

## Review system mooted to improve quality of unaided schools

By K. Ramachandran

**CHENNAI, OCT. 14.** An external review system may well be the next stage towards quality improvement in the unaided school education sector in Tamil Nadu.

The Prof. A. Gnanam committee that has prepared a revised curriculum and syllabus for matriculation schools, has mooted this external quality review (EQR) system to make the institutions strive for self-improvement and make them voluntarily conscious of the need to improve quality and deliver better education.

For long, matriculation schools have been seen as those run by educational entrepreneurs whose sole objective is to make money, with very few institutions seeking to provide high quality education. Even their striving for quality was oriented more towards getting higher pass percentage so that it becomes a ruse for hiking fees and other charges. Many parents from middle classes who want to give their children English medium education crowd such institutions, unmindful of the fee structure, officials and academics involved in the system note.

The EQR system has been mooted by the Prof. Gnanam committee in lieu of the present 'inspection system' for matric-

ulation schools. In a mass education system where the number of institutions is too large and mobility of students is happening across large distances, an inspectorate type of regulation might not bring in the expected enhancement of essential quality.

The proposed EQR system combines internal responsibilities with external reference points and leads the institutions towards self improvement, the report notes.

When contacted, Dr. Gnanam said there was indeed a need to have an EQR system coordinated by an external body.

"Following the models in higher education system available in Australia or the United States, schools can come together to form an assessment/accreditation body at the State level. We can have trained and unbiased assessors from different sectors. The schools can be asked to prepare a self assessment report and send it to the State-level body which can do the EQR assessment to validate a school's own conclusions," he adds.

As in the case of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the body can collect an assessment-accreditation fee so that the body can sustain itself without depending on government funds.