CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNING OF RECONSTRUCTION (1955-1966)

Committees, conferences, and correspondence with the State Governments took the Ministry of Education over two years to give the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission an acceptable form. Late in 1955 started the process of the reconstruction of secondary education in the country. Inaugurating the All India Council for Secondary Education in October, 1955, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Union Education Minister said, "The Secondary Education Commission had submitted its Report and the Central and State Governments had accepted it generally. This was not, however, the end but only the beginning of a new process of educational reconstruction. It was necessary that there should be some organisation to advise the Government of India and the State Governments on the manner in which the recommendations of the Commission could be effectively implemented."

The All India Council for Secondary Education took up its work in right earnest. Besides providing useful guidance to the State Governments in matter of conversion of high schools into higher secondary and multipurpose schools, it brought out for higher secondary schools in 1956 a Draft Syllabus prepared by the Central Co-ordination Committee in collaboration with several small committees appointed by the Ministry of Education for the purpose. The preparation of the syllabuses had been completed as a kind of rush job in order to provide the State Governments

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initial guidance in making a beginning with the new courses. Once the beginning had been made, the State Governments would have to set in motion their own research programmes to perfect them and to accord them better with both the needs of the pupils and those of the community.² The Draft Syllabus added certain new subjects like leather work, sculpture, textiles, 'clothing and laundry' to Crafts, Fine Arts and Home Science Groups respectively. 'Elements of home science' was added to both 'Science' and 'Fine Arts' Groups and 'elements of building construction and radio engineering' were included in the Technical Group.

The Centre took two very important decisions. First, every pupil in a higher secondary school would be required to study three languages i.e. his mother tongue or regional language, English and another Indian language. Secondly, social studies and 'general science and mathematics' (and not general science including mathematics as recommended by the Secondary Education Commission) would be studied as non-examination subjects by all the students throughout the three years.

The Higher Secondary Pattern in the Punjab

The School Board of the Punjab University suggested to the University in May, 1956 to accept the 3-year higher secondary pattern recommended by the Centre. The new system was introduced in 1958 i.e. 5 years after the publication of the report of the Secondary Education Commission. The syllabus framed by the All India Council for Secondary Education was adopted by the Punjab with certain modifications keeping in view the curriculum hitherto prevailing (to avoid criticism for radical changes) as well as the diverse interests and abilities of children.

² Ibid., p.9.
The higher secondary curriculum of the Punjab had two parts, the core part and the differentiated part (elective groups). In the core part, the Punjab University made the study of English and Hindi or Punjabi (according to the choice open to students) compulsory. Social studies, general science and mathematics were prescribed as three separate subjects. In differentiated part (elective groups) a student was required to take up four instead of three subjects originally recommended by the Commission. Except in Technical Group, higher English was included in all the groups. There were also made certain other changes in the provision of subjects in elective groups. 'Psychology and Logic' was excluded from 'Humanities and civics from both Humanities and Commerce. In Science Group subjects originally recommended by the Commission were retained. 'Elements of Home Science' recommended in the Draft Syllabus for this Group was not included in it. The Technical Group had the best of the recommendations of the Commission as well as of the All India Council for Secondary Education. It offered physics and chemistry as full separate subjects. The Agriculture Group was made comprehensive embodying the subjects recommended by the Commission as also by the Council. The Home Science Group remained almost the same.

The Scheme of Courses, as it emerged after inclusions and exclusions, was as under:-

A. Compulsory Core Subjects:
   1. English.
   2. Hindi or Punjabi (A candidate offering Hindi for the Elective Group or Hindi as medium of examination shall offer only Punjabi and vice versa) provided that a candidate who does not fall into either of the two categories shall offer a combined paper of Hindi and Punjabi.

5. Mathematics.
6. Craft work. Any one of the following crafts to be offered:
   (i) Hand Spinning and Weaving 
   (ii) Gardening 
   (iii) Woodwork 
   (iv) Metal work 
   (v) Tailoring 
   (vi) Leather work 
   (vii) Clay Modelling 
   (viii) Printing Technology 
   (ix) Sewing Needle and Embroidery work
   (for girls only).

B. Elective Groups:

   A student will be required to take up any one of the following elective groups:

Group I. Humanities:

   Any four subjects to be offered:
   1. A Classical Language (Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian), French, German, Russian, Chinese or Japanese.
   2. History.
   3. Geography.
   4. Economics.
   5. Mathematics.
   6. Music (Instrumental or Vocal) Theory and Practical.

Group II. Science:

   Any four subjects to be taken up:
   1. Physics.
   2. Chemistry.
   4. Geography.
   5. Mathematics.
   6. Physiology and Hygiene (not to be taken with Biology).

Group III. Technical:

   1. (a) Applied Mathematics.
   (b) Geometrical or Mechanical Drawing.
   2. Physics.
   3. Chemistry.
   4. Any of the following:
      1) Elements of Mechanical Engineering.
      2) Elements of Electrical Engineering.
      3) Elements of Building Construction.
      4) Elements of Radio Engineering.

Group IV. Commerce:

   1. Elements of Commerce.
   2. Commercial Geography.
   3. Economics.
4. Any two of the following:-
   i) Book-keeping.
   ii) Shorthand and Typewriting.
   iii) Higher English.

Group V. Agriculture:

1. Agriculture Biology and Chemistry.
2. General Agriculture including Soil Management and Crop Culture.
3. Farm Management including Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
4. Any one of the following:
   i) Horticulture excluding Fruit Growing.
   ii) Fruit Growing and Fruit Preservation.
   iii) Poultry Farming.
   iv) Agricultural Economics.
   v) Higher English.

Group VI. Fine Arts:

1. History and Appreciation of Arts.
2. Any three of the following:
   i) Drawing and Painting.
   ii) Modelling and Sculpture.
   iii) Music (Instrumental).
   iv) Music (Vocal).
   v) Dancing.
   vi) Higher English.

Group VII. Home Science (for girls only).

3. Home Nursing, Child Development and Mother Craft.

In the matter of examination, the Punjab University made departures from the recommendations of the Commission. In order to make the teaching and learning of core subjects a serious affair, there were instituted two examinations at the higher secondary stage, one in the core subjects at the end of the first two years and the other in the elective subjects at the end of the third year. The instruction in elective groups, however, was to start right from 9th class i.e. from the first year of the higher secondary stage. Another major change was the introduction of internal assessment to the extent of 20 to 25 per cent. The internal awards were to be counted towards the final assessment.
Within two years of the introduction of the scheme, the University made some more changes in the curriculum. In the Core subjects in place of English, the study of an Indian language - Hindi, Punjab, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil or Sindhi (as first language) was prescribed. A student who offered Hindi as his first language was required to take up Punjabi as his second language and vice versa, while the one who offered Urdu, Bengali, Tamil or Sindhi as his first language was to study a composite course of Hindi and Punjabi. The list of crafts was further extended by the inclusion of hand-made paper industry, elementary electric technology, hosiery and workshop practice.

Changes were effected in almost all the elective groups. Higher English as an optional subject was removed from all the groups and instead English was made a compulsory subject under each group. Besides English, a student was required to select three other subjects. In Humanities group the higher course in a Modern Indian Language - Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali or Tamil was done away with and Civics included. Physics and Chemistry in Technical Group were combined into one subject. Students of the Commerce Group were asked to take up either book-keeping or 'shorthand and typewriting'. Under Agricultural Group the study of horticulture, 'fruit growing and preservation', poultry farming and agriculture economics were abandoned. Lastly, in Fine Arts Group any two out of drawing and painting, modelling and sculpture, music (instrumental), music (vocal) and dancing were required to be offered.

The introduction of higher secondary system made changes in the high school imperative. But since it was hoped that all the high schools would be converted into higher secondary schools within
a period of 3 years, no drastic changes were effected in the Matriculation Course. From 1958 was started the teaching of social studies in place of 'history and geography'. The contents of the course were to be the same as in the higher secondary scheme. A number of crafts like hand spinning, gardening, wood work, metal work, tailoring, sewing, needle and embroidery work, leather work, clay modelling and papier mache and printing technology were introduced as non-examination subjects. English was again made a compulsory subject. Internal assessment was also introduced from that year.

In partial acceptance of the three-language formula recommended by the Central Government, the study of a modern Indian language (Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu) was made compulsory from 1960. This increased the number of compulsory subjects for the Matriculation Course from three to four. The total number of subjects to be offered for the Course was thus raised to six. The provision for the study of modern Indian languages under the list of elective subjects continued to exist. But the language offered as a compulsory subject could not be taken up as an elective subject. Nevertheless, the curriculum very much favoured students interested in languages. One could take up as many as four languages in a total number of six subjects. General science was added to the list of non-examination subjects in 1960.

The following were the subjects for the Matriculation Examination for 1962:

**Compulsory.**

1. English.
2. Mathematics (or in the case of girls Arithmetic, Domestic Arithmetic and Household Accounts).
4. A Modern Indian Language (Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu).

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Elective Subjects

Any two of the following:

1. A Modern Indian Language (Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi or Bengali) other than the one offered as a compulsory subject or French or German.
2. A Classical Language (Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Latin or Greek).
4. Physiology and Hygiene or Domestic Economy for girls.
5. Agriculture or Animal Husbandry.
6. Drawing.

Non-Examination Subjects.

1. Music.
2. General Science.
3. Craft (Hand Spinning and Weaving, Gardening, Wood work, Metal work, Tailoring, Sewing, Needle and Embroidery work, Leather work, Clay Modelling and Papier Mache or Printing Technology).

The three-year target of complete switch-over to the higher secondary pattern having been found unattainable, the University decided in March, 1963 to equate the high and higher secondary patterns to the extent they could be possibly done to avoid hardships to those who wanted to shift from a high school to a higher secondary school or vice versa. The higher secondary course was consequently divided into two parts—I and II (replacing Core and Elective parts), examinations in them to be held at the end of X and XI classes respectively. The study of the elective group was decided to be started from the X Class and a part of it was to be covered in that class and examined at the end. The subjects of examination in the two Courses of high and higher secondary schools in 1965 and 1966 were as under:

Matriculation

1. English.
2. Mathematics (or in the case of girls, Arithmetic, Domestic Arithmetic and Household.

Higher Secondary Part I

1. English.
2. First Language (Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu or Bengali) Students offering Humanities, Commerce and Fine.

Accounts). A blind candidate may offer Civics, Music or an additional language in lieu of Geometry in Mathematics provided that the additional subject shall be other than that already offered as a full subject.

4. A Modern Indian Language (Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu) other than the one offered by a candidate as an elective subject.

5. General Science.
Note: The students of a school, which has no arrangement for the teaching of General Science, will be allowed (for a period of 5 years only) to offer one of the following:
1) Physics and Chemistry; or
ii) Physiology and Hygiene; or
iii) Drawing.

6. Any one of the following elective subjects:
A Modern Indian Language (Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi or Bengali) other than the one offered under (4) above or French or German or A Classical Language (Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, Latin or Greek or Physics and Chemistry (if not offered under (5) above) or Physiology and Hygiene (if not offered under (5) above) or Domestic Economy for girls or Agriculture (or Animal Husbandry) or Drawing (if not offered under (5) above) or Music.

7. Craft work (Non-examination subject) One of the following to be taken up:
Hand Spinning and Weaving, Gardening, Wood work, Metal work, Tailoring, Sewing, Needle and Embroidery work, Leather work, Clay Modelling, Papier Mache and Printing Technology.
Note: In all a student is to be examined in twelve papers.

Process of Conversion of High Schools into Higher Secondary Schools.
The hope expressed by the University that the change-over to higher secondary pattern would be completed within 3 years of the commencement of the process has not materialized. The rate of Arts to take up one paper in the subject.
3. Mathematics or Arithmetic, Domestic Arithmetic and Household Accounts for girls.
Blind candidates may offer Music or an additional language in lieu of Mathematics paper B (Geometry) provided that the additional language should be other than the one already offered as a full subject.
4. Social Studies.
5. General Science (Students offering Science, Agriculture, Technical and Home Science groups to offer one paper in General Science).
6,7 & 8. Three subjects of an elective group (One paper for each).
Note: In all a student is to be examined in twelve papers.

Higher Secondary Part II

1. English.
2. Workshop Practice (Including Scale Drawing) or Needle work and Tailoring (for girls) or Any one of the following crafts:
Leather work, Clay Modelling, Papier Mache, Spinning and Weaving, Gardening and Woodwork.
3. First language (one paper).
4. Second language (one paper).
5,6 & 7. Three subjects of an elective group.
Note: The old seven elective groups of Humanities, Science, Technical, Commerce, Agriculture, Fine Arts and Home Science continue.
conversion (given in Table II) indicates that the goal is still far. In 1965 i.e. after seven years of conversion, there were 507 higher secondary/multipurpose higher secondary schools against 1075 high schools.

**Table II**

**High and Higher Secondary Schools 1958-1965**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Higher Secondary/Multipurpose Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>1167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conversion of these schools is in no way complete. Out of 499 higher secondary schools that sent up students for the Higher Secondary Part II Examination in March, 1966, only one school had provision for 5 Elective Groups, 14 schools had for 4, 41 for 3, 382 for 2 and 61 for one. And again these schools did not have the provision for the teaching of all the subjects in the elective groups.

7. The figures are from the Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1965.
The Higher Secondary School in Difficulty

Obviously the new system has not made headway in Punjab. For long past, education has been the Cinderella of the Administration. Schools have existed without sufficient space, buildings, equipment and staff. After Independence hopes went high that there would be improvement in the material conditions of schools but peculiar difficulties of the Punjab resulting from the Partition and the genuine demand of the public, long denied minimum educational facilities, for more and more ordinary schools, could hardly permit the Government and the people to spend lakhs of rupees on upgrading the high schools and at the same time equipping and staffing them well. The Central aid advanced for a limited period only facilitates the initial set-up. Expensive higher secondary schools with doubtful advantage would not win favour with the people.

Inadequacies of buildings, equipment and teaching material are covered up by qualified and competent staff if available in sufficient number, for it is the quality of the teacher that ultimately ensures the success of a system. Unfortunately in the Punjab as in other States, the post-graduate teachers, qualified to teach elective groups in higher secondary schools, have either not been available in adequate number or have not been willing to work at the low salaries. The result has been that the higher secondary schools have been forced to recruit less qualified teachers. This has naturally affected the standard of teaching already not very high. Children and their parents may condone insufficiency of space and teaching material but they never reconcile to the lack of teachers or the presence of incompetent teachers. "There can be little good in a system if it leads to ineffectiveness and
frustration in the parties involved, namely students, teachers and
society.  

The curriculum adopted on the recommendations of the
Secondary Education Commission unfortunately suffers from several
of the major defects the Commission themselves pointed out in the
traditional curriculum. As many as ten subjects were required to
be offered by the students of 9th and 10th classes when the new
scheme was first introduced in the Punjab in 1958. Even at present
the number is eight. The treatment of a curriculum cluttered with
too many subjects cannot but be sketchy, superficial and inadequate.

The Draft Syllabus of the All India Council prepared hurriedly
became the model for the Punjab. The scope and sequence of the
contents leave much to be desired. If the syllabus is to direct
the work of the teachers and students, careful attention needs to
be given to a statement of purposes, to sequential order, to inter­
relationships, to desired outcomes that can be evaluated, and to
content.  

In point of difficulty the elective groups are of the old
Intermediate standard. But their study starts from 9th class
(from 10th class since 1963) when the students are not fully mature.
The English medium through which most of the elective subjects are
taught further aggravates their difficulty. Although the University
has allowed the option of using an Indian language as the medium of
instruction and examination, a large number of schools have not yet
given up the English medium. The continuance of English as the
medium of instruction for some uncertain future gains is frustrating
for many children.

9. Ohio State University Team, "The Curricula and Syllabi of the
Multipurpose Schools (In India)", Teacher Education, May-July, 1959, p. 34
The Pre-University class of the college with better facilities, and staff and comparatively erstwhile simpler curricular\textsuperscript{1} has all along won preference over the XI Class of an overcrowded higher secondary school. At places where both higher secondary schools and high schools co-exist; students particularly girls prefer to go to the high schools. Since 1962 the Punjab University has permitted the change of course from Matriculation to Higher Secondary and vice versa on the conclusion of IX Class. Wherever it is feasible, students of higher secondary schools go over to high school and through it to the college a year after.

This decision of the Punjab University to allow students to switch over to the Matriculation, was described by Bhai Jodh Singh, Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala, "as admission of the failure of the higher secondary system."\textsuperscript{10} In 1964-66 when the University permitted students of higher secondary schools to join the pre-University class after passing Higher Secondary Part I Examination, the Principals of higher secondary schools in the State opposed it. In it they saw the death knell of their schools. The University had to revoke its decision in their interest.

The higher secondary school calls upon children to decide about the choice of their elective group right after their VIII Class. This puzzles many students and their parents. They are not mentally prepared for an early decision particularly when it is not possible to have through test a fair estimate of students' interests, aptitudes and abilities. In an industrially growing and economically developing democratic country, which has recently won her freedom from foreign rule - for the vast majority of the people a period of

suffering, privations and denials, it is difficult for boys and girls as also for their parents, full of ambitions and aspirations, to decide about their future careers so early. The high school in contrast to the higher secondary school provides students full two years before they choose to go in for a preparatory course for a professional training. This saves students of later frustration resulting from a wrong choice. The public in general has not felt convinced of the utility of the higher secondary school; the people still feel that the Matriculation has distinct advantage.

Some of the newer courses do not attract students in sufficiently large numbers to justify the expenditure incurred in introducing them. The majority of parents continue to press for the science and art courses because of the established connections of these subjects with university education and the better paid positions in society. In so far as subjects like agriculture, commerce, domestic science, etc., are concerned, nothing important in the society has happened of late to indicate that completion of secondary education in these subjects will enable children to secure positions of high social and financial status. Since that important condition is not met, parental reluctance to admit children to the new courses asserts itself again and again. The distribution of the courses offered by the students for the Higher Secondary Examination in the Punjab during the past four years (Table III), makes it clear that the vast majority of the students limit their choice to the art and science courses.

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Table III

Group-wise Distribution of Candidates for the Higher Secondary Part II Examination of the Punjab University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elective Group</th>
<th>Number of Students who took the Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities.</td>
<td>9637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science.</td>
<td>5956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical.</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce.</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture.</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts.</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Science.</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Too many old type examinations burden the higher secondary course. Although the Secondary Education Commission recommended one public examination at the end of the secondary education, the Punjab University instituted two examinations, one at the end of the first two years to test the students in the core subjects (and at present in the portions of the elective groups as well) and the other at the end of the third year to test them in the elective subjects. And all the students before they enter the high/higher secondary schools take the Middle School Examination. Thus during the secondary school career a student has to pass through the grindmill of three public examinations. The ill effects of examinations are too well known and particularly in the schools where teachers labour under the fear of punishment for not showing good pass percentage, examinations exercise more restricting influence. These examinations will not let higher secondary schools
become a centre of joyous education, related to life which the Secondary Education Commission wanted it to become. The high school with one examination is better than the higher secondary schools with its two examinations. No doubt, a student going to a college from a high school has to take a public examination on the completion of his pre-university course but he feels much less stifled in a college than in a school.

The large number of failures in the examinations have led to the condemnation of the higher secondary pattern. Public opinion in the Punjab, which has been deeply upset by this waste, naturally expects the authorities to adopt prompt and effective measures for putting an end to a situation full of such tragic potentialities. The retention of the Matriculation system for a much longer period than was originally planned, has already been decided upon, but it may be difficult to tone up the system of instruction in schools which have suffered conversion.\textsuperscript{12}

It was believed that the internal assessment introduced in the higher secondary school would have a most wholesome effect on the entire educational structure. It would shift the emphasis from examination to study and learning and would greatly help in improving the atmosphere of schools.\textsuperscript{13} But in actual experience things have been different. At their present stage of evolution, our schools are hardly mature for the trust reposed in them. Complaints against the misuse of authority given to teachers are frequent. Furthermore, lack of training on the part of teachers in the art of evaluation, and cumbersome procedures of checks and balances used by the

\textsuperscript{12} The Tribune, Ambala, Editorial, October 30, 1963.

University to bring about uniformity of standard in internal assessment done in hundreds of schools militate against the success of internal assessment programme. Periodic tests now held too frequently to meet the requirements of internal assessment are all on the lines of the final public examination, and as a matter of fact are a preparation for it. The higher secondary school is through and through examination-ridden. The students groan under the tyranny of examinations, ill-thought, ill-devised and ill-planned.

The higher secondary school is not held in favour for yet another reason. In view of the skills and abilities required for a career in the increasingly growing complex industry and technology, the higher secondary school can hardly become a terminal point for direct entry into a vocational career. This being so, the addition of a year to the schooling of the youth, a vast majority of whom compelled by economic circumstances is anxious to enter a training course for future career or enter life straightaway after the school, is nothing short of a hardship. This amounts to delaying the entry of the children of the poor masses into the preparatory course for higher technical and professional training or into apprenticeship of a less technical vocation. The stay in a three-year higher secondary school does not reduce the period of specialization for a career. A longer period of general education, not quite efficiently carried out, hardly suits an under-developed country.

Retreat, Compromise, Advance.

In the flush of enthusiasm for reform born out of reaction against the narrowly conceived curriculum of the past, our educationists recommended upgrading of high schools and an ambitious programme for them. The recommendation to add one year to the ten-
year high schools came too early. In the face of the hard facts that large areas of the country were without high schools and the great majority of the existing high schools were ill-equipped, the recommendation was rather ambitious. Although the Commission realised that it would be unsound to expect many high schools to take on the additional year and convert themselves into the contemplated higher secondary schools, the burden of their theme related to the creation of higher secondary multipurpose school with diversified curriculum. Grants were advanced to the states for converting high schools into the higher secondary. The enthusiasm for reform and the money received from the Centre impelled states to start switching over to the higher secondary pattern amidst inadequacies and regardless of the demands of the people. With all the resources available most of the higher secondary schools have not been able to introduce more than two or three streams - mostly Humanities and Sciences groups. Obviously they have failed to provide a greater variety of educational media. The majority of these schools are bi-purpose rather than multipurpose. It is a complete defeat of the objectives of the scheme. The facilities already existing in colleges for the teaching of Humanities and Sciences have not been utilized and the schools without these facilities have been called upon to make arrangements for the education of XI Class. No wonder that most of the higher secondary schools have proved to be inefficient and ineffective and the high schools far out-numbering them have remained neglected.

The higher secondary curriculum aimed at acquainting the students with the broad elements of each one of the major sciences and giving them intensive tuition in a couple of specialized

branches. But both plans have gone awry for lack of effective teachers as well as laboratories and equipment. The result is that the new type of school is only a camouflaged version of the old one and the only losers have been students who were inveigled into opting for the new order through the glamour in which it was officially wrapped. Science classes have been conducted in many schools by teachers who would have hardly done well even under the old system, while there are no laboratories worth the name wherein to make the teaching of science a reality for the learners. It is strange that these difficulties and handicaps were not anticipated. If they were, the obstructive nature of the hurdles was apparently glossed over for the sake of change. 

The criticism of the higher secondary system has been sharp. But in equally strong terms has been put forward its defence. In July, 1963, Mr. Partap Singh Kairon, then Chief Minister of the Punjab, said that the higher secondary scheme was the real corner stone of education. It had not been given full trial and it would be unjust to judge it on the basis of limited experiment. The Union Education Minister, Dr. K.L. Shrimali, reiterated, "I want to make it clear that we are not going back on this question of higher secondary education. It is a calculated step and there is going to be no reversal of this policy.... In no country in the world secondary education is complete with ten years' schooling. We want to go forward with the 12-year course of education rather than go back to the old 10-year course." Inspite of all such justifications and defence, the higher secondary school has not won popularity. The zeal has lately cooled down and most of the

17. Ibid., July 8,1963.
reformers are now sadder and wiser men, casting about for compromises which would save face and at the same time introduce an element of realism in the ambitious scheme which they once so eagerly publicized.\textsuperscript{18}

In an educational gathering in April, 1966, the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab indirectly suggested that no sentiment or false prestige should stand in the way of retracing the step or retreat.\textsuperscript{19} Retreat requires great courage. Reconsideration of the whole scheme resulting in a compromise between the old and the new and between the ideal and the practicable may redeem the situation. The Report of the Education Commission that appeared on 30th June, 1966 suggests a compromise as well as an advance. After making a nation-wide survey of the higher secondary schools set up on the recommendation of the Secondary Education Commission (1962-53), the Education Commission (1964-66) recommends that the system of 'streaming' in schools of general education, which now begins in Class IX, should be given up and no attempt at specialization should be made till after Class X.

The idea that every secondary school should be raised to the higher secondary status should also be abandoned. In a country where rural areas predominate, it is unwise to try to raise every high school to the higher secondary status. There should be, as a rule, no integrated course of studies beginning with Class IX. Classes IX and X will now form part of the first ten years of general education and Classes XI and XII (and during the transitional period Class XI only), which will provide for specialized studies in different subjects at the higher secondary stage, will become an independent, self-contained unit like the

\textsuperscript{18} The Tribune, Ambala, Editorial, October 30, 1963.
Sixth Form in England. 20

The Commission visualizes that the higher secondary schools will be large, centrally located and equitably distributed between the urban and rural areas. Knowing full well that most of the secondary schools are in a very bad shape at present, the Education Commission recommends that the higher secondary stage should be extended to two years (XI and XII Classes) and should be located exclusively in the schools, for the Commission believes that it is bad for the Universities and Colleges as their resources and energies are being improperly utilized and even wasted in doing what is essentially the work of secondary schools. It is bad for the secondary schools because they are weakened by being deprived of a stage which could give them good teachers and facilities. It is bad for the students because they are now required to enter universities at too early an age, and compelled to learn through methods of higher education which are beyond their capacity and more suited to mature students. 21

Fears are lurking round the corner that the proposed higher secondary stage may not be a success in schools. The experience of the existing higher secondary school has shown that any further attempt to burden the high school with the responsibility of higher education will be dangerously hazardous. Even before the report of the Commission had appeared the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab had said,

I do not want to forestall the recommendations of the National Education Commission, but I learn that the Commission is recommending two types of schools - 10-year high schools and 12-year high schools i.e. 10 years of general education plus 2 years of specialized education leading to university or professional education.


Any body who wants to achieve two aims, i.e. general education and professional competence under the one and the same roof, will surely meet frustration. We can learn from Russian experience and reorganize our system of secondary education as best suitable to the National needs. 22

It is surely not so easy to add two years to the high school as to propose it. "This is a task for which the schools are not and are unlikely to be equipped without a drastic and unnecessary change in the whole educational system; it might be simpler and better to revive the Intermediate Course in Colleges." 23

In view of these difficulties there is a serious difference of opinion between the draft outline of the fourth plan and the Education Commission's report on the basic structure of school education. Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, member of the Planning Commission and Chairman of the Education Pannel, has frankly expressed the view that instead of adding two years to school education it will be better to add another year to collegiate education and have a pre-university course of two years in college. The experiment of converting high schools into higher secondary schools by adding one more year of instruction has not turned out to be an unqualified success and in fact many states have given up the idea and so has the Planning Commission. Not only is the expenditure involved, heavy, but also the fact must be faced that the amounts actually made available are insufficient for effecting the improvements necessary in libraries and laboratories for imparting higher instruction. Above all, the staff of the required calibre and qualifications are not forthcoming to man the teaching posts for the higher classes. Men of good academic qualifications do not like to work as teachers in schools but will rather go to colleges

22. J.D. Sharma, op. cit., p.5.
and universities. Moreover, high schools themselves are in such a bad way and need so much improvement that to base higher secondary class on them even for one year, let alone two years, will overstrain the foundations which ought to be strengthened. 24

Of hundreds of higher secondary schools, a majority usually work on the old high school pattern. To expect such schools to operate the XII Class as well, and with the efficiency the higher secondary pattern demands, would be unrealistic as well as uneducational. Teaching standards, already very low, would fall lower still and students who complete their education in such schools may find the college or university stage very stiff for them. 25

While schools would be handicapped for lack of properly qualified teachers and suitable academic atmosphere, colleges which now have Class XII attached to them would suffer in a different way if this group is shifted back to the higher secondary set-up. A large majority of colleges in Punjab and other States are in the private sector, drawing their operational finance from students on their rolls. Most of them find the 'interim' classes between the Matriculation and the university stages highly beneficial because these earn them a substantial income. 26

All this asks for reconcentration on the high school, strengthening it by improving its curriculum and making it a sound base for entry into life of thought and action. Ten years of good education imparted effectively must provide sufficient initiation into life.

26. Ibid.
Reconstruction of High School Curriculum Anew

The process of reconstruction of high school education that started in 1955 is not yet complete, nor perhaps can it be for a reasonable length of time. Prof. K.G. Saiyidain aptly described it as "a very long and complicated process." He said, "as we work for introduction of the new pattern we come face to face with many problems.... Every time we tackle a problem, we see a number of other problems emerging to which we had to apply our minds."27 Plans during the course of their implementation have revealed weaknesses, significant to be reckoned with. After eight years of trial (and of error too) in Punjab we find the higher secondary school merely a partial success while the high school all these years has remained relegated to the background. The uncared for institution, this high school of the Punjab is, now over a century old. It has catered for far larger numbers of students during the last eight years than the newly established higher secondary school, enjoying all the tender care of its sponsors. A high school with simplified, purified and balanced liberal courses and with a practical and vocational bias or a higher secondary school with differentiated streams, struggling to be a terminal point for many students to enter into practical life, which of the two do we need? The same old question whether vocational and specialized training should be a part of secondary education or should it be imparted separately which sought answer during the early twenties, stares us in the face even now in the later sixtees.

The full implications of the principle of bifurcation in high school courses first recommended by the Indian Education Commission

(1882-83) were not fully realized for quite some time. The demand for inclusion in the high school curriculum of various practical courses, intended to fit young men for vocational and industrial life, would be pressed in years to come, it was perhaps not clearly visualised at that time. Lord Curzon emphasized what the Commission had suggested before him. It was the National Council of Education in Bengal (1906) that for the first time extended the scope of practical courses. It introduced scientific and technical studies besides the clerical and commercial, parallel to the general courses. Ill-fated as the Council was, it could not carry on its experiment for long.

Upto the end of the Great War, however, there was no great demand for vocational courses at the high school level. In twenties, as a result of the beginning of the Industrial growth, steady increase in the number of educated unemployed, dissatisfaction with exclusively literary education and the defective system of examination, the intelligentsia impressed upon the Government the need for introducing vocational training in the high schools. The lack of too many openings in industry and technology and the British tradition to keep vocational training and general secondary education apart, however, would not persuade the Government to bring into the high school specialized education. Sir George Anderson, who was the Director of Public Instruction, Punjab during the twenties, plainly said that it was not the concern of his Department to provide vocational education. He believed with Mayhew that sound general education was the pre-requisite of all vocational and technical training. "It is indeed a fallacy to assume", he wrote, "that an industry can be created by training men to practise it. Moreover, vocational training must have as its basis a suitable measure and quality of general training, which is directed towards
the attainment of those qualities and characteristics which are essential to success in industry and commerce."\textsuperscript{28}

The level of industrial development during that time probably did not warrant general education up to the Matriculation standard and the public demand for some sort of vocational education at the secondary school was not altogether unjustified. In thirties the enhancement of the high school period and diversification of courses grew strong, the view being that both general and vocational education should be carried on in secondary schools of extended duration. Although there was some justification for asking for diversified education in the high school in view of the socio-economic development of the country, the addition of one year to the high school period was a proposal too ambitious and quite ahead of its time.

The Sargent Report in 1944 offered a solution of the problem by recommending the establishment of separate technical high schools parallel to academic high schools. In 1953 the Secondary Education Commission recommended the provision for several courses, general and practical, in the same school to be raised to the higher secondary level. The long outstanding demand for diversified education was fulfilled.

The implementation of the recommendations has revealed practical difficulties. As a result, "the diversification of curricula in secondary and higher education has not kept pace with the times so that the problem of educated unemployment has been intensified on the one hand while on the other, there is an equally acute shortage of trained man-power in several sectors."\textsuperscript{29} But it


has also been realised that the high school stage should provide only good general education with a practical and vocational bias. The Education Commission (1964-66) has advised against 'streaming' in schools up to high stage. What the English Educationists were at pains to drive home to us forty years ago, the Commission recommends to-day. What we did not accept then, we are in a mood to accept now. Not that we were wholly in the wrong in the past but our present circumstances have so changed that they demand a change in the objectives of high school education. We have reached that stage of industrial development which necessitates sound general education at secondary stage so that the product of the secondary schools can derive benefit from prospective vocational and technical training and become efficient skilled hands. This stage of industrial development was attained long back in Britain and her educationists thought about the aims of secondary education in terms of the needs of industrially growing society.

What difference would it have made if the reconstruction of the secondary education during the post-independence period had been started after a fuller study of the socio-economic needs of the country. All these 11 years, millions of rupees have been spent on the conversion of high schools into higher secondary schools. This huge sum could have been better utilized on the improvement of the high school by providing better books, better equipment and better teacher education. Alternatively, instead of converting high schools into higher secondary ones on an accelerated pace, the policy of going slow and having pilot multipurpose schools would have yielded rich dividends.
The advice tendered by the Education Commission to make the present high school an institution of sound general education is timely. The following curriculum recommended by it offers a balanced programme of studies:

Lower Secondary Stage (Classes VIII - X)

(a) Three languages. In non-Hindi speaking areas, these languages will normally be (i) the mother-tongue or the regional language, (ii) Hindi at a higher or lower level, (iii) English at a higher or lower level. In Hindi speaking areas, they will normally be (i) the mother-tongue or the regional language, (ii) English (or Hindi, if English has already been taken as the mother-tongue), and (iii) a modern Indian language other than Hindi.

(Note: A classical language may be studied in addition to the above three languages on an optional basis).

(b) Mathematics.
(c) Science.
(d) History, Geography and Civics.
(e) Art.
(f) Work-experience and Social Service.
(g) Physical Education.
(h) Education in Moral and Spiritual values.

The Commission fully recognizes the importance of science as well as art. If physical education is the concern of the school, no less importance is given to the moral and spiritual development. Work experience and social service included in the programme must prove to be of great social value.

The Report of the Commission provides "some basic thinking and framework for taking at least the first step towards bringing about what may be called an educational revolution in the country." It asks for the reconstruction of education at all

levels anew. Success must not be far if the lessons of the past are not forgotten, if the present is understood and if there is a vision of the future to guide and inspire effort.