

FROM RCE TO RIE AND BEYOND: A JOURNEY OF HALF A CENTURY

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A bird's eye view is given here of the journey that the Regional Institutes of Education have taken along with their parent body, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi for more than fifty years. The focus is on the Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar.

1. Prologue

I came to know about the Regional College (now Institute) of Education (RCE, now RIE), Bhubaneswar in 1972 when I was a Pre-University student at Fakir Mohan College, Balasore, Orissa (now Odisha). Owing to a malpractice issue, one of the science papers of the previous year's Pre-University Examination of the College was scratched. Out of panic, a few of the affected students applied to the Regional College of Education, Bhubaneswar and got admitted into its B. Sc. B. Ed. course. However, in a short while, the scratched paper was re-examined and the students returned to Fakir Mohan College. I found out from them that in spite of the short stay, they liked the ambience of RCE very much. Then, around 1980, while working for Ph. D. at the Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar I met Dr. J. K. Mohapatra, a senior member of the Physics faculty of RCE. What I gathered from him about his college and its parent organization, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, made me think that I might like to work in such a reputed institution of teacher education. This ultimately happened and I joined the NCERT in 1986 after leaving a regular teaching position at Bhadrak College for which I was selected by the Orissa Public Service Commission. Ever since, I have enjoyed being a member of the NCERT family. For over thirty years, I have seen changes happening to NCERT and RCE in different forms. I have also heard of the changes that had occurred before my joining. In 2012, the Regional Institute of Education, Bhubaneswar celebrated the Golden Jubilee year. For over half a century, the Institute has led a very large number of people on their ways to many professions including teaching and has contributed immensely to education in the country along the guidelines set by the NCERT. On the 5th of August 2016 we observed the 54th foundation day of the Institute. On the 1st of September 2016 we are going to celebrate the 56th foundation of the NCERT. In between these two significant events it is worthwhile to take a look at the eventful history of the Institute. Hence this write-up, which only gives a partial account, inextricably linked with the history of the parent body, the NCERT. For this purpose I shall make use of whatever material I have access to. Let us begin with the beginning of the NCERT.

2. Origin of the NCERT

Immediately after the independence in 1947, the Government of India showed its concern for education by establishing several bodies such as the Central Institute of Education (1947), the Central Bureau of Textbook Research (1954), the Central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance (1954), the Directorate of Extension Programmes for Secondary Education (1958) [which was initially established as the All India Council for Secondary Education (1955)], the National Institute of Basic Education (1956), the National Fundamental Education Centre (1956), and the National Institute of Audio-visual Education (1959). By merging the above named seven institutions (NCERT, 2011, p.1), the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established in 1961 by the Ministry of Education, Government of India as an autonomous body *to assist and advise the Central and State Governments on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education*. On 6th June 1961 it was registered as a Society under “the Societies’ Registration Act (Act XXI of 1860) being an Act for the registration of Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies and In the matter of National Council of Educational Research and Training Society”, with permanent address at Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110016. The first Governing Body of the NCERT comprising 11 members was headed by Dr. K. L. Shrimali, then Education Minister, Government of India. Dr. Shrimali also headed the team of 7 signatories to the Memorandum of Association. The Ministry of Education, Government of India announced the establishment of the NCERT in its Resolution of July 27, 1961 (Appendix 1) and it formally started functioning on *September 1, 1961*.

The Governing Body of NCERT, with Dr. K. L. Shrimali as the President, submitted the first report on the activities of NCERT for the period September 1, 1961 to March 31, 1962 (from the date of inception to the close of the financial year) on January 5, 1963. It may be pertinent to quote the main objectives of NCERT as delineated in §1.2 (Objectives) of this report (NCERT, 2011, p.vii) as the same has a bearing on the emergence of the Regional Institutes of Education:

- (a) To undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research in all branches of education.
- (b) To organize pre-service and in-service training mainly at an advanced level.
- (c) In collaboration with the State Governments and other authorities or agencies concerned,
 - (i) to organize extension services for such institutions in the country as are engaged in educational research, training of teachers or provision of extension services to schools;
 - (ii) generally to disseminate improved techniques and practices in educational institutions in the country;
 - (iii) to undertake or organize studies, investigations and surveys relating to educational matters or the appraisalment of educational programmes.
- (d) To establish and conduct a National Institute of Education at the Headquarters of the Government of India for the development of research, advanced training (both pre-

service and in-service) of educational administrators, teacher-educators and other high level personnel required for education, and the provision of extension services.

- (e) To establish and conduct Regional Institutes in different parts of the country for the development of research, training and extension in general, and for the development of multipurpose secondary education in particular.

3. The Regional Colleges of Education Programme

In our presentation here we shall extensively quote from the document titled “Plan and Programme: Regional Colleges of Education” (NCERT, 1963), henceforth referred to as PP, in which many other relevant documents are cited.

Background

In the initial years after independence, the Government of India was not content with just establishing institutions to look after different aspects of education. It set up a commission to examine the secondary education scenario in the country. In 1953, the Secondary Education Commission reported the many ills and inadequacies in the prevailing system of secondary education and recommended (MOE, 1953) that

- high schools be upgraded to higher secondary schools;
- multipurpose schools be established “with a variety of diversified courses to suit the different abilities, interests and aptitudes of an ever increasing student population”;
- provision be made for “a core programme which includes social studies, general science and craft education”; and
- the facilities for the teaching of science be expanded and improved.

In 1954, the Central Advisory Board of Education endorsed the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission, after which the Government of India initiated the establishment of *multipurpose secondary schools* with a purpose “to provide diversified programmes to cater to the varying interests, aptitudes, and talents represented in the increasing proportion of the population who are entering the secondary schools, and to link education at the secondary stage to the needs of the country.” As a result, though over 2000 (about one-eighth) of the secondary schools became multipurpose by the end of the Second Five Year Plan (1961-62), “only a small fraction offered more than three of the seven diversified courses which had been recommended for these schools.” In the mean time, some conceptual, logistic and systemic problems in the implementation of the scheme of multipurpose school were discovered by the Ministry of Education in 1958 and a team of experts from the Ohio State University in 1959. On the basis of their observations and recommendations (OSU, 1959), the Planning Commission proposed in 1961 (PC, 1961) that

- “during the Third Plan attention should be concentrated on consolidation of the multipurpose scheme by strengthening the institutions already established”;

- “an integrated teacher training programme for the multipurpose schools be undertaken in four regional training colleges which would prepare teachers for the multipurpose schools through in-service and pre-service training programmes both in the practical and in the scientific subjects”.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Education, Government of India “decided to establish four Regional Colleges of Education in the country for the training of teachers required for multipurpose and secondary schools”. The Regional Colleges project was transferred to the NCERT which was established in 1961. The work on the project began in January 1962 by a team comprising officers of the Government of India and consultants from the Ohio State University under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in India. A number of national level consultations were held with subject experts, educators, educational administrators, and officials of the prospective affiliating universities to finalize the plan and programme for the proposed colleges.

Assumptions

The Regional Colleges programme (PP) was founded on the following key assumptions pertaining to preparation of secondary school teachers:

1. “The professional competence required of the teacher is achieved through an organized programme of learning experiences; it is not merely a by-product of becoming a well educated person.”
2. “The education of a teacher based broadly on a foundation of general education should include a thorough mastery of subject matter so as to give him an insight into its structure and interrelationships, and professional preparation.”
3. “General education which contributes to growth as a person, specialization which provides scholarly knowledge of the subjects to be taught, and professional education which leads to understanding and skill in professional performance, must be integrated into a total programme.”
4. “The prospective teacher must assume responsibility for his own education in an increasing measure.”
5. “Opportunities to work with adolescent learners must be an integral part of the professional preparation of the secondary school teacher.”

The programme envisaged that the prospective teacher should get enough opportunities to reflect upon his learning, take self-driven initiatives, handle problems ranging from evaluation of achievement to teaching of subject specific advanced concepts, and study his students and school processes besides gaining first-hand experience of teaching in a classroom. It was also advised that the three areas of study namely *general education*, *specialization*, and *professional education* should not be treated as isolated compartments; rather each area should lead to others

by *natural gradation*, and the areas should reinforce each other. It was further expected that “the staff will work as one unit and that ALL staff members in ALL departments will strive to help the prospective teacher in forming an integrated structure of what he learns”. It was advised that only “those higher secondary school students who have highest potential for becoming successful teachers” be selected for the teacher education programme. In-service education programmes for educational workers, research activities, preparation of instructional materials, and other educational services were included in the total programme of the Colleges of Education. The Colleges were planned as residential institutions to ensure all round development of the students – curricular as well as co-curricular, the non-academic activities centering on “the student’s health, citizenship, and creative interests and abilities”.

Objectives

The major objectives of the Regional Colleges of Education as spelt out in the PP were:

1. “To develop and provide a programme of teacher education for the multipurpose schools and to prepare teachers of technical subjects, science, crafts, agriculture, commerce, home science and fine arts.”
2. “To provide in-service courses for the existing teachers of the practical subjects in multipurpose schools.”
3. “To provide in-service programmes and field services for the teachers, supervisors and administrators concerned with the multipurpose schools in the region in which it is located.”
4. “To organize and develop a model demonstration multipurpose school.”
5. “To function as regional centre for programmes of in-service education and field services for secondary schools in general.”
6. “To undertake pilot studies and research projects in the methods of teaching, in relation to the multipurpose schools as well as the general secondary schools.”
7. “To evolve and try out improved patterns of teacher education.”
8. “To prepare and disseminate instructional materials for secondary schools in general and multipurpose schools in particular.”
9. “To collaborate with other institutions in initiating and promoting improved methods and practices, to function as a clearing house in this regard and generally to provide leadership.”

Locations

The four Regional Colleges of Education were located at Ajmer for the northern region, Bhubaneswar for the eastern region, Bhopal for the western region, and Mysore for the southern region, the affiliating universities being Rajasthan, Utkal, Vikram, and Mysore respectively.

Approximately one hundred acres of land were provided by the home states free of cost for the Colleges.

Demonstration multipurpose school

A demonstration multipurpose school, with recognition from the Central Board of Secondary Education, was established in the campus of each college with two basic objectives:

1. “To serve as exemplary institution to demonstrate a good multipurpose secondary school programme.”
2. “To serve as a laboratory for new methods in teaching practice.”

International assistance

The Regional Colleges project received assistance from the United States Agency for International Development through a contract with the College of Education, Ohio State University, Columbus (Ohio) and UNESCO in the following manner:

- “Technical assistance in the form of educational consultants to work at the Central Unit as well as at the Colleges.”
- “Equipment to the value of about Rs. 15 lakhs from the USA.”
- “Training at the Ohio State University of 21 participants belonging to the College staff (20) and the Central Unit (1) for a period of 7 months to study the working of comprehensive high schools and the pattern of preparing teachers of agriculture, commerce, industrial arts, technology and in-service education; Staff of the Department of Science to have training facilities under UNESCO programme.”
- Technical assistance from UNESCO to the Science Departments of the Colleges under the Expanded Technical Assistance Programme.

Academic programmes

The following types of programmes were proposed to be offered at the colleges:

1. Four-year programme for preparing teachers of science.
2. Four-year programme for preparing teachers of technology.
3. One-year teacher education programme in each of the following areas:
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Commerce
 - c. Fine Arts (Bhopal and Bhubaneswar only)
 - d. Home Science (Ajmer and Mysore only)
 - e. Science
 - f. Technology

4. A programme of in-service education
5. Three types of programmes for craft teachers: a one-year diploma programme, a two-year diploma programme, and a two-year degree programme

It was suggested that the programmes at different Colleges would be based upon the needs of the respective regions; initially the four-year programmes would start at Ajmer and Bhubaneswar only; the four-year programmes in science and technology were experimental in nature with integration of subject matter, professional education, and general education throughout the four years; four-year programmes in other areas could be started in future depending upon the need and the success of the four-year courses in science and technology. A time schedule was drawn out according to which after starting in August 1963 the first batch of four-year degree programme would pass out in June 1967.

Management structure and staffing pattern

In the PP, details of administration, finance, management structures and staffing pattern were clearly laid out as highlighted below.

- *Principal*, with over-all responsibility of the college and the demonstration multipurpose school
- *Vice-Principal*, to hold delegated responsibility
- *Coordinator of Student Personnel Services* (Reader in Psychology – part-time), for organization, coordination, and supervision of guidance programme in college, hostel, and school
- *Counsellor* (Lecturer in Psychology – part-time), for implementation of guidance programme and placement service
- *Hostel Counsellors* (Members of the staff – part-time), to look after the guidance programme for boarders, their health, welfare, discipline, and food services
- *Coordinator of Student Field Experiences* (Reader’s rank – part-time), as in-charge of the organization and administration of student field experience programme
- *Coordinator of Extension Services* (Reader – part-time), for need assessment, planning and coordination of in-service courses besides coordinating the activities of the Extension Services Centres in the region
- *Director of Health, Physical Education and Recreation* (full-time), with responsibility for the corresponding activities in the college
- *Coordinator of Curriculum* (Reader – part-time), to look after development and improvement of courses and instructional materials by (i) “serving as secretary to the *Committee on Programme Improvement*,” (ii) “serving as a member of the *Instructional Materials Coordinating Committee*,” and (iii) “directing the *College Instructional Materials Centre*”
- *Coordinator of Research* (Reader – half-time), with responsibility for (i) “channeling and securing the cooperation of members of the college staff in research projects sponsored

by NIE and other agencies,” (ii) “channeling and transmitting research needs of the college and demonstration school to central, state, and other organizations which have educational research as a primary objective,” and (iii) “encouraging and assisting small research projects undertaken by the college staff”

- *Department Heads*, with responsibility for organization, development and administration of the their departments including, besides other things, “providing leadership to the department in maintaining a high level of scholarship, and a tone of dedicated service”
- *Administrative Officer*, with responsibility for the financial, business, and establishment affairs of the college
- *Hostel Superintendent* (Warden), as in-charge of general supervision of hostel services

In order to assist the Principal several *Faculty Standing Committees* were proposed in addition to a *Faculty Council*:

- (i) *Principal’s Advisory Committee*, to review and recommend policy decisions; to review all new programmes and courses; to review committee reports; etc.
- (ii) *Committee on Programme Improvement*, to advise on the programme of instruction and guidance, the development of instructional materials, the programme for the professional growth of the staff.

Two subcommittees would help this committee:

Sub-Committee on Academic Standards and Evaluation, to look after instruction, evaluation, students’ attendance, and university relationships.

Sub-Committee on Student Field Experiences that include school observation, community experiences and practice teaching.

- (iii) *Committee on Student Affairs*, to advise on student affairs including students’ self-government and guidance programme.
- (iv) *Committee on Extension Services* that include in-service programmes.

Besides the above committees, also proposed were a *Students’ Council* and a *Regional Advisory Committee on Extension Services*.

The projected student enrolment at RCE, Bhubaneswar for different courses including 50 in-service teachers (on campus at any time) was proposed to be 250 in the 1st year (July 1963) going up to 695 in the 5th year (July 1967).

The staff needed for a college was based on considerations as follows:

- (a) “From 16 to 18 lecture and seminar periods per week plus administrative responsibilities, such as committee work, is considered a full-time load for a staff member, on the assumption that the staff will also be engaged continuously in planning and developing instructional materials, studies and investigations and similar activities bearing on their professional work.” “One lecture or seminar period has been reckoned as a 50-minute period (45 minutes class time plus 5 minutes interval between periods).”
- (b) “One and one-half laboratory periods have been considered equal to one lecture period.”

- (c) “The administrative duties of a head of the department dealing with a one-year programme are considered as equivalent to four lecture periods per week. For the department head dealing jointly with a four-year programme and a one-year programme, the administrative duties have been considered equivalent to eight lecture periods per week.”
- (d) “For research writing and special assignments, the instructional load may if considered necessary be appropriately reduced by the Principal.”
- (e) “It will be necessary for most students to take their *Internship in Teaching* in schools located at distant points from the college (including other states and allowing students to return to their home states for internship experience). This will require the full-time responsibilities of the concerned staff members during the eight-week internship period. During this period, however, departmental staff members will be free to devote full-time to supervision. During this eight-week period, one staff member should not attempt to supervise more than ten students. However, the amount of travel involved and the quality of the cooperating teachers in the schools where students are placed should be taken into consideration in determining the number of students that any one staff member can supervise effectively.”
- (f) “A minimum of one full-time staff member will be required in each department for in-service education. (N.B. This is for the purpose of estimating staff requirements only. The work-load of in-service education will actually be shared by all staff members.)”
- (g) “The regular academic year will be a minimum of 222 working days excluding final examination days.”

The staff-student ratio was calculated on the basis of student enrolment, nature of programmes, in-service training programme, and class size. For RCE, Bhubaneswar the recommended ratio was, 1:11 in July 1963 and 1:12 in July 1967. At the College the instructional staff to be in position in June 1963 included 1 in Agriculture, none in Commerce, 3 in Education, 2 in English, none in Fine Arts, 1 in Physical Education, 3 in Regional Language, 4 in Science, 1 in Social Science, and 4 in Technology; the numbers to be added after June 1963 were 3 in Agriculture, 3 in Commerce, 8 in Education, 1 in English, 3 in Fine Arts, 1 in Physical Education, 1 in Regional Language, 9 in Science, 1 in Social Science, and 4 in Technology.

Daily work schedule

The proposed college schedule was based on a six-day week according to which Saturday morning would be devoted to co-curricular activities and supplementary laboratory work, and Saturday evenings to co-curricular activities and sports events. There would be 9 (45+5)-minute teaching periods each day (Monday to Friday) between 8 a.m. and 4:35 p.m. with a lunch break from 12:05 to 1:20 p.m. The durations 6:15-6:45 a.m. and 5:50-7:00 p.m. would be earmarked for health and physical development, and health, physical education and recreation respectively. In order to increase the amount of time available to students for independent study and

investigation, self-directed activities etc. it was suggested that after experimenting with the four-year programmes in science and technology, ways should be found to enable the students to spend less amount of time in attending lectures and doing laboratory work.

Field experience programme

The Student Field Experience programme was designed to apply and test all theories and principles taught in the total programme. It would comprise both observation and participation activities on the part of students and would be provided in a variety of settings including the Demonstration School, the local schools, and the cooperating schools. The Internship in Teaching would be the culminating part of the Student Field Experience programme. Continuous in-service education and periodic seminars for the personnel involved including cooperating teachers were considered to be essential for the success of the internship programme.

Guidance programme

The Guidance programme would be an essential and important component of the programme that proposes to integrate general, professional, and content education. Such a programme was suggested for the college and the demonstration school separately. The programme would address a wide range of needs of the students including their initial orientation, personal and social adjustments, potential abilities, educational careers, and placement.

Material development

Each college was suggested to have an Instructional Materials Development Centre to plan, develop, try out and refine new instructional materials, which would then be sent to the Central Instructional Materials Services Unit for reproduction and extensive distribution.

Selection of students

The PP suggested ways of selection of students for various programmes. For the four-year programmes in science and technology, for example, the selection would be based on “comprehensive data collected from academic records, secondary school guidance records, application forms and interviews”. It was further suggested that “as a pre-requisite to admission, all students must sign a bond to serve in the education profession”.

Examination

In the domain of examination, it was suggested that the colleges would be initially guided by the dictum of UGC (1962): *Teaching, learning, and examining constitute an indissoluble trinity of functions in an academic community, and they must be related to each other, and to the objective which the educational process is desired to achieve.* The colleges would then develop new methods of evaluation, with focus gradually shifting from external and terminal examinations to internal and continuous assessment.

Uniqueness of four-year programmes

The PP laid down the need and uniqueness of the four-year programmes in the following language: “The four-year programme for prospective teachers of science and technology is based on careful study of the needs of secondary schools in India and of the recommendations of several study committees. It differs from the traditional course in the following ways:

1. It is a coordinated four-year course as opposed to a three-year degree course plus a one-year professional course. The total programme is envisaged as a professional programme with the main object of preparing teachers of science and of technical subjects for the secondary schools.
2. General education, professional education, and content are integrated in the four-year sequence. Professional education starts with psychology in the second year and terminates with “internship” in teaching in the fourth year. Care has been taken to maintain a balance between the time devoted to general education, professional education, and content.
3. Theory and practice are viewed as a single continuing process and not as two separate activities.”

It further justified the inclusion of general education thus: “General education (comprising Languages, Social Sciences, and Health and Physical Education) is included in the four-year programme to introduce the student to the national heritage, man’s creative expression and thought and also to world of recreation. General education however is viewed as part of the total curriculum and a deeper study of selected subjects, if properly handled is as much a liberalizing influence, leading to insights into the relationship and unity of knowledge.”

It was suggested that out of the total time available for the four-year programme 59%, 22%, and 19% be devoted to content courses, professional education, and general education respectively.

The PP laid down the course and paper structures with details of syllabi, and teaching and evaluation methods for various programmes. In the regional language paper on Hindi pertaining to the four-year programmes in science and technology, it specifically suggested the inclusion of “Translation of English passages on technical and scientific subjects into idiomatic Hindi; familiarity with the list of technical terms in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, Engineering, etc., published by the Government of India.” For the same programmes, the general education component had two papers: (i) Social Science for 2nd year, comprising a broad integration of the various elements of the social sciences (the *six* unit headings being, *Survey of history, Cultural heritage of India, Political institutions, Problems of national unity, Economic development, and India and the world*), and (ii) History of Science and Technology for 3rd year, the *four* unit headings being, *The nature and early development of science and technology, The nature and philosophy of modern science, The major scientific and technological developments and their influence on each other, The impact of science and technology on man individually and*

on national and international developments. It was suggested that this course would be taught cooperatively by the staff of the social science, science, and technology departments.

4. The Regional Colleges of Education (RCEs) Came Into Being

On the basis of the Plan and Programme (PP) document some of whose salient features have been discussed above, the Regional Colleges of Education (RCEs) were established at Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, and Mysore along with the corresponding multipurpose schools, popularly called the Demonstration Multipurpose Schools (DMS). Whereas the RCEs at Ajmer, Bhubaneswar, and Mysore started functioning from 1963-64, the one at Bhopal started in 1964-65. In a short time, the Colleges developed their own campuses with resident students and staff. The campuses were abuzz with activities.

Though the RCEs started with the various programmes envisioned in the PP document, in course of time, they got modified through deletion, addition, etc. (NCERT, 1987). A four-year course in English was added. The four-year technology course was discontinued on the grounds that (i) technology stream was not offered in most of the multipurpose schools, and (ii) the Government of India set up four Technical Teachers Training Institutes (TTTIs). As the multipurpose school scheme was subsequently discontinued and there was a fall in demand, the four-year course in commerce and one-year courses in home science and fine arts were discontinued. A Summer-cum-Correspondence course for B. Ed. degree was started in 1966 in all the RCEs in order to clear the back-log of untrained teachers in secondary schools which ran for a number of years. One-year M. Ed. course was started in all RCEs. In order to produce competent teachers for higher secondary classes, two-year M. Sc. Ed. course was started at RCE, Mysore in physics, chemistry, and mathematics, and at RCE, Bhubaneswar in life sciences.

Besides the pre-service programmes, all the RCEs started offering field services, extension programmes, and in-service training for teachers and other personnel mostly on the basis of the needs of the states under their jurisdiction. The establishment of Field Offices by NCERT in different states enabled the RCEs to interact with the states more closely. After a few years, however, the field offices were closed and the staff transferred to RCEs.

Over the years, the management structure at RCEs has undergone changes. They have posts of Dean of Instructions instead of Vice-Principal. They do not have any Counsellors; instead the DM Schools have them.

Research, consultation, development of curricula and teaching learning materials etc. have become an integral part of activities at RCEs. With time they have established themselves as premier and coveted centres of teacher education in the respective regions. In some school systems, the RCE products are preferred over others, and they even conduct on-campus selection camps at the RCEs.

5. Reviews of NCERT/ RCEs

Like any good institution the NCERT subjected itself and its constituent units like RCEs to periodic reviews through the Ministry of Education / MHRD, Government of India as well as on its own initiative almost from its inception. Some of the committees constituted for review are: Nag Choudhury Committee (1968); J. N. Kapur Committee (1974); Internal Committee chaired by Director, NCERT (1976); ASCI, Hyderabad (1978); R. C. Das Committee (1980); Committee chaired by P. S. Sabadanayagam, Education Secretary (1980); Bose-Kulkarni Committee (1981), Task Force on NCERT (1985); R. C. Das Committee (1987); Abbreviated Review of NCERT by MHRD (1995); Review Committee on RIEs (2007); Goverdhan Mehta Committee (2011).

It may be of interest to note some of the recommendations made by the various committees pertaining to the programmes and functioning of the RCEs (RC, 2007):

- Four-year integrated courses should be phased out (Nag Choudhury Committee, 1968) as by then the restructuring of the school system as multi-purpose schools had been abandoned.
- Four-year integrated courses should continue since the products are better than the products of one-year B. Ed. course. (Kapur Committee, 1974)
- One-year B. Ed. and the Correspondence-cum-Contact programmes are the core programmes of RCEs and the Four-year integrated courses need to be phased out. (Internal Committee chaired by Director, NCERT, 1976)
- Pre-service training programmes should be discontinued in RCEs and activities of RCEs should be restricted to development of teacher training methodology and limited training operations for demonstration. (ASCI, Hyderabad, 1978)
- RCEs should interact with the states and should assist in educational development of the states. (R. C. Das Committee, 1980)
- Only the innovative pre-service programmes should continue and innovativeness of the four-year programmes should be evaluated. (Task Force on NCERT, 1985)
- The Regional Colleges of Education be renamed as the Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs). (R. C. Das Committee, 1987)
- Four-year B. A. B. Ed. and two-year M. Sc. Ed. courses should be phased out and only four-year B. Sc. B. Ed. should continue. M. Ed. (Elementary) to be continued in place of M. Ed. (General). (Abbreviated Review of NCERT by MHRD, 1995)
- RIEs be restructured as Centres of Excellence of Teacher Education by revitalizing their programmes and functions. (Review Committee on RIEs, 2007)

- NCERT would do better as an Institution of National Importance (INI) rather than as a University since it has done a great service to the nation as a whole (assisting the central as well as state governments) by playing a pivotal role in shaping school education. (Goverdhan Mehta Committee, 2011)

6. From RCEs to RIEs

In 1982, a Task Force was set up by the Government of India under Dr (Smt) Madhuri Saha, the then UGC Chairperson to critically assess the role, organizational structure, and functions of NCERT. One of the recommendations of the Task Force was to *develop the Regional Colleges of Education into Regional Centres of NCERT*. After the Government accepted the recommendations of the Task Force in June 1985, the NCERT set up, in June 1986, a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. R. C. Das to consider in detail the above named specific recommendation of converting RCEs into Regional Centres. The R. C. Das Committee submitted its report in January 1987 one of whose major recommendations was to “*rename the Regional Colleges of Education into Regional Institutes of Education* instead of Regional Centres as the Institutions will be conducting various pre-service and in-service teacher education courses leading to degree/diploma of a University” (NCERT, 1987, p. 58). The report was accordingly titled, *Transformation of Regional Colleges of Education into Regional Institutes of Education of NCERT*. This recommendation, however, was not implemented immediately. In the mean time, several significant developments took place in the domain of school education and teacher education, such as the implementation of the National Policy on Education 1986, the emergence of the National Council of Teacher Education as a Statutory Body in 1993, and launching of the centrally sponsored District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994. Accordingly, some changes were envisaged in the functioning of NCERT and its constituent units. The Regional Colleges of Education were renamed as Regional Institutes of Education with effect from 18th April 1995 with discontinuation of some pre-service courses such as the four-year B. A. B. Ed. and two-year M. Sc. Ed. courses. The new name is still in use.

7. RCE (RIE), Bhubaneswar

The Corner Stone of RCE, Bhubaneswar was laid by Dr. K. L. Shrimali, the then Union Minister of Education on May 21, 1963. The College started functioning from August 5, 1963 with four-year courses in science and technology of 40 seats each. Since then the 5th August is celebrated as the Foundation Day of the College (Institute). From inception it is affiliated to Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. After working from a set of five rooms of Utkal University and accommodating students elsewhere the College shifted to its main building in October 1963. One-year B. Ed. course in Arts and Science with 80 seats and one-year B. Ed. course in Agriculture, Commerce, Fine Arts and Home Science with 20 seats were started in July 1964. M. Ed. course with 10 seats was added in 1965. Students for the various courses were selected on the basis of interviews by select committees. The Demonstration Multipurpose School was

opened in July 1964 with all vocational streams in addition to arts and science such as agriculture, commerce, fine arts, home science, and technology. However, the vocational teacher training courses, the four-year technology and one-year B. Ed. courses in vocational streams were dropped after five years as the state governments did not start vocational streams in their higher secondary schools. (Das, 2013).

Graphic descriptions of the initial years of RCE, Bhubaneswar and the attached DM School may be found in GJS (2013) and Udayaraga (2013) in which the old teachers and students have reminisced about their Alma Maters respectively.

The succession list of Principals of RCE (RIE) Bhubaneswar is: Dr. J. N. Kaul (9.6.1963-31.7.1964), Dr. R. C. Das (1.8.1964-10.6.1970), Prof. P. D. Sharma (25.6.1970-13.5.1972), Dr. R. C. Das (17.5.1972-1.11.1974), Dr. G. B. Kanungo (26.12.1974-31.1.1989), Dr. K. C. Panda (1.2.1989-4.4.1994), Dr. S. T. V. G. Acharyulu (5.4.1994-28.8.1995), Prof. G. K. Lehri (29.8.1995-4.2.1996), Prof. D. K. Bhattacharjee (5.2.1996-18.9.2000), Prof. M. A. Khader (19.9.2000-11.11.2004), Prof. M. P. Sinha (12.11.2004-31.1.2005), Prof. K. Dorasami (1.2.2005-24.5.2007), Prof. V. K. Sunwani (25.5.2007-12.11.2008 FN), Prof. U. K. Nanda (12.11.2008 AN- 6.12.2010 AN), Prof. S. C. Panda (6.12.2010 AN-30.6.2011), Prof. U. K. Nanda (30.6.2011 AN-30.11.2011 AN), Prof. (Ms.) Sabita Patanaik (1.12.2011-2.7.2012), Prof. K. B. Rath (2.7.2012 - continuing).

The succession list of Headmasters of DM School Bhubaneswar is: Shri G. S. Amar (23.7.1965-3.1967), Dr. R. N. Pani (17.8.1967-1.7.1971), Shri K. C. Das (15.5.1972-30.6.1983), Shri R. S. Sharma (27.9.1983-22.12.1983), Mrs. S. Y. Viddyarthee (17.7.1984-28.7.1988), Mrs. S. Y. Viddyarthee (25.1.1990-31.3.1992), Shri R. C. Mohapatra (5.12.1995-29.2.2000), Dr. K. C. Panda (28.3.2001-31.5.2002), Shri Akhileswar Mishra (9.8.2004 - continuing).

The Institute provides pre-service academic programmes to students from the states of Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalay, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The fifth RIE opened at Shillong caters to the in-service needs of the north-eastern states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalay, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura. Recently, it has started two-year B. Ed. programme for these states. RIE, Bhubaneswar provides in-service and extension education to teachers and other functionaries from all the other states under its jurisdiction.

With effect from 2010 the four-year integrated B.A.B.Ed. and the two-year M.Sc. (Life Science) Ed. programmes staged a come back to RIE, Bhubaneswar. However, under the new guidelines of the National Council of Teacher Education, the two-year M.Sc. (Life Science) Ed. programme had to be dropped in 2015. Currently, the following pre-service programmes are offered by the Institute on semester pattern.

Four-year integrated B.Sc.B.Ed. (PCM/CBZ)	– 100 seats
Four-year integrated B.A.B.Ed.	– 50 seats
Two-year B.Ed. (Science/Arts)	– 100 seats
One-year M.Ed.	– 32 seats
One-year M.Phil. (Education)	– 10 seats
Pre-Ph.D. (Education)	– 20 seats
Diploma Course in Guidance & Counselling (Distance & Face-to-Face Mode)	– 50 seats

Besides offering the teacher education programmes and conducting research in different fields, the faculty members of RIE, Bhubaneswar have contributed their lot to the cause of NCERT in many ways including the development of National Curriculum Framework, preparation of textbooks and support materials, implementation of centrally sponsored schemes such as the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA), working in priority areas like peace education, population education, women’s education, education of disadvantaged and marginalized groups, early childhood education, inclusive education, etc. Over the years, the products of the various RIE-based pre-service courses have excelled in the fields of education, research, administration, cultural activities, defence, and other professions. They are always in high demand for teaching posts across the country.

The DM School, affiliated to CBSE, provides instruction to over 1000 students from pre-primary to higher secondary level. It has produced generations of students who have achieved excellence in all walks of life. Its teachers are engaged in research and other professional activities besides teaching.

Both the Institute and the DM School have vibrant Alumni Associations, which are regularly contributing to the academic wellbeing of the respective Alma Maters.

8. Bouquets and Brickbats

For more than half a century the NCERT along with its constituent units has tried to realize all its objectives in four major areas: research, development, training, and extension. From the beginning, the NCERT has been widely recognized for the generations of excellent textbooks it has produced for classes ranging from I to XII for schools affiliated to CBSE. Making the textbooks freely available for downloads on internet has been a much laudable effort of the NCERT especially under the initiatives called NROER (National Repository of Open Educational Resources) and e-pathshala. It also publishes several journals and support materials in English and Hindi in order to disseminate the latest trends in education. It has played a pivotal role in the formulation of the National Policy on Education (1986), the Programme of Action

(1992), the National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework (1988), the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2000), the National Curriculum Framework (2005), and other plans and programmes, which have set the trend of school education in the country from time to time. In order to motivate young pupils as well as teachers, the NCERT has been implementing the National Talent Search Scheme, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Science Exhibition for Children, National Awards for Innovations in School Education and Teacher Education, etc. Many audiovisual programmes have been produced for Door Darshan, Gyan Darshan, and Gyan Vani, etc. As desired by the MHRD, the NCERT is working out the modus operandi for the nationwide census base achievement survey of all students in all classes and in all subjects. As a government initiative to take education to all corners of the country using the tools of ICT, the NCERT has started to produce MOOCs and multimedia e-learning packages in all subjects in all languages for all classes for regular telecast on dedicated channels such as SWAYAM besides being available on the popular platform YouTube. The RIEs are playing their roles in all these activities.

The NCERT has been providing a variety of innovative pre-service programmes through the RIEs to prepare quality teachers, besides offering in-service programmes for different stakeholders. In 2014, the National Council of Teacher Education has recommended introduction of the four-year integrated B.A.B.Ed. and B.Sc.B.Ed. courses throughout the country. This is satisfying as these courses, which have almost been the sole property of the RIEs, are going to get the wide recognition due to them. Now, it is the turn of the NCERT and RIEs to plan new innovative programmes such as three-year integrated B.Ed.M.Ed. and three-year integrated M.Sc.M.Ed. etc. to prepare more effective teacher educators and short term discipline specific programmes to prepare more effective teachers for various levels.

Along the way, the NCERT has gathered bouquets as well as brickbats with equanimity. Besides being accused of ‘suffronization of education’, it has also been pulled up for including ‘offensive cartoons’ in the textbooks though cartoons are widely recognised as an effective pedagogical tool, and other ‘offences’ as perceived by different people at different times. Sometimes, it leads to a feeling that considerations other than academic are behind such allegations. In spite of these occasional setbacks, the NCERT is committed to the cause of school education in the country.

9. ... and Beyond

In spite of the successes achieved, there are some perceptible ‘gaps’ or ‘inadequacies’, which need to be addressed. To give a few examples, the NCERT ought to publish an international journal of education, provide a model of teaching learning that can be practiced by others, take research findings into classrooms, establish a strong and productive international network, carry out need-based, policy-oriented and focused research efforts on a national scale, sustain a strong academic leadership, and strengthen its position of superiority in the field of school education. Under government as well as private initiatives, new institutions are coming up in the domain of

education in general and teacher education in particular. The NCERT needs to fortify itself to compete with them. Though several curriculum frameworks have been formulated from time to time under the leadership of the NCERT, they have failed to be national in real sense of the term, as there are several parallel school systems running in the country with different perspectives on and approach to school education. It is also very often pointed out that the textbooks so meticulously produced by the NCERT are not really followed by the teachers or the students for whom they are meant and their place is taken by books of other publishers. The RIEs, which represent the NCERT in their respective regions of the country, are yet to gain academic autonomy to be able to try out new experiments on education. They appear to be losing contact with the States for whom they are meant. No meaningful system exists for interaction with Universities and other teacher education institutions. Professionalism expected of the faculty members is also on the decline. Being members of a society in the name of NCERT and not being designated as central government employees has been a concern for the faculty members across its constituents. The continuing overall poor achievement level of students in various classes throughout the country, as shown by different reputed evaluating bodies including the NCERT, is also a concern for the NCERT and its constituent units. Though *quality* of education has been a concern of the NCERT, the Central Government, and the State Governments, it needs to be recognized that quality cannot be thought of unless the quest is driven by *quantity*, in terms of the number of schools, the number of qualified and motivated teachers, the volume of infrastructure, the spread of basic ICT facilities, and so on, required for a country as large as India. Some kind of licensing provision, as for example for doctors, may be made for the teachers in the country as a measure to enhance the quality of education. Socio-economic background of school age children and language plurality are two other concerns. The NCERT may like to initiate a nationwide debate on such issues.

A few years back, in order to extend its reach, the NCERT proposed six new RIEs at Mujjafarpur, Ahmednagar, Visakhapatnam, Chandigarh, Allahabad, and Dibrugarh the first four out of which got the nod of the Executive Council of the NCERT. No new RIEs have come up till now. Following the report of the Goverdhan Mehta Committee (2011), referred to earlier, the NCERT worked on a proposal to be submitted to the Central Government to grant it the status of an Institution of National Importance (INI). Under the highly ambitious Scheme of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission of Teacher and Teaching (PMMMNTT), MHRD, Government of India proposed to open Teaching Learning Centres at the RIEs apart from those at other places during the 12th Five Year Plan with the purpose of strengthening teacher education in the country. Now a new proposal is in consideration: getting Deemed-to-be-University status for the NCERT as the Central Government is seriously thinking of establishing a central university of teacher education as an initiative in the upcoming National Policy on Education. Though nothing is clearly visible at the moment, the NCERT and its constituent units are in for some changes sooner than later.

10. Epilogue

The account above only gives a glance into the history of the National Council of Educational Research and Training and one of its constituents, the Regional Institute of Education Bhubaneswar. Obviously, many other relevant details are missing. Nonetheless, it tries to give an idea of the original objectives of the organizations and where they are now. Having completed more than 50 years of successful existence warrants celebration as well as introspection. Needless to say, a comprehensive self-assessment of the structure and functioning of all constituent units can suggest ways and means of straightening out kinks and twists here and there in the fabric of the NCERT and stay prepared for the future. Further, we, the faculty members of the NCERT need to enhance our professionalism and enrich our outlook that would make the organisation a more vibrant, more effective and more influential mentor of school education in the country.

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