

REPORT ON S.THOMAS' COLLEGE GURUTALAWA By Fr. Dr. Mervyn Fernando.

1. A general face-lift should be given to the entire Campus. Minor repairs need be effected to buildings and furniture. Some colour washing is required. The landscaping needs improvement particularly the rear sections in order to match the front appearance, ie the Chapel area. It was observed that the Dorms were shabbily maintained. There must be better order. Masters should supervise orderliness with the help of Student Leaders or Prefects. A part of the above work could be done on a Shramadana basis by the students themselves.

2. The library needs to be re-arranged and given a better and more attractive appearance. Some of the books on Sri Lanka are very valuable and rare. They should be put in to a separate lockable cupboard to prevent them being removed. The English books should be separated from the Sinhala. The long shelves could be divided into 2 ½ /3 feet segments. The books must be arranged to stand erect, not fall down because there are gaps. The books must be properly catalogued . There appears to be a large number of outdated books. They must be eliminated. Some valuable Old Books should be bound neatly and put back on the shelves. Some posters can be put on the walls, together with perhaps a few photographs and scenes of Sri Lanka.

3. Games and sports should be made available to all students. Outdoor games after school should be made compulsory. Some students were seen idling and chatting in groups here and there instead of gainfully engaged in some sports and physical activities. If a student does not participate in games in the evening, it must only be because he is unwell and has been excused for that reason.

4. Competitive Inter School Sports should be encouraged apart from Inter House Sports activities. It is suggested that the school should choose 2 or 3 sports activities and strive for excellence in them instead of spreading the efforts and resources in all activities and thereby thinning out. This is all the more necessary because the number of students is also limited. Good coaches should be procured. Some activities in which attention could be concentrated are Squash and Swimming. Cricket is very expensive and unless the necessary resources are available, it will be found difficult to maintain through out the period of activity. Examples could be taken from Matale for Hockey, Ambalangoda for Swimming and Badminton, Ampitya for Long Distance Running etc.

5. The Management and Administrative aspects of the school should be streamlined with emphasis on discipline in all areas. Perhaps an attractive salary may have to be paid to obtain the services of a good person for Administration. The Principal should be left free to attend to educational matters.

6. Some staff training should be given to the Minor staff too. They should be included in any programme of developing skills and attitudes.

7. It is necessary to ascertain with regard to the education programme itself the status of-

- a. What is the quality of the teaching in the class room
 - b. What is by and large the human quality of the teachers and their dedication etc
- Programmes to improve both of the above should be put into place.

8. It is important to ascertain whether there is any personal guidance available to students either with regard to their studies and/or their personal life, particularly the students being essentially in a boarding school. Perhaps the Chaplain should be released from other responsibilities including class room activities for this task, which is connected with the religious and spiritual ministry.

9. Since the location lends itself to outdoor and Outward Bound activities, the school should get organized to provide facilities for hiking, trekking, climbing etc, at least in a small way for a start

with the help of knowledgeable persons available with the YMCA. If need be this activity should be under supervision. This is a feature which could make the school special and attractive. All these extra curricular activities are part of the learning process and this school has so much to offer from its location far more than Urban Schools can ever hope to offer. Maximum advantage must be taken of that.

10. Leadership Training (and English Education) could be obtained from the National Association for Total Education. Mr.Premasiri Welivita could be contacted with regard to this on Telephone 815162 and 812256.

11. Subodhi Institute could help the College through -
a. a programme for teachers (2 days)
b. a programme for final year students (education for life) (5 days)

12. For all the above suggestions, the implementation would be smooth and helpful if the help and support of all Old Boys is solicited systematically. They should help to make the educational product of the school more marketable, mainly because of-

a. natural environment of location
b. quality of education
c. Special activities and facilities

13. Public Relation and Advertising Experts could be consulted. An attractive brochure could be put out, after the infrastructure is put right, perhaps in a year, or so. Serious thought could be given to reverting to a Boarding School. If the local population is to be considered an integral part of the student population and offered places in the school, then it may be good to insist on their admissions as Boarders perhaps with bursaries for poorer children Masters too, if they are resident will make the institution more attractive and it will be easier for the Headmaster to distribute responsibilities and matters relating to discipline. Single handed it is not an easy task.

14. It is possible to set up an Astronomical Club. Subodhi could send a trained person to help out. A simple telescope will cost approximately Rs.10,000/-
- Rs.12,000/-. Any Old Boy from abroad will be able to bring or send one for approximately US\$250/- or so. A pair of Binoculars for star gazing, moon & bird watching could be obtained the same way (cost \$ 50-60 approximately).

15. The above changes, innovations etc should be prioritized, to be carried out in stages; short term, medium term & long term, according to urgency & availability of funds.

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