

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Investigation

Ever since the modern secondary school came into existence in India, the inspecting officers had been wielding a powerful influence on the secondary school. A strong tradition of direction and control extending over more than a century by the State Inspectorate of Education had moulded the school objectives, programmes, practices, relationships and outlooks of school administrators to such an extent that unless the secondary school inspection system is reoriented and placed on more progressive lines, the freshness of outlook and the spirit of experimentation and dynamicism expected from the secondary school administrators and teachers are not likely to fructify. Owing to historical reasons, the secondary school

administration and teaching in India have been under the powerful grip of the State Inspectorate of Schools. Therefore, all attempts to reform the school inspection system will invariably result in better teaching and better management of secondary schools.

Apart from this, during the post-independence period (1947 - 1964), the expansion of secondary education in the country has been so fast that it has given rise to many problems, and the inspection system of the secondary schools has considerably lagged behind. In fact, immediately after a good beginning that was recommended by the author of the Education Despatch of 1854 for the adequate provision of supervision and inspection of schools in the country, there was hardly a satisfactory arrangement for school inspection. In recent years, as mentioned above, the rapid expansion of secondary education has worsened the situation. In this connection, the comment made by the Secondary Education Commission reads as follows:

The present system of inspection of schools was subjected to criticism by several witnesses. It was pointed out that inspections were perfunctory, that the time spent by the inspector at any particular place was taken up with routine work

like checking accounts etc. There was not enough time devoted to the academic side, and contacts between the inspectors and teachers were casual. It occasionally happened that the inspector instead of being the friend, philosopher and guide of the school, behaved in such a critical and unsympathetic way that his visit was looked upon with some degree of apprehension, if not of resentment.¹

So, under the new set-up in the country, the entire system of inspection for schools needs reorientation.

"The autocratic or master-minded administrator", writes Mukerji, is today becoming more and more obsolete. In an age of democracy, he is to work with the people and for the people."²

The foregoing statements reveal that the old system of secondary school inspection, established over one hundred years ago, needs to undergo suitable changes in view of the new conditions in India. Hence, a serious study is needed to evaluate and appraise the present school inspection system in India.

¹Report of the Secondary Education Commission, (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1953), pp.183-189.

²S.N.Mukerji, Secondary School Administration: Its Principles and Functions, (Baroda: Acharya Book Depot, 1963) p.52

This thesis attempts to make a critical inquiry into the secondary school inspection system in the Indian Union and to offer some suggestions for its improvement. It is strange that school inspection has not received the attention it deserves. So far, there is hardly any comprehensive volume published on the subject. The books written on the subject of Indian Educational Administration give a very cursory account of school inspection and hardly offer any opinions and observations of the authors. Very few theses or dissertations are devoted to the study of this subject as the list prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training indicates.³ The paucity of the literature in this area adds to the need and significance of the present investigation.

The Purpose, Scope and Limitations of the Study

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate critically the growth of the inspection system of secondary schools in different States in

³National Council of Educational Research and Training. Educational Investigations in Indian Universities (1939-1961), New Delhi, 1963.

India and to suggest both the direction and foundation of its reorientation or even reconstruction. To state more specifically, the objectives of this thesis are :

1. To examine critically the evolution of the inspection system of the secondary schools in India ;
2. To discover the strength of the system which could either be retained in the present form or reshaped in keeping with the growing and varied needs of the fast developing secondary schools in India ;
3. To diagnose the shortcomings of the present inspecting system with a view to eliminating them or improving upon them ;
4. To examine critically the present methods and procedures of inspection and to suggest reform thereon, so that the educative aspects of school inspection can be better brought out ;
5. To make suggestions for the needed reorganisation of the administrative machinery of school inspection;
6. To indicate ways and means to remove or lessen the present inadequacy of the inspecting staff; and

7. To indicate the vital relations between the enlightened, progressive, democratic and dynamic State Inspectorate of Schools and the reconstruction of secondary education in India.

The approach and method of research employed in the present study as well as in collection, selection and organisation of the data for the study are geared to the objectives of the research study outlined above. It is, however, necessary to state the limitations of this study. It excludes the inspection system of the Union territories and Nagaland. It does not deal with any problem related to girls' school inspection. It is also necessary to state that there is little place for much theory, nor does the investigator aim at making a detailed statistical study, although here and there figures for general understanding do appear in the study. In brief, the scope of the thesis is very simple -- to examine critically the present inspection system in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the prevailing inspection system in the country as it has evolved on the whole during the

last century and to suggest the necessary changes for improving it in order that it fulfils the role expected of it in independent India.

Procedure of the Study

The investigator used the following procedures for studying the problem:

1. He studied Government Reports, Records and other related literature on the subject; and
2. He obtained the view-points of experts and official workers in the field of secondary education of this country through interviews and questionnaires.

Five kinds of questionnaires on the subject for the collection of data were prepared and sent to the following:

1. Directors of Education in charge of the Departments of Education in States;
2. Inspectors of schools;
3. Headmasters of secondary schools;
4. Secondary school teachers; and
5. Distinguished Educationists.

These five kinds of questionnaires comprised a variety of questions on such aspects as the aim and objectives of secondary school inspection, methods and

procedures of school inspection, organisation of inspection, relationship between the school authorities and the inspectors, the headmasters and the inspectors; the school staff and the inspectors, the community and the inspectors, qualifications and appointment of inspectors and their duties and functions. The section on the miscellaneous included, among other questions, queries about defects of the inspection system as well as the suggestions for its improvement.

The questionnaire addressed to the Directors of Education was accompanied by a forwarding letter of the Dean of the Faculty, M.S. University of Baroda. All Directors of Education were sent the questionnaire; some of them were sent it again as a reminder. Some of the Directors responded favourably; others did not send their replies. Ten districts in each State were chosen for the purpose of sending questionnaires to the District Educational Inspectors of Schools. It is most distressing to note that the majority of inspectors ignored the questionnaire and did not respond. A few inspectors rejected the questionnaire

by sending it back, stating that it should be sent through the Director of Education. Thirty headmasters were selected for the questionnaires to be sent; and they took great pains in their replies to the questionnaire. Thirty teachers were sent a copy of the questionnaire each; some of the teachers' replies were found to be very useful. Questionnaires were sent to a few distinguished educationists also.

Some respondents attempted only a few questions and others took considerable pains not only to send their replies adequately, but also to write a letter expressing their good wishes and readiness for further help and co-operation. The replies to the questionnaires thus received from various places were organised and analysed for the purpose of incorporating them with advantage in the thesis.

Some educationists and District Educational Officers were personally approached by the investigator to be acquainted with their thinking on the strengths and weaknesses of school inspection in India and how school inspection could be repatterned so as to bring it into line with the progressive

practices in the field in other countries of the world and so as to tune it to the new role and task of the secondary schools in India.

Organisation of the Study

The thesis comprises Chapters one to six. The first Chapter deals with the historical evolution of the inspection system of secondary schools in India. It begins with an account of how the school inspection system was established in India and traces its historical evolution until 1947. The selection of extracts and references from official reports and government documents have been so made that this chapter gives with clarity the picture of the development of the school inspectorate in the provinces in British India. Chapter two continues the background of the inspection system in free India (1947 - 1964). It gives an account of the inspection system of each state. From 1949 to 1959 the merging of princely states and re-organisation of Indian states continued with the result that changes in the state inspectorates in respect of the designations, jurisdiction, duties and functions

etc. of the inspecting officers also continued. Among the other important changes in the system of school inspection in free India, this chapter reveals two significant trends : the organisation of inspectorates at the district level in most states; and the appointment of specialist inspectors in some states.

Chapter three gives an appraisal of the existing system of secondary school inspection in India. This appraisal is mainly based on the evidence collected through questionnaires and interviews together with the writer's own comments. The analysis of the views expressed in replies to questionnaires and interviews reveals that the system needs to be reoriented.

This is followed by chapters four and five which deal in full details with the major problems: Organisation and Administration of Secondary School Inspectorates, and the Methods and Procedures of Inspection. Chapter four discusses the need for the inspecting staff of a high calibre for a new democratic set up in the country after her independence. The changes proposed in the organisational and administrative structure of the inspectorate call for a

great effort to build up the general morale of those officers who run the administrative machinery, and show the need for strengthening state inspectorates. For this, several possibilities have been examined and some practical suggestions made. The chapter concludes with the presentation of a comprehensive suggestion for the selection and training of the inspecting officers after elucidating why there is the need for far reaching changes in the present method of selection of inspecting officers and in their emoluments. Chapter five places emphasis on a new approach to school inspection, which makes the inspector a collaborator and not an examiner; then he must have new techniques of school inspection; these are fully discussed. Finally the chapter breaks a new ground by suggesting consideration for the introduction of an evaluation of secondary schools with the help of evaluative criteria. This has been discussed in considerable detail. In chapter six (conclusions) an attempt has been made to present a new outlook in the inspection system of secondary schools in India.

The bibliography, copies of the questionnaires, their sample answers and a model of a full inspection report are included in the appendices.