
**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF ICSSR NORTH-WESTERN REGIONAL CENTRE,
CHANDIGARH**

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Abstract

The Indian Council of Social Science Research was established by Govt. of India as an autonomous organization by the Ministry of Education (now known as Ministry of Human Resource Development). The Council was established as an apex body and nodal agency of social science in India. The council was conceived the leader, the promoter, the disseminator and initiator of discussion and debate on issues of Social Science concerns and relevance. The ICSSR, New Delhi, established 6 Regional Centres at Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Shillong and Chandigarh to act as catalytic agent for the promotion of Council's objectives and activities in the region. The ICSSR North-Western Regional Centre, Chandigarh, was set up in 1977. Under the existing set up the composition of the staff at the various Regional Centres was categorized under academic, library and administration. In the beginning, staff strength was limited, the span of control was narrow. The ICSSR North-Western Regional Centre, Chandigarh is performing multifarious functions such as promoting and sponsoring documentation and bibliographic work in Regional language by bringing out the Social Science documentation list, Samajik Vigyan Khabar Suchi in Punjabi, Social Science News Index, Bibliography on current topics, financial support to theme oriented seminars, lectures of eminent social scientists, training courses in research methodology in social sciences, study grant to research scholars, photocopying services and seminar-guest house facilities, etc.

Keywords: - ICSSR, NWRC, Organizational Structure, Function, Research etc.

Introduction

In the early stages of planning in India, social scientists, research workers etc., were interacting with one another frequently. Economists, statisticians, model builders and other social scientists influenced policy. But at that time, there was a general feeling that social science in India lacks a national organization which could actively work for its expansion and promotion and secure for its recognition and support from government without being under its control. The ICSSR was set up in 1969, for the promotion of social science research in the country. To promote the social science research in various regions of the country, the ICSSR established 6 Regional Centres at Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Shillong and Chandigarh. These Regional Centres of ICSSR were instituted to specifically decentralizing administration, developing interface with university departments and colleges in the various regions of the country. These Regional Centers were established to:

- Represent the ICSSR within the region and spread the message and the programmes of the ICSSR to social scientists in the region;

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- Bring the ideas and problems of the social scientists of the region to the notice of the ICSSR for possible action;
 - Bring the social scientists of the region closer for promoting social science research within the region; and
 - Serve as a link between the social scientists of the region and the national and international community of social scientists.

The Regional Centres has developed infrastructure and research support facilities over the years with the funds provided by the ICSSR and by the some state governments of the region where they were located. They also have developed hostel/guest house facilities, additional library space, conference hall and reprographic facilities.

Organizational Structure of Regional Centres

Presently, the arrangement for the functioning of the Regional Centres are on a collaborative basis where the host institutions play a vital role both in terms of managing the Regional Centres and in providing the academic resources i.e. faculty, library etc. for development of its programmes . Accordingly, the power to administer the Regional Centres is vested in the Head of the host institution who act as Chairman. He is also supported by an Advisory Committee consisted of social scientists in different disciplines drawn from the Universities and Research Institutions and representatives of the State Government of the Region. A senior faculty member is appointed as an Honorary Director in consultation with the Chairman/Vice-Chancellor for supervising day-to-day activities of the Regional Centres. Regular staff is appointed to man the activities of the Regional Centres. Their service conditions and benefits are corresponding to those of the host institutions. This was done with a view to avoid any tensions within the host institutions through differences in benefits to be derived by the staff of the Regional Centres.

(a) The rationale for arrangement of collaborative institutions was based on:

- (i) To provide faculty and academic management;
- (ii) Land/accommodation; and
- (iii) Supervision of administration, building construction and provision of other facilities.

It was believed that such collaborative arrangements would keep the Council's investment to a minimum but provide maximum support for promotional activities.

(b) The need to draw closer relationship between the ICSSR, the University system and Research Institutes, by involving the Universities and Research Institutes in organizational/promotional activities supported by the Council, not only as recipient of the grants from the Council, but also as

a active collaborators participating in the framing/implementation of the policies, programmes and decisions;

(c) To permit variations in activities of the Regional Centres, according to the felt needs of the Region instead of imposing uniform programmes designed at the Centre.

Staffing Pattern of The Regional Centres

Under the existing set up the composition of the staff at the various Regional Centres are as follows:

1. Academic Staff

- (a) Honorary Director
- (b) Honorary Joint Director (Library)
- (c) Deputy Director

2. Library Staff

- a) Assistant Librarian
- b) Library/Documentation Assistants

3. Administrative Staff

- (a) Office Superintendent
- (b) Assistants/UDCs/LDCs/Accounts Clerks/Stenographers
- (c) Class IV staff
- (d) Guest-House Staff including care-taker, cook, etc.

Organizational Structure of the North-Western Regional Centre of ICSSR Chandigarh:

Regional Centres were intended to decentralize the Council's activities so that social scientists in universities and colleges in States could more easily access information about the activities and programmes of the Council. They were also meant to provide a forum with supporting infrastructure, for promoting greater interaction among researchers at the regional level both in respect of their research and to identify promising areas for region-specific research; encourage greater collaboration among them in both research and training programmes; and devolved responsibility for receiving and screening research proposals. Substantial investments had gone into building office and guest-house spaces and libraries at the Centres.

The North-Western Regional Centre of the ICSSR was set up on the campus of the Panjab University in October 1977, on the initiative of Professor J.P. Naik, Member-Secretary, ICSSR and Professor R.C. Paul, the then Vice-Chancellor, Panjab University. The Regional Centre is headed by the Honorary Director who normally belongs to senior social scientists of the social science department from the host institution. Professor V.S. D'Souza, an eminent Sociologist and Head, Department of Sociology, Panjab University was the founder Honorary Director of the Centre. He is accountable to the

Chairman (Vice-Chancellor) of the Regional Centre and ICSSR head office at New Delhi. He is assisted by Deputy Director of the Regional Centre. The jurisdiction of the Regional Centre extended to the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Functions of the North-Western Regional Centre

The centre is functioning on a collaborative basis where the host institution play a vital role in terms of managing the Regional Centres and in providing the academic resources i.e. faculty, library etc. for development of its programmes. The North-Western Regional Centre, in order to fulfill the various objectives as defined by the Council, undertakes the following functions

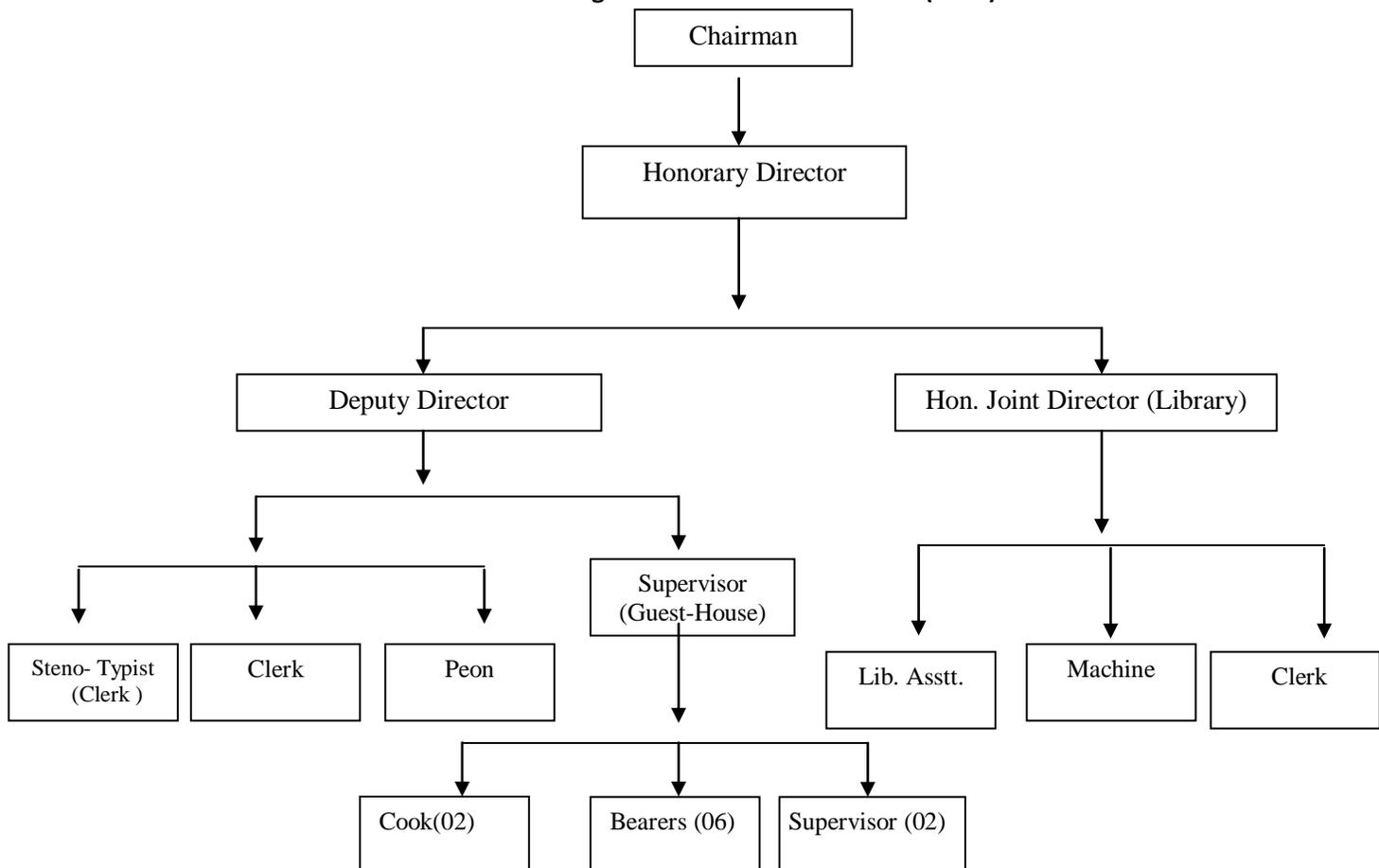
- The Regional Centre is subscribing social science journals, besides this the Centre is subscribing also two indexing services in print form: Social Science Index (foreign in scope) and the Guide to Indian Periodical Literature;
- The Regional Centre brought out Social Science Documentation List, Social Science News Index, Samajik Vigyan Khabar Suchi (Punjabi) and Bibliographies on Current Topics.;
- The Regional Centre arranges special lectures of eminent social scientists in their areas of specialization and themes of current interest;
- The Centre provides financial assistance for organizing theme oriented seminars/workshops to the University Departments and Colleges in the Region;
- The Regional Centre sanction study grants to the research scholars who are doing Ph.D in the field of social sciences. This grant is provided to the research scholars to visit the libraries to collect the research material.
- The Regional Centre under its outreach academic programme organizes special lectures, seminars and training programmes at various places in the Region.
- The Regional Centre organizes the training programme on 'research methodology' to sensitize the teachers and research scholars in social sciences about growing emphasis on quality of teaching and research.
- The Regional Centre provides guest-house accommodation and conference halls for organizing seminars, workshops, training programmes etc.

The Regional Centre provides photocopying services to the students, researchers and members of the faculty at nominal rates.

At the beginning of the regional centre, in 1977, the Chairman (Vice-chancellor) of the Panjab University was the head of the Centre. He was assisted by the Honorary Director, to look after the day-to-day working of the office. The Deputy Director, HAFA, and Honorary Joint Director (Library) was

helping to the Honorary Director in carrying out the administrative, financial and library activities. In the beginning, the staff strength was limited, the span of control was narrow. It resulted in close interpersonal relations between the members of the Board and the staff. There were no conflicts and other managerial issues. When in 1984, the guest-house was started, the staff strength increased. The academic and other activities of the Regional Centre also increased. There is frustration in the employees of the Regional Centre as there is no clear cut policy for the staff. The organizational structure of North-West Regional Centre changed in 1984 which is shown in Chart -1.

Chart: 1
ICSSR Regional Centre Staff Structure (1984)



Source: Record ICSSR N.W.Regional Centre, Chandigarh.

Present Position

Chairman

Presently, the Regional Centre is managed in collaboration with the host institution i.e. Panjab University, Chandigarh. The Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University is the Chairman of the Regional

Centre. He broadly supervises the administration and the programmes. It is open to the Chairman of the Regional Centre to delegate the powers to the Honorary Director if he considered necessary for the day-to-day functioning of the Centre.

Honorary Director

The ICSSR appoint in consultation with the Chairman of the Centre a senior faculty member of the collaborative institute to be the Honorary Director of the Centre. He supervises the academic as well as administrative activities of the North-Western Regional Centre. The Honorary Director of the Centre exercises the same powers as are exercised by Registrar of the Panjab University.

Table 1
Term of the Honorary Directors Since Its Inception

| Name | Period |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Professor V.S. D'Souza | October 1977 to September 1979 |
| Professor G.S. Gosal | October 1979 to March 1992 |
| Professor J.N. Joshi | April 1992 to October 1994 |
| Professor M.R. Aggarwal | November 1994 to October 1997 |
| D.U.I./S.V.C. (officiating) | November 1997 to December 1998 |
| Professor Swarnjit Mehta | January 1998 to December 2000 |
| Professor S.S. Bhayana | January 2001 to August 2003 |
| Shri P.K. Saini ((Acting Director) | September 2003 to June 2008 |
| Professor Bhupinder Brar | June 2008 to May 2012. |
| Professor Surinder K. Sukla | July 2012 to January 2013. |
| Professor Ronki Ram | February 2014 to till date. |

(Source: Record ICSSR N. W. Regional Centre, Chandigarh)

Tenure and Honorarium

The Honorary Director of the Centre is appointed for a period of two years at a time but generally he held the office till the pleasure of Vice-Chancellor of the Panjab University, who is the Chairman of the Regional Centre or on the wishes of ICSSR, New Delhi .The Honorary Director of the Regional Centre is paid Rs.5,000/- as honorarium.

Honorary Joint Director (Library)

The ICSSR also appoints, if necessary in consultation with the Chairman of the Regional Centre, a member of the Library staff of the collaborating institution to be the Joint Director of the Library. He supervises the library activities of the Regional Centre. The Library Assistant take his guidance for the library work. He is paid an honorarium at the prescribed rates. The term of appointment of a Honorary Joint Director (Library) is two years at a time. The post of Honorary Joint Director (Library) remained occupied till December 1990. After that no person was appointed against this post.

Deputy Director

The Deputy Director is full time Officer of the Centre. He is next in the hierarchy of the Organization. He assists the Honorary Director in the performance of the functions and in the formulation of plans and programmes to meet the requirement of the Regional Centre. He also assists the Honorary Director in arranging meetings to implement the various academic activities of the Regional Centre. In addition to this, he looks after the establishment and accounts branch of the Regional Centre.

Working Committees

The activities of the Regional Centre are guided by the various Committees which are as under:

1. The members of these Committees are senior faculty members from various social science departments of the Panjab University and other universities of the Region. They helps in the functioning of the Centre. The Vice-Chancellor of the host institution i.e. Panjab University acts as ex-officio Chairman of advisory Committee of Regional Centre:

Table 2
Composition of Advisory Committee

| Composition of the Member | Number of Member of Advisory Committee |
|---|--|
| Vice-Chancellor/Director of the host institute | Ex-officio Chairman |
| Member-Secretary, ICSSR | Ex-officio Member |
| A member of the Council from the region | Ex-officio Member |
| A Director of the ICSSR supported Research Institute from the Ex-officio Member Region | Ex-officio Member |
| Professor(s) of Social Science discipline of host Institution Member | (Two) |
| Professor of Social Science disciplines from Universities of the Region by rotation, if there are more than two Universities. | (Two) |
| Secretaries to the Department of Education of the State Member (Government in the region (if the grant is received) (If there are more than two State Governments then they will be by rotation). | (Two) |
| Hony. Director of the Regional Centre | Ex-officio Member-Secretary |

(Sources: ICSSR NWRC record)

Advisory Committee

The Chairman of the Regional Centre constitute an Advisory Committee in consultation with the ICSSR New Delhi. The Committee advises the Chairman of the Regional Centre on the planning and development of the programmes. The Advisory Committee offer advice regarding existing/new activities, funding sources, expansion of facilities and personnel etc. The power regarding the supervision and implementation of the programmes rest with the Chairman and the Advisory

Committee. They delegate specific tasks to the Director/other Committees or sub-committee according to the programme requirements. The Advisory Committee is constituted for a term of two years. It met at least once a year to review the work of the Centre and recommend the programmes to be developed during the ensuing year. The members of the Advisory Committee are drawn from the different disciplines of the Universities and Research Institutes in the Region. In the initial stages there were 25 members of the Advisory Committee from the University Department/ Research Institute of the Region. With the passage of times, the state governments stopped their share due to financial crunch in the states. The ICSSR revised the composition of the Advisory Committee. Presently, the composition of the Advisory Committee is as under in Table 2.

The State -wise distribution of members of the Advisory Committee is given in Table 3:

Table: 3
State -Wise Distribution of Members of the Advisory Committee

| Year | Punjab | Haryana | H.P. | J&K | Chandigarh | ICSSR | Total |
|------|--------|---------|------|-----|------------|-------|--------------|
| 1985 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 25 |
| 1991 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 31 |
| 1996 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 25 |
| 2001 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | 11 |
| 2007 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 6 | 1 | 10 |
| 2010 | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 12 |
| 2011 | | | | | | | NOT APPROVED |
| 2012 | | | | | | | NOT APPROVED |
| 2013 | | | | | | | NOT APPROVED |
| 2014 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 | |

(Source: Record ICSSR N. W. Regional Centre, Chandigarh)

The data presented in the Table 3 shows that in the initial stage all the states from North-Western Region were given representation, as the composition of the Advisory Committee was large. The ICSSR New Delhi changed the structure of the Advisory Committee in 2001 and restricted the number to 11. Now the members of the Advisory Committee from different States were nominated by rotation. The data also reveals that the Regional Centre was giving the representation to all States of the Region on rotational basis. The term of the members of Advisory Committee expired on March 31, 2011 and after a gap of three years a new Advisory Committee is constituted.

Other Working Committees

The members of these Committees are senior faculty members from various social science departments of the Panjab University and other universities of the Region. They helped in the functioning of the Centre. These various working committees helps the Regional Centre in carrying out the distribution of study grant, seminar grant, management of Library and Seminar- cum-Guest House Complex.

Efforts to Revamp the Organizational Structure of Regional Centres

With the aim of revamping its organizational structure, the ICSSR New Delhi had set up a number of Committees for suggesting an effective organizational structure. Two sub-committees appointed in 1980 and 1988 respectively mainly dealt with the questions relating to the legal status of the Centres, administrative and financial position of the Regional Centres and the status of the staff.

In 1980, the ICSSR felt that there was a need to evaluate the working of the Regional Centres and access their performance, examine their plans for development and making recommendations thereon. Accordingly, the ICSSR constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Ram Joshi former Vice-Chancellor, University of Bombay.

Another sub-committee was appointed in April 1988 under the Chairmanship of Professor Iqbal Narain to look into the entire gamut of issues afresh in the light of the recommendations of the earlier sub-committee and the questions raised by the Research Institute Committee and the Council. Professor Iqbal Narain, Member-Secretary, ICSSR in the 7th Annual Conference of the Directors of the ICSSR Regional Centre held in 1986, stated that the Regional Centres both acted as the vanguard and a feed mechanism to the Council. The Regional Centres fulfilled the expectations largely but they were yet to go a long-way in achieving their objective. So far, they had concentrated on largely on building, infrastructure facilities but now the Regional Centres should devote themselves to develop their academic character also. During the 6th Plan period the expenditure of the Regional Centre had doubled and it might register a rise of 70 per cent during the 7th Plan period. He emphasized that each Regional Centre should develop an identity of own and reaches up to the researchers and teachers in mofusil colleges, and provides research material in Regional Languages. This Committee noted the recommendations of the earlier Sub-Committee. The committee address the issues regarding the legal status of the Regional Centres, legal agreement to be entered into between the ICSSR vis-à-vis the ICSSR Regional Centres and the host Institutions, promotional avenues of the staff, auditing and accounting procedures, centralization of major programmes at the ICSSR headquarters and decentralization of functions, giving academic flavor to the academic activities to the Regional Centres etc. However, these changes were not translated into action.

Another sub-committee was constituted by ICSSR under the Chairmanship of Professor Amitabh Kundu in 1998, looked into issues relating to legal status, administrative structure and relationship between ICSSR and the host institution, guidelines for the functioning of the Regional Centres; and,

financial implication for administrative infrastructure and activities to be undertaken by the Regional Centres.

The Council drawing upon recommendation of various Committees, in its 98th meeting held on 7th September 2001 vide its Item No.90.3.8 resolved that the Regional Centres will be an integral part of the ICSSR and their pay-scales and service conditions would be governed by the pay-scales, rules, regulations and service conditions as applicable to the employees of the ICSSR. It was also decided that the members of the staff of the Centre and employees of the ICSSR would be transferable among the Centres and also between the headquarters of the ICSSR. But this is not implemented till date.

Another Review Committee was constituted in 2002 under the Chairmanship of Professor T.S Papola to review the ICSSR Regional Centres. The Committee's terms of reference were to assess the performance of the ICSSR Regional centres during the Ninth Plan and also the current year of the Tenth Plan and to identify functions for the Regional Centres which could be in conformity with the work programme of the ICSSR. The committee also examined the plans of development, available infrastructure, status of the Director, existing staffing pattern, service conditions and benefits, financial resources and their supervision and relationship with Research Institutes etc.

The ICSSR constituted another Review Committee in 2003 to look after the organization and functioning of Regional Centres. After considering the proposed activities to revitalize the ICSSR Regional Centre, the Committee was of the opinion that the present staff structure was not adequate to effectively perform the expected functions.

The various Committees constituted to decide the status of the Regional Centres given their reports. The decision regarding the status, terms and conditions, the staffing pattern, pay-scales, promotional avenues, service conditions and retirement benefits etc. are still pending with the Council.

Communication and Control of Headquarter on the Regional Centres

The efforts to establish an effective system of communication and to develop a method of control often test the relationship between headquarter and field units. Non implementation of organizational plans, programmes and policies can to a greater extent be attributed to the absence of understanding of the purpose and objective of such policies on the part of field officials who are silent taken into confidence in formulation of such programmes and policies (Amreshwar, 1972). The only channel of communication open to the officials of the Regional Centre and head office comprises orders, directives, circulars, notifications, memos which forms a one way communication.

The ICSSR is in no way different from other Central or State Government organization. It followed the same patterns and channels of communication as prevalent in the State or Central Government. The ICSSR Head-office controls the Regional Centre through a number of ways. The field services whether centralized or de-centralized is subject to headquarters control. There are six methods

of such control. Firstly, the Headquarters has the right to receive information from the Regional Centre in the form of Reports, Returns and Statistics pertaining to the condition and progress of various schemes. On the basis of such information Headquarter issues directions or advise as they may think necessary. Secondly, the headquarter controls and guides Regional Centre work through administrative codes and manuals laid down the rules of procedures which must be followed and observed by the Regional Centres. Thirdly, the budget is a powerful instrument of control. The Regional Centre must function within the budgetary allocation available to them and for any deviation from or access over it, the approval of headquarter is necessary. Fourthly, there is inspection and visit of the headquarters official. Through inspections and visits, the headquarter reviews whether the powers delegated to the Regional Centre are properly and correctly used and rules and instructions followed or not. Inspection is a sort of post-audit through which irregularities and short comings of the Regional Centres are detected. This was the 'police' or 'snooping' conception of inspection and is rather disfavored these days and has been inconsistent with the dignity of those inspected. The newer conception of the inspection was that it should be an instrument of education, advice and discussion for the Regional Centres. Its object has to be to understand and remove difficulties and to encourage and help the Regional Centre's rather merely to find fault with them. It is clear, however, that inspection to fulfill its purpose must be both correctional and helpful. Fifth, there is investigation. This is used to discover malpractices and corruption with a view to prosecuting those responsible for them. This is an essential technique to enforce the accountability of those who are in-charge of the Regional Centre's property and funds. Finally, control is also exercised over field personnel in matters pertaining to appointments, postings, transfers, promotions and disciplinary matters etc.

During the discussions with the Regional Centres staff, it was found that they are not consulted while formulating the policies and programmes of running the Regional Centres. They were not part of the Research Institute Committee (RIC) who took the decisions regarding the policy matters of the Regional Centres. It was further noticed that the headquarters' control over the Regional Centres was very rigid and the Regional Centres had to take prior approval of the headquarter before taking any action with regard to the operation of various schemes. Though the headquarter had delegated powers to the Regional Centres yet, some more powers needs to be delegated to run the Regional Centre efficiently, effectively and to provide better services to the social science community of the Region.

Final Words

The ICSSR North-Western Regional Centre, Chandigarh is performing multifarious functions such as promoting and sponsoring documentation and bibliographic work in Regional language by bringing out the Social Science documentation List, Samajik Vigyan Khabar Suchi in Punjabi, Social Science News Index, Bibliography on current topics, financial support to theme oriented seminars, lectures by

eminent social scientists, training courses in research methodology in social sciences, study grant to research scholars, photocopying services and seminar-guest house facilities, etc.

The overall management strategy for the ICSSR is to concern with bringing about a rapport between the system's objectives, the organizational apparatus available to it and effective performance of the personnel. Resources and procedures have to be geared up to take the organisation ahead. This could be achieved through restructuring the organizations, redesigning jobs, training the personnel and initiating better control system. In the ICSSR organisation, especially at the Regional Centres there has to be a greater degree of willingness to experiment and to adapt. The flexibility approach, individual dynamism and initiative, a meaningful rapport with the social scientists, smooth and harmonious relations with the university, enlightening policy guidance and direction and a sound infrastructure must help to give Regional Centre a strong foundation. Some organizational set up at the Regional Centre with progressive personnel policies may be helpful for achieving the objectives with speed, efficiency and economy. While exemplifying the significance of sound organizational structure relating to it with the Regional Centre it would not be irrelevant to quote Peter F. Drucker here, "best structure will not guarantee results and performance but the wrong structure is a guarantee of non-performance. All it produces are friction and frustration".

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