

06.10.2008

Lr. No. 34/2008

To

The Hon'ble Minister for Education
Government of Kerala

Dear Hon'ble Minister,

Sub : Report of the High Power Expert Committee on Textbook Review – reg.

Ref : G.O.(Rt) No: 3117/2008/G.Edu. dated 08.07.2008

The committee constituted to review the curriculum, syllabi, textbooks and handbooks for school classes conducted a detailed study of the various aspects of the issue and has finalised the report. The report was unanimously approved by the committee in its sitting at Thiruvananthapuram on 06.10.2008 which I have the honour to submit herewith.

Thanking You

Yours Faithfully

K.N. PANIKKAR

Chairman

High Power Expert Committee

Thiruvananthapuram
06.10.2008

INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The government of Kerala has revised the curriculum and syllabi of school education and has accordingly prepared the textbooks for classes 1, 3, 5 and 7. These textbooks have been introduced from the academic year 2008-09. The Kerala curriculum framework (KCF 2007) was prepared after holding discussions with academics, organizations of teachers and students, non - governmental organizations and the general public. The KCF - 2007 draws upon the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 (NCF-2005). The textbooks prepared for the classes mentioned above were distributed to the students free of cost during this academic year. The curriculum, syllabi and textbooks follow the learner centred, activity oriented and constructivist pedagogy, which is being practiced in Kerala from 1997 - 98 onwards. The development of the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks was undertaken by the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT).
- 1.2 The social science textbook prepared by the SCERT for Std. VII has generated considerable debate in the state, both about its content and approach. Some student and youth organisations, political parties and caste and religious organisations have been critical of the suitability of the book. They had resorted to agitational methods in order to demand the withdrawal of the book. The Opposition raised the issue in the Assembly and also demanded the withdrawal of the textbook, as a condition for entering into any discussion. In response to this the Hon'ble Minister for Education announced in the floor of the House the constitution of a High Powered Committee (HPC) to examine the various complaints raised against the book. Accordingly a committee consisting of 18 members was constituted wide G.O No. 3117/2008/General Education dated 07.07.2008 (given as Annexure - I) which was given three months to submit its report. The committee was given the option to submit an interim report, if necessary.
- 1.3 The members of the committee are:-
 1. Dr. K. N. Panikkar, Chairman
 2. Dr. M. A. Oommen, Emeritus Professor
 3. Dr. Arjun Dev, Rtd. Professor. NCERT, New Delhi

4. Dr. Anita Rampal, Department of Education, Delhi University
 5. Dr. Poonam Batra, Central Institute of Education, Delhi University
 6. Fr. Alex Thomas, Headmaster, PEMHS, Thiruvanchoor, Kottayam
 7. Sri. E. D. Thankachan, Rtd. District & Sessions Judge, Thiruvananthapuram
 8. Prof. Mammen Varkey, Rtd. Principal, Bishopmoor College, Mavelikkara
 9. Sri. Scaria Zacharia, Rtd. Professor of Malayalam, Sanskrit University, Kalady
 10. Prof. M. N. Karassery, Department of Malayalam, Kozhikode University
 11. Dr. Jameela Begum, Department of English, Kerala University
 12. Sri. K. T. Abubakar, Headmaster & Teachers National Award Holder, Kurimannil Thalappil. P.O, Pappinippara, Manjeri, Malappuram
 13. Dr. Fazal Gafoor, MES Hostel, Bank Road, Calicut
 14. Prof. M. Thomas Mathew, Rtd. Government College Principal
 15. Prof. K. M. Abdul Raheem, Department of Economics, M.E.S College, Mampad
 16. O. Abdu Rahiman, Islahia college, Chennamangloor, Kozhikode
 17. C. P. Sudarsanan, Rtd. Higher Secondary Teacher, Chirathara, Karikkad, Alappuzha
 18. Prof. V. Karthikeyan Nair, Rtd. Director, Higher Secondary Education (Secretary)
1. 4. The terms of reference of the committee are given below:
- i. To examine the complaints raised against the social science textbook of class VII
 - ii. To examine the curriculum and textbooks as a whole.
 - iii. Any other issue the committee feels relevant to the above.

Proceedings of the Committee

- 1.5 The first meeting of the Committee was held at Thiruvananthapuram on 14th and 15th of July, 2008. After a detailed discussion of the various objections and criticisms raised in the meeting and reported debate in public, the Committee decided to submit an interim report to the government. Accordingly the interim report was submitted to the Hon'ble Minister for Education on 15th July. The text of the Interim Report is given in Annexure - II. The interim report suggested certain changes in the text and some additions in order to allay the apprehensions voiced by the public. The changes were included to highlight the freedom of religion and to provide clarification about some information in the text.

1.6 In its first meeting, the HPC decided to elicit the opinion of all those who are interested in the matter. A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to individuals and organisations for submitting their suggestions. The questionnaire was sent to political parties, members of the legislative assembly, organizations of youths, students, teachers and employees, trade unions etc. The purpose of this exercise was to sensitise the committee about the opinion of the public about issues which had generated considerable controversy. The questionnaire is given as Annexure - III

1.7 The committee held its sittings at Kozhikode, Kochi, Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram on 10th, 16th, 18th and 22nd August 2008, respectively to hear the public, both individuals and organisations. The response was fairly good and most of those who deposed before the committee had filed written statements. Thirty individuals and organisations responded to the questionnaire. Reports were submitted by the KPCC and the united committee of the archbishops of Changanassery, Pala and Kanjirappally. The Kerala Students Union submitted an alternative textbook which they had prepared for social science of Class VII.

1.8 Besides the petitions received in the office of the Committee and those at the hearings at Kozhikode, Kochi, Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram, the office of the H'nble Minister of Education had received some representations. They were handed over to the committee. The representations received, the full list of which is appended as Annexure - IV, are as follows:-

Office of the committee	-	79
Office of the Minister	-	36
Hearing at Kozhikode	-	30
Hearing at Kochi	-	24
Hearing at Kottayam	-	24
Hearing at Thiruvananthapuram	-	17
Total	-	212

1.9 Of these 30 were responses to the questionnaire. Of the members of the Legislative Assembly only two had responded; viz; the Ho'nble Leader of the Opposition and Sir. Simon Britto. A few individuals and organisations who appeared before the committee and gave oral evidence, did not submit written statements. Their views were also considered by the committee.

Suggestions and Observations by the Public

- 1.10 The suggestions and remarks by the petitioners come under three categories. The first set of respondents demanded that the textbook shall be withdrawn. Among them there are two categories. One group was of the opinion that though the NCF - 2005 was acceptable, the KCF - 2007 is a distortion of the concepts employed in the NCF. Further, the textbook presents the concept of secularism in a wrong sense. It projects the ideas of class war and communism. The contents of the book are presented in a misleading and negative manner. The KSU, the Muslim League, Private School Teachers Association, and the Kerala Arabic Teachers Federation come under this category. The second group rejects the constructivist and critical pedagogy adopted in the NCF and KCF. According to some of them this will influence the young generation of children to become atheists and terrorists. Therefore the textbook shall be withdrawn. The catholic bishops council and the catholic teachers guild belong to this group. The All India Democratic Students Organisation was of the view that the textbooks try to implement the imperialist agenda of the World Bank.
- 1.11 The second category is of the opinion that the text need not be withdrawn, but some chapters should be withdrawn and certain other portions may be modified. The KPCC is of the opinion that the NCF is misinterpreted and implemented in a distorted manner. Further, the social science textbook of Class VII, does not do justice to the past or to the future. There are so many errors in the book and facts are presented in a negative manner. Therefore the KPCC suggested that the first three chapters should be withdrawn. The Hon'ble leader of the opposition endorses the recommendation of the KPCC. A few respondents demanded that the lesson under the subtitle 'no religion for Jeevan', 'Muslim Aikya Sangham' etc may be withdrawn. A large number of petitioners demanded the substitution of 'Muslim Aikya Sangam' with 'Muslim Renaissance' and the text of which was supplied by them. Another section under this category demanded that the portion dealing with 'Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS) shall be deleted. Yet another section congratulated the government for including a section on PRDS and insisted on its retention.
- 1.12 The third category recognizes the scope for refinement and improvement but suggests that modifications could be introduced when the text is revised. They are of the opinion that the demands for immediate revision or withdrawal are not motivated by academic reasons and are not academically tenable.

- 1.13 A group of Homoeopathic doctors appeared before the committee at its meeting at Kozhikode and pointed out that the Social Science textbook for Class VII is discriminatory to different systems of medicine. They complained that the text encourages allopathy for treating illness. They are of the opinion that each system of medicine has its own potential for treating the patients. They demanded that equal importance should be given to all systems of medicine, both indigenous and foreign.
- 1.14 The activists of the 'Madya Virudha Samithi' (Anti liquor society) came to depose before the committee at its meeting at Kochi and congratulated the government for including a portion on the prevention of illicit distillation in a remote village by the people there. The movement was a success as people participated in this "liberation struggle" (that is the title given in the text dealing with this particular portion). The activists are of the opinion that the lesson may convey the message that only illicit distillation is bad, whereas taking liquor as such is not bad. They demanded that the textbook may convey the value of total ban on alcohol and drugs.

1.15 Discussion with the Director, SCERT

The committee held discussion with the Director, SCERT, about the procedure adopted for the preparation of the curriculum, syllabi, textbooks and handbooks. He acknowledged that the KCF 2007 is heavily indebted to the NCF - 2005 in its approach, pedagogy and methodology. The only change was the development of the issue-based content. The NCF gives the freedom to the various SCERT's of the states to adopt and adapt the content according to the local conditions. Chapter - 2 of the KCF contains eight issues, which the Kerala society faces today. Accordingly the textbook writers were given instructions to prepare the lessons on the issues identified in the KCF. The Director explained that these issues are developed in a spiral manner from the lower to the higher classes. He is of the opinion that only after perusing the whole syllabus grid for classes I to XII that the full dimension of the curriculum can be understood. The eight issues identified for inclusion in the textbooks for the classes mentioned above are developed in an evolutionary manner from the lower classes to the higher classes. When the child completes his/her school education he/she will be able to acquire the required skills and attitudes.

1.16 Discussion with the textbook writers

The committee had a discussion with four teachers who were involved in the process of preparation of textbook and handbook of social science for Class VII. Among them two were actually involved in the drafting of the KCF also. They stated that each portion of the lessons was drafted after much discussion in the workshop meant for the same and the text was the product of collective effort. According to them the textbook and handbook are to be taken together as they are complementary to each other. Reading the text alone is not sufficient. The impression that the text is not sufficient is a result of considering it in isolation. It has to be read together with the teacher's handbook. If the text is transacted in proper manner as instructed in the handbook the learner would feel the extent of its content. Regarding illustrations they stated that they had no control over their design or production. Responding to the criticism that the eight issues included in the content are presented in a negative manner, they stated that they do not figure in the textbooks. The child never sees and reads them. It is in the syllabus grid that they are included and it is only a factual statement about certain features of our society. The teacher's handbook clearly explained how these issues are to be handled in the classrooms.

Analysis of the Textbooks

1.17 The Expert Committee in its first meeting itself planned a detailed analysis of the curriculum, textbooks and handbooks. Ten themes were identified and the members of the committee prepared notes which were presented in the second meeting of the committee. These theme are: -

- Structure of the book
- Pedagogic issues
- Facts and content
- Curriculum and conceptual issues
- Language (Malayalam)
- Religion and caste sensibilities
- Gender sensibility
- Marginalised groups
- Handbook
- Democracy, secularism and humanism.

In addition, a comparative analysis of the social science textbook of Class VII with the NCERT textbook was also undertaken. These notes were used for discussion and for the preparation of the Report.

Criticism from the public about the textbook

1.18 The criticism raised by the public against the book can be summed up as follows:

- An excerpt from the autobiography of A. K. Gopalan is included in the textbook, while the biographies of leaders like Pattom Thanu Pillai, C. Achutha Menon etc. do not find a place (Chapter 1, page - 9).
- A copy of a page from the school register of the year 1924 from Malappuram district is given in the text, which contains the caste details of 23 students, all of whom belonged to upper castes. It is alleged that this is a deliberate attempt to discredit the upper castes (chapter - 2 - page - 18)
- The conversation between the headmaster of a school and the parents of a child at the time of filling up the application for admission is given in the text (chapter - 2 page - 24). The parents, who are inter - religious married couple, demand that the column relating to religion of the child need not be filled up and they suggest that the child could decide his caste when he grows up. A sentence from Nehru's 'Will and Testament' is then given which states that no religious rites should be observed after his death. The narration of these two incidents is seen as disrespect to religion amounting to denial of religion.
- The freedom struggle is presented in a distorted manner (chapter - 3, pages 31 - 39). The roles played by Gandhiji and Nehru are minimised while those of regional leaders are given greater importance. Some insignificant incidents are narrated while major events are avoided.
- There is a clandestine move to inculcate communist ideology in the tender minds of the children. The whole text is designed and prepared with such a view.
- The English version of the social science book is full of mistakes and hence it should be withdrawn.
- Textbooks are prepared according to the agenda of the World Bank.

- The illustration of the umbrella given in page 5, lesson 1 of 'Kerala Patavali' of Std. I is not appropriate. The picture is that of a broken umbrella which is not matching with the narrative given below it.
- To demonstrate the importance of air in human life the narration of 'Wagon Tragedy' is given (Basic Science - Std V. Page - 58). The same incident is narrated in the social science textbook of the same class. The selection of such a tragic incident to demonstrate the importance of air is unfortunate.
- To present the injustice of discrimination, an incident from the life of Sri. K. R. Narayanan, the former President of India, is given in the English Course Book - Vol I of class VII under the title 'A lamp that faced storm'. It seems to be a fictitious narration, because it is not an excerpt from either the autobiography or biography of Sri. K.R. Narayanan. The source of the text is not cited. It deals with an occasion in his life while he was a schoolboy when the mathematics teacher was teaching 'division'. The text states that "the word 'division' pierced the poor boys heart". It is pointed out that he was a Malayalam medium student and therefore the teacher could not have used the English word 'division'. Further, the Malayalam equivalent of 'division' in mathematics does not convey the meaning of English word 'division'.
- In the same text there is a poem by William Blake titled 'The little black boy' (page 21-23). At the end of it there is an exercise given to the students "compare and contrast the appearances, attitudes and fortunes of the white child and the black child and fill in the table given below". The table contains two columns, one for the black child and the other for the white child. Some teachers who deposed before the committee had reported that the students in their class filled up the table by comparing and contrasting the black and white among themselves. The children of Std VII can never conceive of the discrimination between the whites and blacks once practised either in South Africa or U.S.A. It is afraid that it may lead to discrimination between fair and black complexioned children in our schools.
- A member of Koodallur Mana has represented that the impression conveyed about the '*mana*' is not true to fact. They are derogatory and should be corrected, as it has resulted in "considerable anguish and distress" to the present members of the family. It is not proper to give the name of the '*Mana*'.

- There are factual mistake in details in the portion regarding Muslim Aikya Sangham, Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha, Quit India Movement etc, which may be corrected.
- Several incidents and facts given are not properly contextulaised. As a result the students may find it difficult to grasp them properly.

OBSERVATIONS & ANALYSIS

Curriculum

2.1 The National Curriculum Framework of 2005 (NCF) heralds a paradigm shift in school education. It seeks to effect a break from the existing syllabi and pedagogic practices. In the making of the curriculum NCF suggested the following five principles:

- *connecting knowledge to life outside the school,*
- *ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote method,*
- *enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric,*
- *making examinations more flexible and integrated into classroom life and,*
- *nurturing an over-riding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.*

In pursuit of these principles NCF advocated a child centered and activity oriented pedagogy which would stimulate the creative ability of the student. Child centered pedagogy means giving primacy to children's experiences, their voices, and their active participation. The students are encouraged to raise questions and find answers with the help of the teachers. The teacher must help them engage with the challenging process of knowledge construction and needs to understand and ably guide them in the process. The collective involvement of the students has important intellectual implications. The students may realize that several answers are possible to a single question which widens the frontiers of knowledge. Such an engagement with the guidance of the teacher promotes collective and collaborative learning. According to NCF *"Critical pedagogy provides an opportunity to reflect critically on issues in terms of their political, social, economic and moral aspects. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and a commitment to democratic forms of interaction. This is important in view of the multiple contexts in which our schools function. A critical framework helps children to see social issues from different perspectives and understand how such issues are connected to their lives"*.

The child's point of view of looking at and understanding the world and not the discipline should become the starting point in framing the curriculum. Children's conceptual

development is a continuous process of deepening and enriching the associations they make with their concrete experiences, while acquiring new layers of meanings. All children are naturally motivated to learn, and their attitudes, emotions and beliefs are an integral part of their cognitive development. Therefore the often artificial boundaries created by the system between the 'affective' and the 'cognitive' domains of knowledge, and also between the 'curricular' and 'co-curricular', need to be consciously erased. The curriculum must also dissolve the water-tight compartments of school 'subjects' which cause knowledge to be fragmented rather than inter-related and integrated. More importantly, areas of knowledge such as art, crafts, sports, or work, which offer a rich potential for the development of skills, aesthetics, creativity, initiative, practical intelligence and capabilities for team work, should not get sidelined

- 2.2 The Kerala Curriculum Framework, 2007 (KCF) draws upon NCF, conceptually and pedagogically. It is reflected in the following statement: *"When the objectives of education of Kerala are determined, independence, sovereignty, secularism and democracy of India are to be kept in view. The concepts of work oriented human values and high sense of aesthetics are to be achieved through this. Sense of security and responsibility shall be reflected in all walks of life. Each child shall acquire the idea that his welfare is closely connected with that of his family and society"* (KCF. 2.4). The KCF - 2007 is actually a refinement of the prevailing system and explores new possibilities. The main change is that in the previous system the textbooks were prepared on the basis of contents conceived in the syllabus, while in the new system the textbooks are prepared on the basis of issue-based content.
- 2.3 The salient features of KCF - 2007 are the following: constructivist and critical pedagogy, issue based approach in textbooks and continuous and cumulative evaluation. Except the second, the other two were already prevailing in Kerala since 1997. The teachers, with their past experience, are well aware of the system.

Issue based content -

- 2.4 An innovative aspect of the KCF is its issue-based approach for the preparation of syllabi and textbook. The issues are identified for the preparation of textbooks which are as follows:-
- Absence of a vision of universal humanism.
 - Lack of human resource development.

- Lack of understanding of the specificities of cultural identity and its need to develop freely.
- Inability to see agriculture as part of culture.
- Lack of scientific approach to health and public health.
- Lack of due consideration towards marginalized groups.
- Lack of scientific management of land and water.
- Lack of eco – friendly industrialization and urbanization

That issues are posed in a negative manner, has been a point of criticism. These issues were obviously selected to highlight the conditions prevailing in the state and were meant to reflect the underlying concerns of the syllabus and textbooks. Whether they have been taken as overarching themes and have thus constrained the development of an appropriate syllabus grid for subjects like science, mathematics etc need to be closely looked into by subject committees. The issues identified for including in the content are couched in such a manner that they create a negative impact. The issues may be stated positively and not couched as 'deficit' statements.

- 2.5 The KCF – 2007 details the manner in which languages, basic science, social science and mathematics are to be taught. When textbooks are prepared these subjects are expected to be problematised and linked with the eight issues, which have already been identified. Establishing a creative but not contrived connection between the issues and subjects should be the approach to be followed for all subjects in all classes.
- 2.6 Although the curriculum clearly indicates the objectives of education, the syllabus grids are expected to lay down the level and nature of knowledge transaction that is expected in each subject in each stage, which the students should acquire. It would be desirable to elaborate on this in the syllabus grid, to clarify. This would indicate to enable the textbook writers to incorporate the knowledge necessary for each class.
- 2.7 Textbooks need to take more care of continuity and also proper sequencing, especially since they are based on a thematic approach, and as suggested by the NCF, there is a conscious attempt to dissolve strict subject boundaries. This would be required to be offset by careful planning of lessons after ensuring the necessary continuity in the distribution of syllabus in

the entire grid, from a learner centred perspective, while also maintaining the academic rigour required for the broad disciplinary area.

Presentation and Narration

- 2.8 The mode of narration and presentation has a vital role in ensuring the quality of a textbook. In all textbooks, it is felt that the text is very limited. However, it is necessary to have sufficient and appropriate text for students to engage with all the subjects. The text must be interactive not didactic, so that it helps support and scaffold their own thinking, as it triggers their curiosity and stimulates their critical reflection.
- 2.9 The science textbooks provide definitions and terminologies much too abstract and far beyond the comprehension of students at that age. Moreover, performing an activity or experiment does not always ensure learning, especially if the concepts are too abstract for the child to engage with at that age. For instance, research studies show that since the concepts of 'water vapour' or even 'air' are too abstract for a young child, even performing an experiment to demonstrate evaporation and condensation does not help in 'understanding' these processes, and the child continues to use her own schema to explain what she observes. The language and terminologies used in textbooks or classrooms must take serious note of the child's thinking and progressively help her to make sense of concepts, instead of imposing mental constructs she cannot yet grasp.
- 2.10 The books contain quotations, tables, charts etc. with no indication of the source of the data provided. Sources need to be mentioned, in a manner appropriate for the child of that age, to grasp the information in its context.
- 2.11 Pictures and stimulating visuals including cartoons and caricatures are an integral part of a textbook. The importance given to them and space provided for them are welcome. At the same time their artistic quality is not satisfactory. It must be recognised that the child does not 'read' a text in a simple linear manner, but 'engages' with new ideas in an often non-linear pattern of processing text and visuals, while jumping to make sense and connections with her own experience. Textual pages must be designed to stimulate such thought and reflection processes.
- 2.12 A constructivist approach to learning lays stress on the learner's home language, which is also the basis for the development of her thoughts, concepts, attitudes and values. The language used in the textbook is mostly colloquial. It needs serious thought and careful

planning to help the learner move confidently between the colloquial and the formal academic genres used by different disciplines. Care may be taken to ensure that verity in language is respected and the language sensibility of social groups is also taken into account.

- 2.13 The social constructivist approach calls for careful 'scaffolding' or supporting of the process of children's learning through 'social interaction' - discussion and reflection, in small groups of peers or with an adult, who could be the teacher, a parent or a community 'resource person'. This enables children to reach a higher level of understanding than they would achieve on their own. This process of scaffolding the child's learning must be reflected not only in the teaching learning interaction, but also in the way the syllabus and textbooks are prepared. Textbooks could be further refined to keep this in focus in the style of presentation.

Teachers Handbook

- 2.14 The teaching - learning evaluation process becomes complete only when three ingredients are inseparably intertwined. They are the syllabi, textbook and teacher's handbook. Since the teacher plays a pivotal role as a guide in the new paradigm, the handbook becomes the torch, which shows the right path. Hence the handbook shall be a document, which contains the philosophy, content and guidance for the effective transaction of the knowledge of the textbook and evaluation of the skills and abilities which the learner has acquired. It provides the necessary guidance for the practice of the Curriculum. The handbooks prepared for this academic year are better than the ones prepared during the previous year. Yet there is much scope for improvement.
- 2.15 A major aspect to be added to the handbook is the clear direction for both continuous and terminal assessment evaluation. The teachers are usually taught and trained in the traditional behaviorist paradigm. Naturally they may be using the old scales for evaluation even in the changed environment. Training was imparted to them for transacting the textbooks which used the activity oriented pedagogy. Many teachers consider that activities and exercises given to the learners in the form of projects, seminars, assignments, collections etc are tools of evaluation. But they have to better understand the processes by which learner constructs knowledge and how learner's responses need to be assessed. Therefore, the handbook must contain clear directions with proper illustrations and examples of how

questions can be formed to elicit learners' understanding, for both continuous assessment and terminal/half yearly/annual examinations.

Process of preparation of textbooks.

- 2.16 The SCERT undertakes the preparation of curriculum, syllabi, textbooks and handbooks. It is a long process through which these are prepared and finally approved by the curriculum steering committee. From the conceptualisation workshop at the beginning of this process up to the granting of formal approval by the steering committee several teachers are engaged in the preparation of the textbooks and handbooks. It may be advisable to further streamline this process to ensure proper co-ordination at different stages.
- 2.17 Once the curriculum is approved, it should be presented in the workshop by the concerned faculty member of the SCERT. The faculty member shall ensure that the textbook contains the themes and issues identified for the textbook. If the teachers authorized for preparing the textbook suggest any modification in the syllabus or theme they should be considered by the faculty and the curriculum steering committee. It may be advisable to periodically review the prescribed procedure for the preparation of the textbook.
- 2.18 The final draft of a textbook is prepared after discussing in a series of workshops. Ten teachers are expected to participate in them. It is reported that the number of teachers who participate in these workshop are not always sufficient. This may cause many problems in the drafting of the book. Each time new members have to be appraised of the theme and strategy of the textbook. Consequently the continuity and coherence of the programme could be adversely affected. Therefore it is necessary to entrust the preparation of the textbook to a core group which could work without interruption, with inputs from other resource persons.
- 2.19 There is need to involve eminent resource persons with experience in the constructivist approach and with academic expertise in different disciplinary areas to help strengthen the conceptualisation of the syllabus grid and provide guidance for the writing of textbooks.

Teacher Training

- 2.20 Majority of teachers who are in service at present is under the influence of a system which can be traced to the colonial past. Only by conscious and deliberate efforts that they can imbibe a new democratic spirit. One way of achieving it is through teacher training programmes. Though teacher-training programmes have been intensively carried out in the state ever since the paradigm shift was effected in 1997, it seems that a sizable number of

teachers could not internalize the new methodology. Therefore, the teacher training programmes will have to be given greater attention.

- 2.21 In these programmes different aspects of pedagogy and disciplinary knowledge including a deeper understanding of learners should receive attention. The method must vary from primary to higher secondary level in the sense that at the primary level more emphasis has to be given to aspects of child development and pedagogic practices that ensure learning through an integrated approach. At higher levels of learning, more stress will need to be given to ensure teachers' own deep understanding of concepts and an appreciation of the changing nature of their disciplines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The textbooks under review have sought to bring about a qualitative change in pedagogy, content and presentation. As envisaged in NCF and KCF they have tried to instill in children qualities of critical enquiry and social sensitivity and help to promote a more creative relation between teachers and students. They aim, as a consequence, to change the classrooms into sites of collaborative knowledge transaction. Over the years, these textbooks could be further refined and enriched. The following recommendations are made with that in view.
- 3.2 As suggested in the Interim Report there is no case for withdrawing the Class VII Social Science textbook. However, it may be reviewed for the next academic year, in the light of the general observations and recommendations contained in the Report.
- 3.3 Critical pedagogy and constructivist methodology used for the preparation of the textbooks have influenced the structure and organization of the books. The questions, which follow each part of the lesson, need to be reviewed to ensure coherence and continuity.
- 3.4 In the critical pedagogic practice the textbooks are not intended to provide 'total' information about any topic. Therefore, comparison with the textbooks of previous years or of the NCERT is not appropriate since those may be based on a different syllabus. Yet, there is a case for enriching the content by expanding the narrative for the social science textbooks and providing suitable markers to help children construct their understanding. In that case, for instance, the portion on the national movement may become fuller or renaissance leaders may get greater representation. In the science textbooks, however, there is need to avoid 'information' and definitions which are inappropriate for learners at that age.
- 3.5 The principle of guiding the children from local to the national is commendable. But undue emphasis on the local is likely to encourage provincialism and parochialism. The textbooks should have some opening to the national and international, taken up at an appropriate stage.
- 3.6 The textbooks should be subjected to periodic revision based on critical evaluation and classroom research. An expert committee for each subject with 3 – 5 members may be set up for this purpose.

- 3.7 The success of critical pedagogy depends upon the intellectual equipment of the teacher who plays an important role in this process. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the teachers get adequate training, in areas of content, pedagogy and children's development.
- 3.8 All textbooks need to ensure gender sensitivity. More concrete narratives and case studies need to be incorporated in the text to address issues regarding unequal gender relations in society. A serious effort must be made to involve more women in the preparation of curriculum syllabi and textbooks.
- 3.9 Illustrations and visuals require considerable improvement.
- 3.10 It is necessary to ensure better production and use of quality paper to make the textbooks more attractive to the students.
- 3.11 The language of textbooks should be learner friendly.
- 3.12 Experts and the resource persons with disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge should be engaged to guide the process of the preparation of textbooks and handbooks.
- 3.13 Professional development of textbook writers need to be ensured through academic exposure and research initiative.
- 3.14 The names and affiliation of the members of the drafting committee and expert committee should be acknowledged in the textbooks.
- 3.15 The syllabus, textbooks and handbooks should be posted on the website for inviting comments and remarks. The comments and remarks thus received and the reports from the field (schools) should be considered by the expert committee. The SCERT should also evolve a procedure for wider consultation.
- 3.16 In the light of the poor quality of English translation of Class VII textbook of Social Science, a proper procedure should be adopted to ensure the quality of translation.
- 3.17 The govt. should consider the constitution of a Textbook Commission to monitor all textbooks used in the state.

Interim Report of the Committee Constituted by the Government of Kerala
for the Review of Class VII Social Science Text book under the
Chairmanship of Prof.K.N.Panikkar

The Government of Kerala vide G.O(Rt) No.3117/2008 constituted a committee to review the class VII Social Science text book. The terms of reference of the committee are:-

- (a) To examine the complaints raised against the Social Science Textbook of class VII
- (b) To examine the complaints raised against the Curriculum and Textbooks as a whole.
- (c) Any other issue the committee feels relevant to the above.

The committee had its first meeting on 14th and 15th of July 2008 at Thiruvananthapuram in which the following members were present. After an extended discussion the committee arrived at the following decisions.

1. The class VII Social science text book has been prepared by and large in conformity with the Kerala Curriculum framework of 2007.
2. In the structure, content and pedagogy the committee found the book to be generally satisfactory. However, the committee feels that there is scope for improvement in some areas. The issue will be discussed in subsequent meetings.
3. The organization of the book is framed according to the requirements of critical pedagogy which enable the students to acquire knowledge through the interrogation of social reality.
4. The committee did not find any explicit attempt to propagate communist ideology. What is clear is the attempt to inculcate the values of humanism, secularism and democracy. However the committee would go into the details in subsequent meetings.
5. The committee is of the opinion that the book does not attempt to negate the importance of religion in human life. On the contrary the book projects the positive aspects of religion (Refer pp.25&26). Yet, the committee recognizes that the way religion is referred to in the text book could be revised in order to avoid any possible misinterpretation.

The committee felt that some changes could be introduced in the text for the sake of clarity and for forging logical sequences.

In the light of the above, the committee recommends the following for immediate implementation:

1. The demand for the withdrawal of the book has no academic basis and need not be entertained.
2. The box item on the burning of the dalit in page **17** be properly historicized.
3. The table about the school admission list of school on page **18** be made comparative by giving the table for the year 2004. Similarly give the comparison in the cropping pattern
4. The lesson on Jeevan's religion be revised as follows :
 - (i) Change the title
 - (ii) Remove the references to the religion of the parents.
 - (iii) Delete the second sentence in the 11th line.
 - (iv) Connect the statement of Nehru with the main theme of the lesson.
 - (v) Introduce Narayana Guru's ideas at the end of the lesson. A revised version of the lesson is enclosed.
5. The reference books in both the Text and the Hand book be revised
6. Language of the book, both English and Malayalam need to be improved. A fresh translation may be made in the case of English version. Care may be taken to ensure that the languages should be child friendly.

These are interim observations and recommendations. The final report will be submitted as earlier as possible.