



Report of the State and Progress of Education in the Central Provinces and Berar

For the quinquennium ending 31st March 1927

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No. 487.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

(MINISTRY OF EDUCATION).

Nagpur, the 10th March 1928.

READ—

The Quinquennial Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the State and Progress of Education in the Central Provinces and Berar for the period ending the 31st March 1927.

RESOLUTION.

The Report of the Director of Public Instruction summarizes the work of the Education Department during the years 1922—27. These years coincide approximately with the period during which, as a result of the Reforms, Education has been a transferred subject. In the circumstances it was natural that the work of the Department should have been subjected to a steady scrutiny both in the Legislative Council and the public press. Public opinion has been voiced also on various important committees and in informal conferences. Government notes with satisfaction, therefore, that the Director's review of the work accomplished during the last five years shews a steady expansion and improvement, especially in the higher stages of education, and that in spite of disappointment at the slow progress in primary education, especially the primary education of girls, the general tone of the Report is one of determined effort and robust optimism for the future.

2. The number of institutions has increased by 8·6 per cent from 4,991 to 5,422 and the number of pupils under instruction by 19·8 per cent from 333,303 to 399,289. The increase, however, has to be discounted to some extent because the previous quinquennium witnessed a decline of 5·1 per cent, or 17,867, in the

number of students. The increase, both in the number of institutions and of pupils, though general, has been most marked in collegiate and secondary education and most disappointing in primary education. The number of colleges has increased by 14·3 per cent and the number of college students by 88·8 per cent. Secondary education shews an increase of 5·3 per cent in the number of institutions and 43·3 per cent in the number of pupils. The number of primary schools increased by 4·8 per cent and the number of pupils in the primary stage by 11·7 per cent. A similar phenomenon is seen in the education for girls, the percentage of increase being 12·4 in the number of girls' high schools and 92·6 in the number of pupils therein, as compared with an increase of 2·5 per cent in the number of primary schools for girls and of 14·5 per cent in the number of girls' primary school pupils.

3. The total expenditure on public instruction increased by 39·8 per cent from 81·27 lakhs to 113·64 lakhs. Towards this expenditure Government has contributed 63 per cent, District Councils 11·9 per cent and Municipalities 6·5 per cent, whilst the remaining 18·5 per cent has been derived from fees and other sources. The major portion of the increase of nearly 32·37 lakhs in the total expenditure is attributed to measures for the improvement of education and to the fact that the greatest development has taken place in the collegiate and secondary stages of education. The Report mentions, among the factors which contributed to this increase, such important measures as the construction of buildings for King Edward College, Amraoti, and the new Victoria College of Science, Nagpur, contributions to Nagpur University, special large grants to local authorities for vernacular school buildings, the creation of new assistant professorships, and of teacherships for the opening of additional sections in Government and aided schools, increased grants to Municipalities and private bodies, the opening of classes for optional English in vernacular middle schools and developments in primary education. All these bear witness to the activity of the Department and will, Government trusts, find their justification in the extension of education which it has been the aim of the Department to produce.

4. During the period under review several important measures have been carried out which will have far-reaching effects on the future development of education in the Province. Nagpur University has been established. Collegiate education has been developed and improved by the establishment of the University College of Law, by the opening of King Edward College, Amraoti, and by additions to the college staffs generally. Further improvements are indicated by the construction, on approved modern lines, of new and extensive buildings for the Victoria College of Science and by the recent opening of a hostel for the students of that college.

5. In school education the outstanding events have been the creation of the High School Education Board, the revision of the syllabus for primary, middle and high schools, the introduction of the vernaculars as a medium of instruction and the introduction of optional English in some vernacular middle schools. The two latter measures have given rise to certain difficulties. These have been adequately and judiciously reviewed in the Report. It is yet too early to make a definite pronouncement on either subject. With regard to the medium of instruction Government recognizes the reasonable nature of the claims which have been put forward that as far as possible instruction should be given through the pupils' own mother-tongue and has framed its policy accordingly. Instruction in all Government Secondary Schools is now given through the vernacular which is the Court language of the district in which the school is situated. It has been found necessary, however, to maintain some English medium sections in those high schools where the classes contain more than one section, in order to meet the needs of minority communities. Certain administrative and instructional difficulties have resulted from the change of medium but these are being overcome. Government views with concern, however, the fact that "in places where the vernacular is most popular and successful, the standard of English has deteriorated" as shown by examination results. This is a matter which deserves serious attention. For while it is desirable that children should be educated in their own national language and literature, in the existing

conditions in India it is equally desirable that the standard of English should be maintained. Government trusts that as education in the vernaculars develops, this side of the question will be kept in view. Meanwhile, since the period covered by the Report, assistant professorships of Hindi and Marathi have been created in order to improve the standard of the chief vernaculars of the Province. The introduction of optional English has produced conditions which, as indicated in the Report, may result in the vernacular middle schools competing with the Anglo-Vernacular middle schools as the ordinary means of entering the high schools. For the reasons given in the Report Government views this possibility with misgiving. For inadequate instruction in the vernacular middle schools would undoubtedly result in a gradual lowering of standards in the middle and high schools and re-act on education as a whole. On the other hand, the Report indicates that one beneficial result of the introduction of optional English is that it has induced members of the agricultural classes to keep their sons at school beyond the primary stage. This is all to the good. Meanwhile the movement needs careful and sympathetic guidance. To this Government is devoting its attention and has already appointed a Committee to examine and report on the effects of the introduction in the schools maintained by Local Bodies in Berar.

6. The new powers and responsibilities with regard to vernacular education which have been given to Local Authorities by the Local Self-Government Acts and the growing interest which Local Authorities have shown in vernacular education have been adequately dealt with in the Report. This interest has received the sympathetic help of Government. Large grants-in-aid have been distributed to Local Authorities, especially in Berar, for the improvement of vernacular school buildings. In certain districts Government Deputy Inspectors have been transferred, as an experimental measure, to the services of District Councils to enable the latter more adequately to carry out the duties and responsibilities which they have acquired through the Local Self-Government Act. The period during which the experiment was to operate has been extended from time to time. Difficulties connected with the transfer are indicated

in the Director's Report. These are receiving the careful consideration of Government with a view to determining whether the experiment should be continued or some more suitable method devised to enable both Government and the District Councils to carry out their respective duties in connection with education. Meanwhile the progress made in primary education has on the whole been disappointingly slow. The number of primary schools and of primary school pupils has increased. But the number of boys in the primary classes represents only 4·5 per cent of the total male population and of these only 6·7 per cent passed the primary examination in 1926-27. Many of these boys are said to lapse into illiteracy, but Government agrees with the Director that it is possible to exaggerate the extent to which this is general. But that it does occur to a substantial degree can scarcely be denied and Government is considering the possibility of combating it by instituting village libraries. This is a form of social work which Government trusts will appeal also to public-spirited individuals.

7. Legislation has been passed to enable Local Authorities to introduce schemes of compulsory primary education in certain defined areas within their jurisdiction. Several schemes have already been introduced. The idea of compulsion is new and progress has naturally been slow. But Government notes with pleasure that there are indications that the demand for compulsion is likely to increase in the near future. Several new schemes have been sanctioned since the period covered by the Director's Report and several others are under consideration. Government desires to reiterate the view it has already expressed that in the progressive application of compulsion lies the best hope for future progress. With this end in view, an officer has been placed on special duty to advise the larger Municipalities in the preparation of new schemes. But compulsion to be effective must be enforced in fact as well as in name. Government has recently introduced a Bill before the Legislative Council which enables it to compel local authorities to introduce compulsion in specified areas.

8. Equally important, perhaps, at the present stage, is the necessity to create in the minds of the villagers

a desire for primary education and Government trusts that public-spirited workers will help to create this desire. For it cannot be too strongly emphasized that a sound primary education is the foundation of all progress. The difficulty is largely financial, and the increase in the expenditure on this stage of boys' education from Rs. 24,64,778 to Rs. 28,53,948 is altogether inadequate to enable a big advance to be made. Government proposes to hold an enquiry into the financial position of Local Authorities in order to devise a more satisfactory system of awarding grants-in-aid of vernacular education, with a view to paving the way to further developments.

9. The education of girls has received the careful attention of Government and a Committee has been appointed to examine the present position and to suggest means for expansion and improvement. The report of the Committee, as well as the account given in the quinquennial report, indicates that, although a certain amount of progress has been made in the cause of girls' education, the progress has been both slight and slow. The demand for girls' education is at present almost inappreciable, especially among the agricultural classes. Government regards the present position with anything but complacency and trusts that an earnest endeavour will be made by the more advanced sections of the community to create a demand for girls' education. For there can be little doubt that if the masses of the people really want education for their girls, they will get it.

10. The training of teachers, for both boys' and girls' schools of all grades, has received special attention during the period under review. The number of trained certificated teachers has been steadily and appreciably increased.

11. Efforts have been made to improve technical education along the lines recommended by the Vocational Training Committee of 1922, particularly by the institution of scholarships for extra-provincial study in India and for study abroad. Manual training has been developed. Physical training and hygiene have received attention and a Superintendent of Physical Training has

recently been recruited from America with a view to carrying into effect the recommendations of the Physical and Military Training Committee which was appointed in 1925.

12. During the quinquennium the grant-in-aid to European schools has been reduced from one-half to one-third in order to place these schools on the same basis as Indian schools. As a result Government grants fell from Rs. 97,225 in 1921-22 to Rs. 74,845 in 1926-27. It is satisfactory to record that in spite of this considerable decrease the efficiency of the schools has been maintained and that the total expenditure in the schools has actually increased during the quinquennium.

13. Government notes with pleasure the decided advance which has been made in all stages of Muhammadan education and trusts that this is but the prelude to further progress.

14. The education of the Depressed Classes has received special attention during the quinquennium. The principle of the equal rights of all castes to education has been emphasized and maintained. In accordance with the recommendations of the Depressed Classes Committee, Government has given grants-in-aid equal to one-half of the approved expenditure on hostels for students of these classes and has increased the number and value of high and middle scholarships for Depressed Classes pupils. Government notes with satisfaction that the Depressed Classes are taking advantage of these opportunities. This and the gradual breaking down of prejudice, which is noticed in the Report, is a hopeful sign for their gradual uplift and for the development among them of a spirit of self-reliance and self-help.

15. Attention has been drawn in the Report to the cessation of recruitment, both of Europeans and of Indians, to the Indian Educational Service, and to the gradual disappearance of the European element in the Service. These are matters which deserve the attention of all who are interested in the education of the Province. The important bearing of education on the development of the Province and the necessity for its extension, rendered mor-

pressing by the rapid growth of political life and the urgent need for the more general education of the electorate, makes it imperative that efforts should be made to recruit highly qualified Indians for the Department. Government has for some time had under consideration the re-organization of the Educational Services as a result of the Lee Commission's proposals, and contemplates creating scholarships to enable Indian students of ability to prosecute their studies abroad so that they may take advantage of the best training available in their particular department of study. Government hopes that if this is done some of the students who secure such scholarships for study abroad will be willing to return to the re-organized Educational Services of the Province and so make their knowledge available to the younger generation.

16. Finally, Government desires to record its appreciation of the work done by the Education Department as a whole, by the various officials and non-officials who have been mentioned in the Director's Report and, in particular, by Messrs. Mayhew, Jones and Beckett who have acted as Directors of Public Instruction during the period under review. By the premature retirement of Mr. Mayhew the Department lost the services of an able and enthusiastic educationalist.

By order of the Government
(Ministry of Education),

R. H. BECKETT,

*Offg. Secretary to Government,
Central Provinces.*

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