

CHAPTER III

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKS

Introduction

- I. School Surveys in U.S.A.
- II. Previous Works in India
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used in Accreditation
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In this chapter, first of all, an idea is given regarding the school survey movement in U.S.A. Then, a brief review is given about the previous works regarding school survey in India. On these attempts, certain observations are made. Then, the need for further research is stressed and finally, on the basis of all these points, a brief idea is given about the present study.

The roots and the beginnings of the evaluation of schools are found in U.S.A. The development of methods for undertaking surveys has been intimately related to the development of accreditation procedures in U.S.A. This is hardly surprising, since accrediting associations, represent the major enterprises that engage in school survey work, although professors of education, educational consultants, state and local superintendents and others engage in surveys of schools to varying degrees.

I. SCHOOL SURVEYS IN THE U.S.A.

The evaluation and school survey practice are known more in U.S.A. In India, the concept of evaluation

has not taken shape till

Now. It would be worthwhile to study, therefore, what attempts have been made towards school survey practice in the U.S.A.

As developed so far, a school survey is a research procedure applied to a school or school system, or to a group of either, in whole or in part, the purpose of which is to evaluate the service and its purpose and explain alterations or extensions by which the service may be improved. At the outset, the emphasis was on evaluation; this was promptly changed, however, and the survey has been developed as an instrument for improving the schools.¹

The survey movement began some fifty years back in U.S.A. The ideas were seized upon with enthusiasm by educational leaders and the practice spread rapidly to all parts of the country and to all types of educational enterprises. The school survey was not an entirely new phenomenon when it first appeared. It was obviously but one other expression of the new scientific movement in evaluation parallel to the testing movement.

If educational science was one parent of the survey, the other was the circumstances of the nineties which focussed attention of the public, generally, upon

¹ Walter S. Monroe, Encyclopaedia of Educational Research, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p.1126.

the idea of efficiency in the management. The growing cost of schools with the high taxes provoked wide inquiry as to what the Americans were getting for the tax dollar.

Thus, the practical needs and suitable circumstances for the school survey appeared just when the new science of education had begun to provide the needed concepts and principles and the necessary tools and leadership for such a work.

But the development came early to the survey from two directions - directly from experience in survey work, indirectly from scientific studies of education, then going on, mainly in the universities. Experience in surveying revealed that; regardless of the number of separate studies made, the survey must be developed as a single unified instrument of enquiry, focussed upon the progressive improvement of schools.

Along with this idea of unity, which was partly a problem in organization, there was rapid growth in the number and kinds of techniques used in the analysis and presentation of facts pertaining to problems in such fields as attendance, finance, playground, space, etc.

The leaders of the survey movement began to study

and deliberate upon the problem of how to make a survey. An outline of a plan for a survey was presented before the National Society for the Study of Education by Smith and Judd² in 1914. In 1918, Bliss published his methods and standards for local school surveys, and Sears, his test, the School Survey, in 1925; and a plan for self-survey of a State School System by the Research Division of the National Education Association added many details to the literature on survey planning.

Notable reports of this type of work are those by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools on higher education³ and by the co-operative work of the regional associations of colleges and secondary schools.⁴ These studies seem to have had direct value to the schools they covered, as well as a broader effect by way of clarified and revised educational standards for the country as a whole.

2 H.L.Smith and C.H.Judd, Plan for Organizing School Surveys, Thirteenth Year Book, (N.S.S. E. Part II, 1916), p.85.

3 North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools Committee on revision standards, Commission of higher institutions. The Evaluation of Institutions of Higher Instruction, (University of Chicago Press, 1936, 37).

4 W.C.Bells, Education of Secondary Schools, General Report, (Washington, D.C.: Co-operative Study of Secondary School Standards, 1939), p.526.

As described by R.M.W.Travers⁵, the most comprehensive attempt to draw up a guide for the evaluation of schools was an outcome of the co-operative study of secondary school standards, which was first organized in 1933 by the representatives of six major regional accrediting associations. The following were the purposes of the study:

- (1) To determine the characteristics of a good secondary school.
- (2) To find out practical means and methods to evaluate the effectiveness of a school in terms of its objectives.
- (3) To determine the means and processes by which a good school develops into a better one.
- (4) To derive ways by which regional associations could stimulate and assist secondary schools to continue growth.

The same study also provided a series of schedules for evaluating secondary schools in the different areas. The points of criticism about the evaluative criteria

⁵ R.M.W., Travers, An Introduction to Educational Research, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p.262.

raised by Travers⁶ are quite noteworthy.

The items listed under each heading of the evaluation sheets vary in specificity. Some are highly specific, and ask whether staff members have had specific types of experiences; e.g. in the case of the item that asks whether home economic teachers had had actual work experience in this field. Some are so general that it seems almost impossible to determine whether the condition exists. For example, it may be almost impossible to answer in terms of the categories provided whether the programme of a school is based upon an analysis of the educational needs of youth, for it is not clear whether it is to be based on systematic investigation. Also, it is not clear what is meant by the educational needs of youth, for are these to be the needs already experienced, or needs in terms of the problems they will face later in life? The term "need" is one with a multitude of meanings. As another illustration of the same difficulty, one may wonder how it is possible to determine whether a programme encourages enlargement and enrichment of the pupil's scope of interests.

⁶ Ibid., p. 264.

Any criticism of the schedules prepared in the co-operative study of school standards must take into account the purposes for which they were prepared and the background of thinking on which they were based. A superficial examination of the schedules reveals that they seem to bear some resemblance to orthodox psychological and educational measuring instruments but that they do not meet customary standards of acceptability. This criticism is not entirely fair, even though it may be pointed out that the end result of the use of the schedules is a single numerical rating based on a series of evaluation of a number of important elements in the situation. In addition, it may be pointed out that the ratings thus arrived at, are produced by a highly subjective process and cannot be appraised in terms of norms because no norms are available. Finally, the measurement expert might point out that no evidence is given concerning the reliability of the assessments provided by the schedules, nor is there any evidence concerning the validity of these assessments. These criticisms can, however, be answered in the following manner:

Firstly, the history of school inspection and accreditation during the last fifty years has illustrated a trend away from the use of quantitative data and a return

to qualitative standards. Therefore, the schedules that represent a recent stage of thinking in this area ~~will~~ represent a series of measuring devices to be used in a standard way; rather they are guides to the thinking of the person who is undertaking the evaluation. They present a series of topics that may be given consideration in the total assessment procedure, and it is recognized that some of these may be irrelevant in some situations and that some relevant ones may have been excluded from the list. Some common guide to thought is better than each assessor to be entirely his own guide.

Secondly, numerical norms of the type provided by most publishers of achievement tests would be largely meaningless in the assessment of secondary schools, since different schools must be assessed by different standards. The curriculum provided by a large secondary school, serving an industrial population, must differ in some ways from that of a small school, serving an agricultural community. The failure of schools of the latter type to meet the needs of the agricultural population is the most common criticism of professional visitors to them, and yet this is an entirely different criticism from that directed against schools in industrial communities.

On the other hand, the criticism concerning the lack of evidence on the reliability or validity of the recorded assessments cannot be passed off lightly. If individuals do not show substantial agreement with one another in the entries made on the schedule with respect to a specific school, then the schedules and the records have no value. Evidence of reliability would be fairly easy to obtain, and the only real excuse for its lack is the large amount of money that such an undertaking would probably involve. Evidence of the validity of the end products of the schedules must also be produced.

II. PREVIOUS WORKS IN INDIA

In India, the movement of evaluating the system of secondary schools has just begun in actual practice. Two attempts towards the construction of evaluative criteria are commendable, in this direction. The first attempt was made by Professor Hugh B. Wood, who as a member of the U.S.A. Team of Educationists directed the work in India, under the auspices of United States Educational Foundation in India; and who conducted four workshops at Patna, Jabalpur, Baroda and Mysore in this connection. The evaluative criteria, prepared by this Committee in 1940 and revised in 1950, were studied, and a group of eight trainees

in the Baroda workshop decided to prepare a similar set of criteria for Indian schools. Their work was reviewed and completed by some of the trainees of the Mysore camp, and the 'evaluative criteria' for Indian Secondary Schools is the result.⁷

In his book on 'Secondary School Administration', the author elucidated the criteria for evaluating a secondary school, and has given a revised form of the evaluative criteria.⁸

This very attempt prompted the present investigator to take up this study. On a careful, close and detailed study of these two works, the investigator made the following observations:

Regarding the first work, on a close study, one can find that the criteria run over hundred pages, and its very bulk defeats its purpose. Though, some aspects of this work have good application, the too many details and the stupendous labour involved in filling them render the

7 Evaluative Criteria, A Committee of the Secondary Education Workshops, The United States Educational Foundation in India, (New Delhi: 1954).

8 S.N.Mukerjee, Secondary School Administration, (Baroda: Acharya Book Depot, 1959), pp. 297-328.

work unsuitable for the practical purposes. This work is the first of its kind in India and it bears the thinking of as many as 250 representative authorities in educational administration. It is a good work to start with, but it cannot be taken as it is, without trying it out on a sample of schools.

This shortcoming was improved upon by Dr. Mukerjee⁹ in his work, which is the second attempt in India towards the evaluation of schools. The criteria of Prof. Mukerjee show the revised form of the first work. The first work on evaluation has been revised in the sense that the author has changed some of the nomenclatures of the criteria, made them applicable to Indian schools, and has introduced terminology understandable in Indian set-up. The work has been considerably recast and abridged.

After the investigator studied these criteria, he had a conference with Dr. Mukerjee on two points: (i) that the investigator wanted to try out these criteria in the form of a questionnaire on a sample of schools, and (ii) that he wanted the criteria to be supplemented by some fact finding questions as a result

⁹ Ibid., pp. 297-328.

of which one can gauge the qualitative and quantitative progress of schools in Gujarat. As a result of this, if the sample is properly chosen, it would give a fairly complete picture of the secondary schools of any area chosen for investigation.

These observations are made only as far as the evaluative criteria are concerned. As regards school surveys also, the work has been taken up by DEPSE (Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education) under NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training). They have set-up a special staff and office for "school survey" of India. They have selected a sample of 1,000 schools from all the states of India for survey. A questionnaire¹⁰ totalling 82 pages has been published by them. This was to be filled in by the headmasters. All the Extension Centers were requested to give active co-operation to this survey movement. The present investigator was the one who participated in the discussion of the construction of this questionnaire; he guided 17 headmasters in filling the questionnaire and also scrutinized these completed

10 DEPSE-NCERT, The School Survey Questionnaire, (NCERT, 7-A, Lancers Road, Timarpur, New Delhi, 1964).

questionnaires. It can be seen that as far as the survey is concerned, the school survey unit has definitely made painstaking efforts for bringing out a clear picture of schools in different states of India.

The correspondence with the Directorates of Education of different states revealed that they have also started to work actively for evaluation of schools in their jurisdiction. Some states are holding conferences with the Educational Inspectors for detailing out the criteria of evaluation of schools. In some states, the Departments of Education themselves have taken up such surveys in order to get a clear picture of the present state of secondary schools under their jurisdiction.

III. OBSERVATIONS OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA USED IN ACCREDITATION

Regarding evaluative criteria also, some scientific thinking is necessary. On the study of such criteria, the investigator noted the following points:

- (1) There is a general agreement that the main ultimate criterion of the effectiveness of an educational programme is the extent to

which it produces desirable changes in the pupils. Evaluative criteria for use in accreditation are based on the judgments of educators that certain characteristics of a school do have an effect on the extent to which the objectives of learning are achieved.

On the basis of this criticism, it was decided that the criteria and conditions of a good school must be given ^{priority ratings} by the principals and educators. There can be thousand such 'conditions' which go to make a good school and all of such conditions cannot be taken for granted. Only those 'conditions' which are essential and which directly contribute towards making a good school, should be taken into account.

- (ii) Normative data may have relatively little value since they do not set minimum standards but only show how one institution compares with others. On the norms provided, one institution appears to be

low and apparently inadequate because others are higher on the scale, although the fact may be that all the institutions are inadequate.

- (iii) The normative material provided was developed during a period of great educational change, which included times of over-supply and under-supply of teachers. These changes would make it difficult, if not impossible, to use norms of the types provided, because by the standards provided, institutions would show great changes even from year to year.

No attempt should be made to find out 'norms' because these schools are a sort of process in themselves. They grow, they change and they develop as times pass. Therefore, there cannot be any such thing as 'norms'. If one wishes, one can find out the 'norms' but then, such norms will be of no use after even one year of study.
 This is particularly^{so} because secondary schools in India are under a transitional

period. The process of change is very rapid. Therefore, it is not the 'norms' that will be useful, but it is the study of schools on the basis of recommendations of Mudaliar Report that will prove useful.

- (iv) The system of evaluative criteria does not take into account the fact that unitary items may be crucial. A school that has a programme quite unrelated to the needs of its students should not be accredited even if it is adequate on all of the other dimensions listed. A rural school that fails to take into account the fact that most of the pupils will eventually enter agricultural pursuits is inadequate, even if it achieves high scores on other variables.

Each condition in a criterion must be considered to be important. Without fulfilment of even one criterion, the schools cannot progress even though progress is shown on the records.

IV. THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

J.B.Sears, while writing on school surveys commented that most of the types of research reported above have been useful and should be continued. He further writes:

In the light of changes that have come in instructional objectives and in the total programme of instructional service, one or two additional or slightly different lines of study suggest themselves. So far, we have made few studies of the values sought by surveys or used in interpreting findings, or in the recommendations made.

For instance, by what criteria may one say of the instruction as a whole or of a division of it, as good? Are the same criteria used similarly in all surveys? How do the criteria check against the prevalent philosophy of education? It seems possible that by careful studies, one might discover as to what criteria could best be brought to bear in evaluation studies and in bringing about recommended changes.¹¹

In connection with this idea, there is also a need for study of the problems examined by surveys. It is not enough to know the criteria of goodness. We must also know through what studies one may be able to

¹¹ J.B.Sears, "The School Survey", (Houghton 1925), as quoted in Encyclopaedia of Educational Research, (New York: The Macmillan and Company, 1950), p.1126.

determine the presence of absence of goodness. These lines of study would seem to lead in the direction of locating real difficulty in all the areas of school work.

Moreover, if we look to the work done in India, it seems there is a lack of systematic and scientific effort of school evaluation in any particular state. Various states are attempting now-a-days to think about devising a system of school evaluation. The thinking has already started. But a specimen attempt is wanted. The present study is a sort of specimen study - a study of the sample of secondary schools of Gujarat State on the basis of definite criteria for evaluation of schools. The study is an intensive study as regards the criteria of secondary schools and the study is a limited study as regards the sample and jurisdiction of the area of study is concerned.

V. THE PRESENT STUDY

Looking to the need for further research in the matter of school surveys, a number of problems could be contemplated. First of all, there could be simple exploratory surveys in order to find out the situation as it is. Such a study can help to evolve specific

hypothesis for still further studies. Another kind of research could be undertaken to test certain hypotheses which might have been evolved by the investigator on the basis of certain documents, reports or public opinions trends. In the third place, there could be undertaken more exact studies for the development of evaluative criteria for judging the efficiency of the schools. In such a case, specific conditions of the school will have to be correlated to the desirable outcomes of the process of evaluation. And, the validity of such conditions will have to be established.

The present study is somewhat like the second example of the work stated above. As mentioned in the first chapter, the idea has evolved out of the situation as assessed by the Secondary Education Commission and through the writings of other eminent educationists. And as stated in the previous sections of this chapter, the evolution of evaluative criteria in the United States as well as in India has provided a framework for this study. It is also made clear in the objectives of the study that the purpose of this investigation is to evaluate the present position of secondary schools in the State of Gujarat; in the light of the recommendations of the

Secondary Education Commission. Therefore, the nature of this study is of an evaluative survey of the secondary schools in the whole of Gujarat State. It is not intended^{either} to develop any evaluative criteria or to develop any specific hypothesis for specific follow-up investigation.

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