CHAPTER III

Educational Reforms during the Perestroika in the USSR

Perestroika was the period of interregnum between the state controlled Soviet education system and the education system of democratic Russian Federation. This is the period in which a new education system was attempted to be introduced in the Russian Federation. This was a milestone in the new reform efforts initiated by the state having long lasting impact. The Perestroika was a period of new discussions, debates and experimentations. In fact, a process of some educational reform was already attempted in USSR even before the introduction of Perestroika - that is in 1985. Subsequently the first education draft was brought out on educational reform named “Draft of Education Reform 1984”. Though this draft covers the reform of education system in every stages and discipline, it basically deals with the school education. It was the result of the crisis emerged in initial vocational education in the 1980s which created enormous labour shortage.

The extension of the complete secondary education from 10 years to 11 years and some relaxation in state control over school administration, were some of the key proposals in the educational draft of 1984. One of the major characteristics of the reform was that it covers near about every sphere of education system viz, the general secondary school education and the vocational education. This was one of the reasons that the educationists like Cohen state that Gorbachev has not brought a fundamental change in the education system; instead, he tried only to improve the existing Soviet education as everywhere he insisted to have followed communist ideology more vigorously and a respect of the fatherland and labor.

However, some other educationist felt that Gorbechev’s reform proposals like weakening central control over the school education and autonomy of higher education institutions in the matter of finance and educational administration and courses to be taught would eventually lead towards a capitalist mode of education. The major issues discussed in this chapter are the general debates related to the reform, the introduction of computer education, the civic and law education, the debate between religious vs atheistic education and the outcome of educational reform during Perestroika.
In 1984, two years after Brezhnev's death, new reforms of general and vocational education were instituted. Teachers' salaries, which had been lower than other professional incomes, were raised. The minimum age of entry of children in the primary school was lowered from seven to six years. It thus extended the complete course of general-secondary schooling from 10 to 11 years. Vocational training in the upper grades of the general school was reinforced by including computer literacy in general schools. The main emphasis, however, was placed on the development of a new integrated secondary vocational-technical education that would overcome the traditional barriers between general and vocational education.

The 1984 reform of Soviet education was surpassed by the course of economic and structural reforms (perestroika) in 1986 under the leadership of Mikhail S. Gorbachev. In February 1988, some earlier reforms were revoked, including the compulsory vocational training in the general school and the plans to create the integrated secondary school. Universal youth education was limited to a nine-year program of "basic education," with subsequent secondary education divided into various academic and vocational tracks.

The newly established State Committee of Public Education has incorporated the three formerly independent administration systems for general schooling, vocational training and higher education. Even more important was the rise of an educational reform movement led by educationists who favoured an "education of cooperation" (pedagogika sotrudnichestva) over the authoritarian principles of collective education that originated in the Stalin period. These theorists advocated individualizing the learning process, emphasizing creativity, making teaching programs and curricula more flexible, encouraging teacher and student participation and introducing varying degrees of self-government in schools and universities as a part of the proclaimed "democratization" of Soviet society. Some of the proposals were approved by the State Committee; for example, the universities and other institutions of higher learning were granted some autonomy. Other proposals were tested by teachers in experimental groups.

Reform programs in that period mainly called for new curricula, textbooks and teaching methods. The chief aim of those programs was to create a "new school" that would better equip Soviet citizens to deal with the modern, technologically advanced nation
that Soviet leaders foresaw in the future. Though the Soviet education system was good enough, its drawbacks became particularly noticeable after the introduction of Perestroika (the openness) such as the facilities were inadequate; overcrowding was common with a short supply of materials and equipments. The schools and universities had failed to supply adequate skilled labor to almost every sectors of the economy and overgrown bureaucracy gradually slashed down the budget allocation for education every year. At the same time, young Russians became increasingly cynical about the Marxist-Leninist philosophy which they were forced to absorb, as well as suppression of self-expression and individual responsibility. In the last years of the Soviet Union, funding was inadequate for the large-scale establishment of “new schools,” and requirements of ideological purity continued to overpower the new pedagogical creativity which was officially declared (Glenn E. Curtis, ed; 1996).

Basic Direction of the Reform:

The education reform in the Russian federation denied socialism, and started to build a new education system in accordance with a goal of constructing a Western-European-style market economy and democratic society. The reform aimed to take into account the needs of individuals and groups though decentralization, deregulation and specialization. Each of these dimensions is here commented upon.

Concerning decentralization of educational administration, during the Soviet regime education had been regulated by laws and decrees which operated in a hierarchy with the Republic at the top and the Oblast (state), Krai (County), ‘Gorod (City), Raion (District) and Okrug (Ward) at successively lower levels. Local governments’ were expected to implement the education policies set at higher levels and to adhere to the standards determined by the Soviet governments with appropriate adaptation to local conditions. However, since the local governments were closely connected with local communist organizations headed by the Soviet Communist Party and faithfully obeying the education policy formed by the Soviet government and Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party; they could not provide local residents with education which met their needs and local circumstances. Such rigid and uniform education was criticized under new reforms initiated as part of perestroika and the movement to secure local competence was strengthened. This direction was maintained in the Russian
Federation after the collapse of the USSR. It aimed to establish local autonomy in education in the new administrative structure of the Federation and its component parts.

A major criticism is that during seven decades of the Soviet period, Russian education became overburdened with ideology; no discussion was possible about general human values that might surpass class boundaries. In the wake of perestroika, there was an extreme counter-reaction against everything connected with Soviet education. Some educationists and teachers felt that the entire educational system is in ruin. In their view, commercialization of all spheres of life had increased many problems including the growth of criminality. Teachers were vague about what values should be inculcated in schools, and the value of education itself was called into question in a society where it is becoming increasingly difficult to make an honest living. Some of the Russian educationist welcomed the move towards an educational system based on choice rather than coercion, but they believe that it will take many years to develop a new set of values that could be inculcated in Russian schools.

Accordingly, a far-reaching and long lasting response to socio-economic challenges in education was demanded by the post-Brezhnev Soviet political leadership. In the summer of 1984, Oscar Anweiler (1984) wrote that the year following the June 1983 plenum of the central Committee of the Communist party, at which the new educational reform was formally announced, had been one ‘critical balance’ that marked the end of the Brezhnev era and the beginning of the new era (Anweiler; 1984; 851).

Since 1983, the Soviet education system has been mobilized and made a highly visible component of the impressive efforts by the new government to shore up the sagging national economy and to solve serious social problems. Education has been brought into place for general socio-economic reform with specific tasks to fulfill (Szekely; 30; 32). Besides Perestroika – basically a set of mobilizing strategies aimed at resolving contradictions including educational reforms, he also advocated for 'Glasnost' (openness). This chapter will help to understand the relationship between Perestroika, Glasnost and educational reforms. Among the various dimensions of educational reform during the 1990s in the Russian Federation, many were rooted in the process of perestroika of policy under the governance of Gorbachev.

Restructuring in education was developed from the concept of accelerated socio-economic development (uskorenie), which called for the all round development of
scientific and technical progress, with the aim of creating a new qualitative aim of Soviet Society endorsed on the 27th Party Congress. Gorbachev concedes the analysis which leads to Perestroika, long before the April 1985 Plenary Meeting (Gorbachev; 1987; 37). According to Gorbachev the objective of uskorenie (accelerated socio-economic development) would take time in reconstruction and openness. He was aware of the requirement of a different type of Soviet person and a different type of educational system, both of which would have to become more participatory rather than authoritarian. Accordingly, Gorbachev's first priority was the restructuring of the 'Nomentklatura' though the purge of ineffective politburo members. During most of 1985, the term 'Glasnost' was unused primarily in this context, that is, to corrupt and wasteful leadership (Goldman, Marshall, J; 1991; 48).

Gorbachev's objective was to provoke a closer integration of education with the requirements of the economy. He and his supporters openly criticized the education establishment for its failure to develop provisions of the 1984 reforms, which concerned primary and secondary education. The reason to bring these reforms of 1984 lies in the fact of labour shortages during the 1960's and 1970's which created pressure for a large percentage of secondary education graduates to pursue vocational carriers rather than seek post secondary education opportunities (Kerr; SEER; 1982; 12).

By the beginning of the period of reform (1985) soviet higher education was characterized by an orientation toward the training of specialists for the military-industrial complex, feminization of the student body and politicization and ideologization of the entire educational process. Some educationist felt that the beginning of Perestroika resulted in a 'massive brain drain' as a no less than 400000 highly educated people left the country taking advantage of the openness (krukhmaleva et al. 2000). The new political course announced in the mid-1980s had a great impact on higher education. The main idea underlying the reforms was the principle of democratization of the forms and content of education. This was one of the reasons that the reforms continued even after the downfall of the USSR (Smolentseva; 2003; 397-11).

In 1990, just before the collapse of the USSR, education and training in the Soviet Union was a massive exercise involving over 100 million individuals. The voluntary training system which operated outside the government education sector involved some
43.5 million workers and professionals engaged in retraining or upgrading their qualifications and skills. The current fate of adult education in Russia is tied up with the vast and unprecedented political, economic and social transformation between 1985 and 1996 which began with Gorbachev’s radical policy of glasnost and perestroika. Following the December 1991 break-up of the USSR, the entire Soviet education system had to be restructured (Zajda, 1994, 190).

1) Introduction of Civics Education during Perestroika

One of the remarkable developments during Perestroika was the introduction of Civics Education as the current socio-economic demand of the country was to prepare a new type of citizen who is well aware of the democratic values and the market economy. According to Vaillant Janet (1997), the ideas about civics education in Russia have changed considerably since the early days of perestroika. Most Russian educators have broadened as they consider necessary for young Russians to learn in order to become effective citizens of a law-abiding democratic society which was not possible before Perestroika. In the late 1980s, civics education was defined narrowly as teaching about political ideals and institutions. Academic information about government and legal institutions were still considered important and indispensable, but educators were increasingly focusing on a functional approach, defining civics education as all those school activities that prepare future citizens. They are developing new concepts and ideas that fit with the particular experience and needs of Russia today.

The era of perestroika shattered Soviet society and shook the Soviet school. Once Marxist-Leninist ideology had been discredited, schools had little choice but to dismantle their out-dated ideologically-based moral and historical education. They could no longer indoctrinate their students and the very term "vospitanie" became a matter of discussion. The education ministry called for a new type of humanitarian education that would prepare citizens to live in a democratic and law-governed society. New content for old courses like History became the order of the day. New subjects were introduced in the curriculum to prepare students to live in a normal, democratic and prosperous country.
2) The First Phase of Reform about Civic Education:

In 1988, the chairman of the Soviet State Committee on Education proposed a complete revision of the curriculum of the disciplines, social studies and history in order to carry out what was then called the "humanization and democratization" of education. The new course for high school was to be an interdisciplinary social studies course for classes 8 - 11 called "Mankind and Society." It was to include material from many disciplines, including history, economics, law, and political science as well as philosophy, individual psychology and ethics. It continued the Soviet tradition of linking teaching about values, now called "universal human values," together with the social studies, but presumably now without indoctrination. (Vaillant Janet; 2007; 6-7)

The government plan was for civics education to take place in one of two courses for Class 9 from which schools can choose "Civics" (grazhdanovedenie) or "Politics and the Law." It had been proposed that both of these courses are to be introduced for younger children as well. These curriculum innovations, proposed first by the Soviet ministry, were confirmed by the central education ministry of the Russian Federation after the break-up of the old USSR in the early 1990s. Yeltsin himself supported the idea that the schools should teach about the constitution, and the Russian ministry of education offered decrees requiring schools courses on civics (grazhdanovedenie).

Ten years later, by 1998, despite the enormous material difficulties that confront the education sector, despite debate about whether free education accessible to all should be available through grade 11, or only through grade 9, despite continuing political battles over what precisely new texts should contain. The new texts contained the courses about civics, Law and the constitution of Russian Federation.

The education press, particularly newspapers such as the "Uchitel'skaya Gazeta" (The Teachers' Gazette) and the "Pervoe sentiabria" (The First of September) and their specialized supplements on civics, as well as journals such as the "Prepodavanie Istorii v shkole" (Teaching History in School) and the relatively new the "Obshchestvoznanie v shkole" (Social Studies in School) have played an important role in distributing new ideas and materials, compensating in part for a shortfall in textbook production and schools' inability to purchase the books. Besides this, the regions, localities and schools have some choice about what to teach in schools regarding civics education seeing
socio-economic needs and the geographical distribution of the locality. Career guidance was provided to the students for the jobs needed in labour market. To achieve these goals, each school was to be linked to a base enterprise such as a firm, a laboratory, a factory or a farm to provide training to the students after graduation. The 1984 reform also made an attempt to improve the status of teachers by increasing their salaries. In addition, students were to start first grade of age 6 instead of age 7, schools were to be equipped with audio-visual equipment. Ideological education was to be improved with an expectation of regenerating some enthusiasm among students and teachers as part of the curriculum that has typically been tolerated at best (Kerr; 1989; 17; 1; 1).

3) The Gender Aspect of Educational Reformation:

In Russia, women reached educational parity or better with men during the post-War era during the 1970s (Blossfeld and Shavit; 1993; 1-23). Another noteworthy finding pertains to gender: Russian women have gained on Russian men with respect to most post-secondary transitions. Their initial advantages in reaching eligibility for post-secondary schooling and gaining access to specialized postsecondary education has increased. Overall, women reached parity with men with respect to the overall probability of attaining a university degree in the early 1970s. Then, a reverse gender gap prevailed from the early 1980s through the end of the Soviet period. In Russia there has been substantial “vertical” gender stratification at the postsecondary level (Charles and Bradley; 2002; 573-99). Thus women have gained the upper hand in the post-War Russia. This must be balanced against persistent gender-based horizontal stratification at the university level as women are concentrated in specialties and forms of university-level study that bring lower returns on the labor market (Gerber and Schaefer; 2003).

The officially declared war on alcoholism aimed at lowering the national divorce rate, raising the birth rate and using secondary education to make the soviet population computer literate were the other steps of reform during the Perestroika. In the Khrushchev era, the drop in the birthrate was caused by the disastrous effects of the Soviet mortality rate due to the World War II on the size of the population. Beside the effects of the increasingly urbanized life-style of the soviet nuclear family of a single child Soviet schools rolls fell by close to 10 percent between 1970 and 1980. The Khrushchev educational reform was dismantled quickly. Although there are signs of a slight recovery in the Soviet birth rate, the prevailing choice of small families has
proved difficult to change, despite pro-nationalist policies of the government (Szekely; 1986; 322).

During the Khrshchev years, under the new educational reform, Soviet education was asked to train the national resource of youth for work through labour training programs after secondary education. Sharing this economic motivation the day care provision for the children of working mothers was extended. In January 1984, one month before Jurie Andropov, the first of the three new general secretaries of the communist party of the Soviet Union died and a set of draft of 'Fundamental directions of the General and Vocational School Reform' was published (Pravda and Izvestia; January 4; 1984).

The school reform chairmanship was passed to Gorbachev who, during his short 13 month tenure of Chemenko as General Secretary was to devote much attention to the adoption of the educational reform while laying the groundwork for his own assumption of power. Following three month of broad public discussion in the early months of 1984, which was engineered through the party's propaganda organs to mobilize public support, a final set of 'Fundamental Directions' was adopted in 2 April, 1984 into Chemenko's tenure (SESB; April-May 1985; 27; 6-7).

The following reforms were proposed in the 1984 school reform by Gorbachev in general and vocational secondary education as mentioned in the current Digest of the Soviet Press (Current Digest of Soviet Press; 1984; xxxvi; 13):

- Improving the quality of education and upbringing; ensuring a higher scientific level in the teaching of every subject, improvement of ideological, political, labour and moral upbringing and aesthetic and physical development; improving curricula, syllabi, textbooks, teaching aids and methods of instruction and upbringing;

- Improving the organization of labour upbringing, instruction and vocational guidance in the general-education school; strengthening the polytechnical and practical orientation of teaching; expanding the training of skilled workers in the system of vocational-technical education;

- Increasing the responsibility of the pupils for the quality of their studies and for the observance of educational and labour discipline, and enhancing their public activeness on the basis of the development of self government in
pupil's collectives; and
Improving the structure of the general-education and vocational schools and
the administration of public education.

4) The Structure of the General Secondary and Vocational Education in the
1984 Guidelines of the School Reform:

It is proposed to establish the following structure of general secondary and vocational
education:

- Elementary school-grades one to four; incomplete secondary school-grades 10
  through 11 of the general-education school; the secondary vocational-technical
  schools; and the specialized secondary educational institutions;

- The secondary general school was proposed to 11 year school in place of 9 year
  schooling. It is proposed to begin the instruction of children in school one-year
  earlier at the age of six.

- The number and proportion of ninth-grade graduates who enter secondary
  vocational-technical schools, in the long run, increase approximately by 50%.

Labour training in grades 10 and 11 will be combined with the mastery of common
occupation required for material production and the non production sphere and
secondary vocational-technical schools will specialize in the training of highly skilled
workers for appropriate branches of national economy; these schools will be set up
under the auspices of production association, enterprises, construction projects, state
farms, and collective farms etc. An important role in the training of young people
belongs to the specialized secondary institutions for the primary units of production,
education, public health and culture etc. For young workers without a secondary
education, the evening and correspondence schools, in which they can obtain a general
secondary education without leaving their job, will be retrained and the social base of
the formation of higher school contingents will be broadened, and young people will
take a more responsible and more conscientious attitude toward obtaining a higher
education.
5) Improving the Quality of the Instructional and Upbringing Process:

The reform set forth the basic concepts and leading ideas of the school disciplines as clearly as possible, and to ensure the necessary reflection in them of new achievements of science and practice; and arm pupils with knowledge and skills in the use of modern computer equipment, and ensure the wide-ranging use of computers in the educational process, and to set up special school and inter school study.

The reform determine the optimal amount of knowledge and skills that pupils must master for each subjects and grade; and to make fuller use of the great possibilities of the system of vocational-technical education to improve the quality of the training of workers and improve the forms, methods and means of instruction the classroom lesson, lectures, seminars and discussions (Current Digest of Soviet Press; xxxvi; 1; 1984; 5).

Beside the reformation in every sphere of education pupils were emphasized to know the Marxist-Leninist worldview for the form communist upbringing. It is important that the teaching of both social sciences and natural sciences disciplines, cultivate in pupils staunch materialist ideas, atheistic views, the ability to correctly, explain natural and social phenomena. It also propagates the ideas of communism in lessons in history, social studies, literature and other subjects and in ideological political upbringing, overriding importance must be given to the moulding of class conscious citizens with firm communist conviction. All elements of the instructional and upbringing process and the school's entire public life should work to this end.

The reform emphasized to rear young people about the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and the examples drawn from the lives and activities of Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin and the historical experience of CPSU. The draft also states that moral and legal upbringing is extremely important in the moulding of new man as Lenin stressed, “The whole point of upbringing, education and teaching of today's young people, “must be to install communist morality in them”(Lenin; XLI; 309). The draft of 1984 school reforms and the subsequent reform during Perestroika does not advocate against communist ethos and morality rather it enhance it and whatever reform it proposed was within the sphere of communism and Soviet laws.
The significant improvement of art education and aesthetic upbringing for pupils is a highly important task. It also create instructional and upbringing complexes that combine general education with musical, artistic and physical development. Education institutional houses like young pioneers, clubs and palaces of culture should regulate the work of performing art groups. The reform also took vital interest in physical education of young generation for military-patriotic upbringing of pupils to provide the service in the ranks of the USSR armed forces and inculcating a sense of pride in them for fatherland.

In the communist upbringing of pupils, a great deal depends on the young people's public organizations and on student self-government. It is necessary to resolutely enhance the prestige of young pioneer organizations and on student self-government. These organizations should be a reliable support for teachers' collectives, in improving the quality of studies, in organizing socially useful labour and the meaningful use of leisure time and in developing pupil's ability to look after them.

A) Labour Upbringing, Training and Vocational Guidance:

In improving the school activity, the party attaches special importance to the fundamental improvement of the preparation of the younger generation for labour. Properly organized labour Vospitanie (upbringing), training of vocational guidance and the direct participation of the school children in socially useful productive labour are indispensable factors in the development of a conscientious attitude towards one's studies, the making of good citizens, the moral and intellectual moulding of the individual and his physical development.

The purpose of labour upbringing and training in the school should be the inculcation of love for labour and respect for working people. It also emphasized the familiarization of pupils with the fundamentals of modern industrial and agricultural production during the process of study and socially useful works and skill. Besides this, it also prepared a comprehensive program regarding various areas and forms of labour training that could be achieved by joint efforts of general schools, vocational technical schools, production collectives and the public (Current Digest of Soviet Press; 1984; xxxvi; 6).
The USSR state Committee on labour and Social problems, the USSR ministry of
education and the USSR state committee for vocational and technical education used to
determine the list of occupations in which the training of pupils in general and
vocational schools were organised. The areas of labour training for school pupils will
be determined by city and district Soviet executive committees taking into account of
the economic requirements. Make the USSR state committee on labour and soviet
questions responsible for the coordination of vocational guidance work. Active
participation in the organisation of the labour training and upbringing of pupil is a very
important duty of production collectives. Every school should have a base enterprise. It
is necessary to develop mentorship using party and labour veterans and front ranking
production workers and to actively draw pupils into the social production life of labour
collectives.

The reform state that the economic upbringing of pupils is carried out in a close
connection with labour training. It is important that they should take part in production
relations and receive socialist ideas of labour and production disciplines. Part of the
money that pupils earn should be put as the disposal of the school collectives, the
school is called upon to mould economic attitude toward public property and nature in
one’s native area, textbooks, school property electricity and personal belongings etc.


One of the main innovations during the educational reform of Perestroika was
introduction of computer in Soviet General Education. In the words of Graham, an
expert of Soviet education system “A popular computer culture has been slow to take
off in Soviet Union in comparison to the United States, Japan and Western Europe”. (L
Graham; 1984; 1-4) During the Soviet period, the computer education was not
encouraged though it was introduced in some handful of educational establishments.
Some observers have argued even those days that Soviet citizens have little use of
computers and therefore little interest in them. The educational experts of Russian
Federation Grahm and Shanor conjectured that Soviet leaders were deeply suspicious
of computers because they perceived them the information revolution as a threat to the
state’s control over information and its uses (Shanor; 1985; 6).

During the reform, Gorbachev’s strong support to the computer education in general
and vocational schools in particular had created much impact in this regard. The
commission on the reform of General and vocational school under the chairmanship of
Chernenko oversaw the introduction of comprehensive reorganization of Soviet
secondary education that school students should attain computer literacy and that
computers should be widely used in teaching process (Pravda; February 2; 1985; 3).

In USSR computers have not always been at the top of the politburo’s priority list. In
the early 1950’s, the subject of cybernetics was considered by Soviet ideologist as a
‘bourgeois false science’ and ‘idealistic obscurantism.’ After Stalin’s death, the subject
was partially rehabilitated since it had enjoyed no previous Soviet existence (Grahm;
1985; 86). Kerr (1987) described certain considerable activity that has characterized
soviet efforts of computerization of educational establishments. Soviet educators and
computer specialists have visited Great Britain, France, Japan and the United
States under a variety of exchange programs. Western and Japanese computer firms have eyed
the soviet school market with interest (The Times; 9 July 1985; 23-24).

Earlier articles by Judge and Commel and by Kerr (1987) described the logic of
developing algorithms in new Soviet courses. They also appreciate the efforts of Soviet
authorities to popularize computer education during Perestroika. In the words of Kerr,
“there is little to exploratory quality that characterizes most American courses of
computer education which enhance a student’s future job.” (Kerr, 1987; 15) While
western enthusiasts extol the value of LOGO as a way to learning logic without being
taught logic explicitly, Soviet students learn logic first without computers and then
apply their learning in a much prescribed way to the use of computers as tools.

Once in place at the end of 1984, the first act of the Gorbachev. Shcherbakoc leadership
to move the reform forward quickly toward implementation was the January 1985
announcement by the Ministry of Education of the plan to introduce a computer
technology course into all senior secondary schools. The new administration took the
‘Fundamental Directions’ a giant step forward and pledged the resources of the
government to make the ‘computerization’ (computerizatsiia) of the Soviet school a
reality. A Politburo meeting held on March 29, 1985 affirmed the goal of teaching the
new course ‘Principles of Information Science and computer Technology’ in the 9th,
10th and 11th grades of general education school and in vocational technical schools
(Uchitelskaya Gazeta; March 30;1985;4).
6) From Atheism to Religious Education:

The soviet state was atheistic from the start. For Marx and Engels, religion was a delusion, a perverted consciousness of the world; only matter was real and societal development was determined by production relations; in the scheme of things there was no place for a divine being. For Lenin, religion was also a dangerous counter attraction. During the late 1920s, school policy moved from non-religious education to anti-religious education. A law of 8 April 1929 reinforced the 1918 decree and forbade religious associations to conduct work among children and young people. On 5 September 1931, the central committee called for full communist upbringing in the soviet school. As the Second World War became the USSR great patriotic war, church state relations had changed as Orthodoxy in particular harnessed itself enthusiastically to the national cause. The atheistic contain of the school syllabi sank to a minimum, and their anti-religious, component vanished altogether (Dunston; 1992; 85).

As early as 1947, the educational press was again stressing that teachers must be an active atheist and 1954 was the start of a new anti religious campaign in the schools. This was reinforced and extended to higher education in 1959 and indeed continued after the ousting of its chief sponsor, Khrushchev, in 1964. For a few years in the early 1960s unedr-18s were even formally banned from church services, though legislation of 1975 was to restore such rights and also permit over-10s to assist in the ritual and to sing in choirs. Experts on atheistic education agreed that approaches should be varied according to the extent of pupils' psychological maturation and the nature of their atheistic or religious experience.

It was argued that vague atheist had to be treated differently from vague believers, and the same technique would not always do with convinced orthodox, inspired by ritual and tradition. Since parents played such a crucial role in the whole matter, a similar careful and differentiated approach was required towards them. There was a clear tendency for teachers to direct their effort, at believing parents, where they were most required; but non believers who did not give their children proper atheistic enlightenment came to be seen to need help. This was an important reason why the inculcation of atheism was regarded as part of continuing adult education.
In the mid-1980s atheistic education was faced with a number of problems. Some were pedagogical, others more generally philosophical. The pedagogical problems were rooted in teachers' perceptions and behavior. Atheism was widely regarded as an arcane subject, inherently difficult to teach, and calls for a highly differentiated approach or set of approaches only made matters worse.

Communism had a lot to say about friendship between comrades and nations, and hatred of its enemies, but the concept of love occurred infrequently in its Lexis. People found religion more human as it provides comfort during the time of crisis which atheism failed to provide. It was argued that if religion had been truly internalized, atheism has no scope in people's life. Atheistic education could scarcely operate within the terms in which religion presented itself even where it was able to overcome its pedagogical problems, its effectiveness remained positively correlated with the extent to which religion was shackled and silenced. This was one of the reasons that in the late 1970s some orthodox churchmen began to urge the party to make common cause with the church in order to halt moral decline and achieve social and economic ideals (Dunston; 1992; 83).

The other milestone in this regard was the draft law and exegesis published experientially in February 1989. This draft reiterated the separation of church and state and of church and school and allowed the religious associations set up their own educational institutions where general subjects should also be imparted along with the religious discourses. By the autumn of 1989, reports and discussion of religious studies in state schools began to appear more frequently when some schools allegedly brought the priest to provide religious education. According to Mikhailova, “Knowledge of religious teachings would also help educators to deal properly with believing parents and children and to understand the local nationality.” (Mikhailova; 1990; 91)

The schools started to provide religious studies in two ways; by inviting the reverend priests and clergy to deliver discourses in the related optional courses and by inviting the guest teachers to teach the religious related optional. One of the most significant changes, which were taking place in 1989, was the changing of Moscow State University's Department of Scientific Atheism from the Department of Social Sciences. According to Merkur'ev, Rector of the then Moscow State University, “In the Faculty of Philosophy, the name of the Department of Scientific Atheism has already changed
of name as well as the syllabi and there would be an obviously re-orientation of the lectures and research in this field. Not only we would provide options in Biblical history, but also we do not rule out the introduction of a course for the whole faculty on the basis of the biblical text.” (Mishin, D. and Grigorev, Ya; in Dunstan; 1992; 95)

7) The Status of Teacher during Perestroika:

There was a considerable increase in the salary of teachers’ as part of reforms which was announced by the education minister Konstantin Chernenko first of all in April 1984 by an overall increase of 35.7 percent for ministry of education employees in the preschool and general education school, 30.4 percent for vocational-technical school teachers, and 29.7 percent for those at secondary specialized institutions to be phased in from 1984 to 1987, despite of the hard pressed Soviet economy(Protchenko; SESB;1;1985; 7). It was a great step of education minister Konstantin Chernenko in order to improve the morale of teachers and for their better performance. He also encouraged teachers to work in remote villages in rural areas, where some 40 percent of Soviet school children live. It was found those 70-80 percent teaching workforces were women due to low pay scale.

Training of Teachers:

By the mid-1980s, it was already clear that serious changes would be required in Russian education not only to meet the social and economic demands during Perestroika, but also simply to keep the educational system itself functioning as a social institution. The quality of teachers and their preparation had declined and the teaching methods alienated students in such an extent that it caused problems to the parents who wants to save their children by the authoritarian and cruel teachers; curriculum, emulated and praised around the world as a model for how to introduce tough subjects like mathematics and the natural sciences, left many less talented students in hopelessness.

School administrators struggled to put in place the system of full access to general education that was mandated by the Central Committee of the CPSU in the late 1970s. In the words of T.S. Carr “neither the administrators nor the teachers had any clear sense of how to do this in a system that had been fairly rigid and segregated among two levels of vocational preparation and a more rigorous academic preparatory track.
Besides this textbooks were outdated and the administrative structure was stultifying and left little room for individual initiative on the parts of teachers or administrators; educational development, evaluation, and research was almost non-existent” (Kerr; 1995).

Perestroika also brought some reformation into the teachers’ education with special methods or unusual approaches that were discovered to work permanently viz, throughout the year and under difficult conditions, and their work was brought to public attention through news media. One of the remarkable movements during the Perestroika was the "Communard movement," a kind of "Communist Protestantism" that placed the needs of children above ideology or conformity, was made the basis of new education system. Some NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) were also working effectively in this field. When Dneprov became Minister of Education for the then-RSFSR in 1990, the values these NGOs expounded became part of official policy.

8) The Social and Family Upbringing of Children and Teenagers during Perestroika:

The draft of education reform also sought the reformation in day schools as it is the proven form of the social upbringing of pupils that create favorable conditions for organizing of the labour and leisure time and subsequently help the family. At the same time, upbringing works in the school after classroom lessons are over were started as it states, “the assistance to the family should be stepped up, and at the same time its responsibility for the upbringing of the rising generation should be increased” (Kerr; 1995).

Parents are called upon to enhance the authority of schools and teachers in every way to instill a spirit of respect and love for work in children. In turn, according to Andropov, ‘children must show concern for their parents and their elders’ honour and respect them, show concern for them; this is the obligation of our country’s young people’. Labour collectives are called upon to constantly keep the upbringing of children their previews, to help parents in this work and to hold them strictly responsible for deficiencies and shortcoming in family upbringing. The development of a system of universal compulsory pedagogical education for parents plays an important role in the improvement of family upbringing and the press, television and radio should play a major role as per the provision of Glasnost (Irbranniye Vechi statyi; Moscow; 1983;32).
9) Improving the Administration of Public Education:

The development of general secondary and vocational education are drawing closer and the goals and the tasks of the two are becoming one since both of them are merging administrative agencies and pursuing a uniform state policy in the field of the education. The rural schools need special attention. Their condition and the level of their work have a substantial impact on the social development of rural areas on the retention of young people in those areas, in raising the cultural level for the rural population. The efforts of party, Soviet Trade Union and YCL organizations should be directed forward fundamentally improving the rural schools’ working conditions reinforcing them with highly qualified teachers and concern for the school is a matter for the entire party and all the people. Guided by the decisions of the 26th CPSU congress and the June (1983) plenary session of the CPSU central committee, party committees should thoroughly study the life of the schools and vocational technical schools. It is the duty of Party Committees to concern themselves, in a Leninist manner and on a daily basis, with the political and spiritual growth of teaching staffs.

The improvement of public education is a key question of the policy of the communist party and the Soviet State. The reform of the general education and vocational schools had great social and political significance. The basic measures of the reform in 1984 just before the introduction of Perestroika will be implemented in stages in the course of the 11th and 12th five-year plans during 1984-1990. Every union and autonomous republic, territory, province, city and district taking local conditions into account must have concrete plans for implementing the reform. The objectives of the reforms were noble, highly moral and human; their realization will be of enormous importance in raising the level of Soviet People’s education and culture. It was thought that the reform would create better conditions for the instruction and a beneficial effect on the strengthening of the country’s ideological political economic and defense potential and an all round progress to society and its advance to communism (CDSP; xxxvi; 1984; 20).

During 1985, Gorbachev and his supporters began sending signal to educators that schools were free to concentrate on education, and that political dogma would no longer be enforced in schools. The principals of pedagogical institutions and academics were directed to work on programs that enhanced the inclination for labour,
discouraged bad habits and gave students the broadest possible view of what work meant and how it could contribute the social well being (Brodinsky and Ben; 1991: 10). The reform has been well accepted among the professional groups involved, and the machinery of educational research and development in the USSR Academy of Pedagogical sciences has been brought into action. (Szekely; Soviet Education; 28; 1-4; 1985)

In 1984 when Gorbachev chair the educational reform commission in the politburo and during his inaugural year as General Secretary of the Communist Party, beginning with the leadership change in December 1984 the ministry of education had done a remarkable work towards the change in the structure of the Soviet school system. The reform revived a great momentum when Gorbachev appointed Sergei Goegevich Shchervakov as the USSR minister of education in December 1984 (CDSP; Jan 16; 1985; 23).

Shchervakov was highly ambitious and enthusiastic on the development of Soviet education. Having served in the education apparatus of the central committee since 1974, he had been proponent of such forerunners of the innovative policies in the labor training aspects of the new educational reform of the establishment of occupational guidance centers in schools and the expansion of local and regional interschool production training centers.

The educationist and critic Ian Elliot is not satisfied with the work of Shectirbarkov as he was not doing any startling new things. Before coming in the office Soviet education has been charged with doing basically the same things that it has been doing for years. But his work regarding improving the compulsory school of general education and expanding the provision of general education and vocational education thereby preparing all pupils for future work. According to the educationist Stephen F. Cohen Gorbachev had brought to the fore several party leaders who are more skilled and efficient in the education system does not mean that he intended to initiate radical reforms of that system as he just wanted to a reformation within the Soviet education system including to love of labour and fatherland’ (Cohen; 1985; 131). He further stated that the Gorbachev regime signifies a reform to improve the existing order of Soviet education without fundamentally transforming existing social, political and economic foundations or going beyond prevailing ideological values,’(Cohen; 1985).
On April 22, 1985 as an offshoot of the nationwide push for discipline in all areas of public life, a new set of rules to govern school pupil behavior was issued. Four levels of conduct were listed in, instead of the two in the previous pupil rules, and an evaluation of the lowest level was made grounds for the refusal of entrance to school leaving examinations. The new rules summoning all Soviet school pupils to ‘Study live and work in a communist way, and to prepare themselves for the defense of the socialist fatherland,’ went on to spell out the virtues expected industry, patriotism, comradeship, respect for elders and courtesy were chief among them and to list the ways in which they might be applied, principally through participation socially useful labour, diligent attention to school work, observance of the school rules, and rational use of one’s leisure time(Uchitelskaya Gazeta; Agust 27; 1985;2).

In this period viz., from 1984-87, changes were also taking place inside the Soviet schooling which are expressed in revision of the single state curriculum and uniform teaching syllabi of general education and in new school courses and standard textbooks. The general education curriculum, having undergone this cyclic permutation, dictates all the subjects taught and the hours allocated weekly to them in each of the soviet School grades (Kuzin and Kondakov, (eds); 1977; 49).

The purpose of the new school rules was to enhance the social responsibility of Soviet School pupils in preparation for their adult roles of a disciplined worker and citizens. In many party and government resolutions, ‘On Inter-school Production Training Centers, ‘Labour Education and the Occupational guidance of the school pupils’ and ‘on the organisation of the socially useful productive labor of General Education School Pupils’, a detailed sets of orders about the aspects of the labor education reforms has been described in detail in the educational draft of Perestroika (Dunston; 1985; 29).

In June 1985, the announcement was made of new procedures to govern a countrywide re-certification of the close to three million teachers employed in Soviet schools. Between 1986 and 1990, 20 percent of the national teaching body is to be subjected to a highly complex process of the peer and supervisory reviews from which all are emerge at the end of the twelfth five-year plan. Teachers who are judged to be working at a level of superior performance and who are given the four title listed above will receive increments to monthly salaries. Among the major reforms during Perestroika was to expand vocational education, the addition of labour training programs in the general
education school was highly problematic because the combined senior secondary program that results needs to prepare a large segment of Soviet young people for both higher education and for work in the mass occupation of the national labour force. One of the major goals among the reforms of vocational education and in the general education school was to attract increasing number of 17 years old graduates into the national labor force. This will mean manual employment at factories and forms for many youths in the future, despite plans of the Gorbachev government for technological modernization and occupational guidance has become a strongly upgraded function of the secondary general education school in recent years.

Within the general education school curriculum, polytechnic education was the traditionally strong element in Soviet Marxist Pedagogy. It means teaching the scientific principles for industrial and agricultural production. Outside formal schooling, due to growing demand of part time employment, 'about 35 percent of senior grade pupils has undergone job training in workshops located directly at industrial, enterprise' in the current school year of 1988 (Szelling; 1990; 20; 6). The 1990 amendments in the rules were held by some educationist that it was a great leap forward towards the ‘combating bourgeois ideology’ in education system.

Despite the somewhat improved prospects for general school labour training, the expanded vocational technical school was likely to prove the more successful way of training teenagers for employment because of its de facto linkage with the national economy for which it carries out specialized job training. Kostin, the first Deputy Chairman of the USSR committee for labour and school problems, which is the agency responsible for overseeing the entrance of youth into the work force, has observed that 15-20 percent of vocational technical school entrants are not personally well suited to the work which they are trained for and as a result, 20-30 percent of vocational technical school graduates do not show up the efficiency to fulfill a job placement and 40 percent graduates change their occupation shortly after entering into labour force. At present, an overwhelming majority of Soviet youths are not being trained for specific carriers that they will follow after school beyond a short term of employment. Because of the addition of labour training and occupational guidance course, the incremental requirement of socially useful labour, and the new course in selected fields of social relevance and computer technology, the number of class periods to be taught in all the
11 grades for the reformed general education school has been increased from 280 to 326 in the new curriculum which was published in June 1984. (Dunston; 1985; 66-67).

The means by which the school should be producing Gorbachev’s new brigades is as old as the soviet school system itself that is the process of Vospitanie, which means in general term ‘upbringing’ but it is a far broader meaning refers to an all embracing process by which a youngster’s values, habits and world vision are fashioned. But even this religious education is not practiced in Russia as it is happening in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other religious countries. The purpose of this religious education is only to provide some basic knowledge about the main features of the major religions. In the Soviet General School, this has meant a systematic attempt to inculcate officially approved attitudes of communist morality, a scientific materialistic world view, patriotism, collectivism, and appreciation of the dignity of labour internationalism, atheism and an active hostility towards bourgeois capitalism and imperialism. (Long; 1984; 469-72)

The Soviet Constitution 1977 lists the duties and responsibilities of all citizens (Article 59-69), including obligation ‘to be concerned with the upbringing of children to train them for socially useful work, and to raise them as worthy members of socialist society.’ The constitution also orders citizen to be patriotic. The rules of CPSU, amended in 1986 for the first time since 1961, insisted that all party members be prototypes of the citizen which vospitanie was expected to produce in schools (Long; 1984).

In June 1983 meeting of Central Committee Plenum, General Secretary Yuri Androv and Konstantin Chernenko decreed at great length the decline of ideological dedication among Soviet citizens. Androov demand that the party upgrade ‘ideological, upbringing (vospitanie), and propaganda work’ through the agencies of the press, radio, television and vast network of various types of educational institutions. One might have assumed, therefore, that if Gorbachev, who was at the plenum hoped to introduce revolutionary changes in soviet thinking, then the central school would be the ideal place to start (Pravda; 16 June; 1983).

Throughout the entire era of Gorbachev’s reforms the general school has been a target of criticism for failing to keep up with the vicissitudes of Glasnost, democratization and Perestroika. Indeed one of the causes was the widening gap between Gorbachev’s
blueprints for society and the school program was the fact that the general school underwent its own reform shortly before he became General Secretary.

On 10th April 1984, the CPSU central committee approved the reform of the general and vocational school. According to this reform, the school system remained uniform and highly centralized, still more vocational training was called for, new salary schedules were introduced, and a new course entitled, ‘The contemporary Ideological Struggle and Youth’ was created for class 10. A course on computer technology was added to the syllabus and computer laboratories, to be shared by more than one school were promised.

It was argued that the main reason of the shortage of male teachers in the schools was low salary of a school teacher. Subsequently it was complaint that the number of women teachers in the schools are grown in such an extent that the schools were so dominated by women teacher that male children were becoming ‘feminized’ and therefore were ill suited for military training. It was expected that the social prestige of teachers would be raised and that the quality of their training would be improved, beside sex education was introduced in biology classes.

Textbooks were scheduled to be rewritten and teachers to be retrained. Despite of all this reform, the guidelines repeated the traditional view that the formation of a Marxist-Leninist world outlook is the firm foundation of the communist education of pupils. The shaping of a politically conscious citizenry with strong communist convictions remained the primary task of all school’s social life during the Perestroika. Beside a new bureaucracy created for efficient implementation of the above said reforms despite of all round opposition. This was one of the reasons that the educationist like Stephen F. Cohen that Gorbachev has not brought a fundamental change in the education system rather he tried the improvement in the earlier existing Soviet education system. (Dennis Sowtis; 1991; 23-33)

In short, the new general school program was intended to improve upon-rather than change the old system. The fact that the general school suffered from an inertia of old system and tradition was often noted by the reformers after 1985 which is manifested in the pages of Utechleskaya Gazeta and the Poisk beside this they also criticized the ministry of education regularly for its lack of innovation and its stifling centralization. (Anisin; Pravda; 25 August; 1987; 3)
At the 27th CPSU Congress in 1986, Gorbachev warned party members about the revengeful and unprincipled psychological warfare 'unleashed by imperialism' and said that education must be used to counter it. During an address to the 20th All-Union Komsomol conference in April 1987, he expressed his anxiety over the slowness of educational progress. The 1986 reform also concerned about higher education and specialized secondary education. This reform came at the height of initial enthusiasm for Gorbachev's wide-ranging effort to restructure Soviet Society (Kerr; Slavic Review; no 1; 1982).

The objective of the reform also included: integrating higher education with the economy; improving instruction; acquiring new technology, especially computers for science and engineering; and upgrading administration and faculty departments. The 1987-89 reform stressed that the fundamental goal of education is to improve the national economy. 'In practice the schools are being asked to build a new socialist society (Read; Phi Dela Kappan; April 1989; 613). They must bear in serving as the instrument to achieve higher standards of quality in economic, political, social and spiritual life. The goals that have been set to achieve these things are the goals that Perestroika has set for the 11-year Soviet schools of the future are as followings:

- To develop a new qualitative concept of general education spelling out all of its responsibilities in reconstructing society.
- To devise ways and means for self-financing secondary and higher education.
- To create a differentiated salary scale that will reward quality and excellence in performance;
- To demolish walls that separated the various kinds of secondary schools, in order to achieve a comprehensive educational system;
- To develop worthy traditional values and new democratic ideals of the social order;
- To develop the means of self government and collective decision making in all educational institutions;
- To encourage local, regional and republic level initiatives in instruction and administration;
The 1989-90 reform initially focused on resistance to change, as leaders attempted to overcome opposition to new policies during deteriorating socio-economic conditions and on the heels of critical self appraisal of the educational research studies undertaken in the Russian socialist federated soviet republic (RSFSR) during 1986-90 (Read; Phi Dela Kappan; April 1989; 613).

In the 29th CPSU conference in May 1988 it is said that ‘our higher and secondary school is lagging far behind the needs of the time of scientific, technological and cultural progress. Ligachev who was in charge of CPSU ideology stated that ‘true reform has not yet moved into the classroom,’ but he encouraged appropriate changes those were underway. In the CPSU plenum of education in February 1988, Ligachev finally admitted that the 1984 reform had been a failure. ‘Without significant changes in the public education system’, he said, ‘we will not achieve’ the various goals of Perestroika’ (Pravda; 27 August; 1987; 5) He proceeded to introduce the main features of Perestroika into the soviet general school; less centralization and uniformity; and a greater emphasis upon innovation, creativity, and opinions for both student and teachers. Ligachev appealed especially for the establishment of computer training courses in schools, an innovation that had been promised in 1984 but had not been implemented successfully. He indicated the entire system for general backwardness in equipment, overcrowding and for very poor building.

Such institutions as the academy of Pedagogical sciences, which he accused of being ‘diverted from real life”, should be taken out from under the wing of ministry of education and be made fully responsible for upgrading methodology and theories of education. The infusion of ‘new blood’ or ‘new enthusiasm,” into the academy was deemed essential before it could become constructive. Speaking in the same meeting, Gorbachev reiterated forcefully the traditional Leninist vision of socialism and the role of education in shaping a socialist society. He demanded absolute adherence to Marxism-Leninism and to the ‘essential condition’ of the CPSU monopoly on power. Teachers, he said, are the ‘major protagonists of perestroika,’ and he promised better facilities and greater teaching freedom because ‘the future of socialism depends on the schooling, education and upbringing (vospitanie) of the new individual.’ (Gorbachev; 19 February; 1988)
In August 1988, it was proposed that, the Academy of Pedagogical sciences would be re-organized, and elections for new member, a new President and a new Presidium were held in January and February 1989. Regarding mistakes and dismal periods in the past, he said, ‘instead it should stress on our fatherland’s accomplishment’. Utilizing history, the education system must ‘raise people of courage, people with a highly developed sense of their revolutionary pedigree and of their social system’. Further the education Minister Ligachev urged the schools to improve upon military patriotic education and to implement the teaching of aesthetics to combat, among other things, the ‘spread of primitive music’. Gorbachev supported Ligachev’s appraisal of the educational reform and the success of Perestroika and approved his recommendations for changes in the structures of education. (Gorbachev; 19 February; 1988; 23)

10) Perestroika and the Special Schools:

‘Special’ schools were primary and secondary schools which offered in-depth education in specific subjects such as natural science, foreign language, physical education and art that were first established in 1958. Initially, they aimed at enrichment of gifted children in specific fields; but when it was decided to increase the number of such schools during perestroika, the definition was changed to schools promoting development of individual characteristic ability in response to the interests of each pupil. Such schools increase in number, especially in urban areas, and new types of special character schools named lyceums and gymnasiums were established in 1989. The Soviet government changed the status of some existing public general secondary schools as an experiment, and provides education of higher standard than normal schools especially aiming at preparation for entrance to higher education. Most of these schools were linked with higher education institutes, and provide lessons conducted by professors form affiliated institutes. They also offered pupils chances to enter affiliated higher education institutes without taking entrance examinations.

But the issue of school reform was not discussed by politburo until 14 April 1989 and the official communique from that meeting said nothing about the ideological implications of Ligachev’s proposals. Further, Legachev attacked on the management of the schools by the ministry of education and USSR state committee for vocational and technical education, saying that there administration ‘is carried out primarily by
bureaucratic methods and in a conservative spirit (Gorbachev; Pravda; 19 February; 1988; 25).

As the economic and social conditions of the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate during 1989 and 1990, the attention to educational reform was redirected as the situation becomes worse due to decreasing birth rate. According to Carr “change in education proceeded, but in a way that it gradually less determined by the centre and more determined by national, regional and local concerns” (Kerr; 1990; 30.).

Another factor that comes in the way of educational reform was the emergence of two potentially powerful but somewhat new interest groups viz, the elected congress of people’s deputies and its higher body, the new Supreme Soviet. Many educators, both from public and higher education, serve as members of these organizations and they have not been hesitant to voice their concerns about the problems facing education. But neither these delegate and nor the other members of educational establishment have spoken with one voice. ‘There is considerable diversity in the views expressed, with some blaming the problems of schools on the country’s past and the ‘period of stagnation’ under Brezhnev, whereas others complain that it is the Gorbachev and the new policies of Glasnost and Perestroika that are ruining education as it might prove due course of time a gradual denunciation of communism. Moreover, not only there was lack of unanimity among factions, there was often a lack of agreement within factions on the appropriate policy to pursue or how to pursue it (Kerr; 1990; 30). The CPSU made an effort to regain the initiative in directing the upbringing of soviet youth when, in February 1989, it created a new ideology department in its Central Committee and assigned it the task of restructuring Vospitanie.

In a long speech to the All-Union student Forum in 1989, Gorbachev repeatedly blamed Stalin for the ‘deformation for Socialism’ and urged the student delegates to help in the creation of a new society. He claimed again that there was to be a large increase in capital outlay for schooling and that the teacher’s salaries should be raised. But he also acknowledged that there would not be enough funds to redress the problems of the general school (Gorbachev; Pravda; 19 February; 1988; 23).

Both Gorbachev and the new education minister Yagodin repeated this messages again at the February 1990 CPSU Plenum. At that time, Yagodin even resurrected the bizarre complaint of 1984, saying that without higher wages they would not get enough male
teachers and suitable recruits for the army. In the early 1989, new principles for higher education finally had been published, and in 1990 the USSR academy of sciences and the universities were granted independent status with control over their own resources. (Black; xxxiii; 1; March 1991)

But, none of this was very encouraging to the general schools due to financial crisis. In May 1990, Yagodin reported that it would be well into 1991 before any such changes would come to the general schools. The general schools were even depicted as ‘zones of risk’ in terms of health care and hygiene due to lack of fund to cope with the deteriorating situation of health and hygiene.

A survey of teachers’ attitudes, conducted by Uchitelskaia Gazeta in January 1990, demonstrated clearly how the CPSU had lost touch with the general schools. At that time over 70% of teachers were still party members while the party and Komsomol agencies were ranked first and second among the most unsatisfactory sources of assistance to the schools. In terms of practical and material questions, nearly 80% of the respondents said that Perestroika had failed in the schools because of under funding and poor facilities, and low wages remained most consistent complaint. (Black; xxxiii; 1; March 1991)

Salaries were, in fact, increased in May but they remained well behind the inflation rate and CPSU control over Vospitanie was eroded even further in 1990 when Yagodin announced that the state examinations in Marxism-Leninism training was replaced by a more general on the theories of Philosophy, socialism and political economy (Zevrev; 4 February; 1990;3).

But complaints about the old dogma of religion persisted during this period. Even the long awaited law on religious freedoms left ideological ambiguities for general school administrators contemplates. Article 5 separates church and state and while continuing the long-standing prohibition of religious proselytizing in schools, forbade the state from funding ‘the propaganda of atheism in schools’. Thus we see that the Period of Perestroika was a period between religious freedom and practice of atheism as it neither advocates open religious freedom nor allowed further practice of atheism through schools.
But the law also says that there shall be no restrictions on ‘scientific research’ and the dissemination of its results in schools. The existing perception of atheism as a science provides its Marxist proponents with a decided advantage in school curricula. A compensating article, however, allows chartered religious organizations to create ‘educational establishments for the religious education of children and adults’ (Izvestiia; 9 October; 1990; 4).

The leading pedagogical journal continued to insist that problems of youth, labour and patriotism could be solved by strengthening the program of Vospitanie, but in 1989 there were also isolated calls for an end to the system altogether, on the grounds that Perestroika and glasnost made Vospitanie redundant. In practice Perestroika in schools has lagged far behind official pronouncements from the party and government. If young people are learning new concepts, they are learning those only outside the classroom.

The glasnost and democratization in society at large are socializing them also by television and media express mainly by the ‘primitive music’ heard regularly on TV and by myriad of new types of contact with westerners. A multi-party political system is now in place. Glasnost has put Soviet youth in touch with the global community, and neither the CPSU, nor the central state was in a position to sustain the greenhouse isolation, which the general school customarily provided. Some schools now offers courses on the history of religions and on human rights, all unrelated to the communist perspective. But this is not practiced in Russia as it is happening in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other religious countries. (Uchitel’skaia Gazeta; 12-19 February 1991; 4)