

## CONSTITUTIONAL RELIABILITY OF TAMIL NADU OPEN BOARD

### (Tamilnadu Council for Open and Distance Learning)

#### 1. ORIGIN OF OPEN & DISTANCE SCHOOLING

The foundational concept of distance education originally took root in Berlin, Germany, in 1856. Later, Russia granted widespread institutional recognition to distance learning, proving its viability on a global scale.

The modern concept of an "Open Board / Open University" system was visioned and executed in the United Kingdom by the British Prime Minister, **Honourable Harold Wilson**. Born in Huddersfield in 1916 and educated at Oxford University, Wilson was a passionate economist and Labour Party leader who believed education was the ultimate tool for social mobility.

#### The Vision of Open Board System:

- **The Goal:** To give working-class adults, school dropouts, and those who missed out on secondary and senior secondary education a second chance through part-time study and distance learning.
- **Timeline of Success:**
  - **1967:** A cabinet planning committee was set up to design a comprehensive plan for open and flexible learning.
  - **1969:** The first course prospectuses were published, receiving overwhelming public interest.
  - **1971:** The first cohort of open learning students officially began their studies.
  - **By 1980:** The open education system was firmly established as a respected educational institution with over 70,000 students enrolling and graduating each year.

Today, **Tamil Nadu Open Board** supports this exact legacy by leveraging technologies from printed study materials to online learner support, delivering flexible education to all, regardless of their background or previous qualifications.

#### 2. THE OPEN EDUCATION SYSTEM (AN ALTERNATIVE TO FORMAL SCHOOLING)

The open education system serves as a highly effective alternative to the heavily strained formal schooling and collegiate system. With the number of students applying for various courses rising at an average rate of 7% annually, traditional institutions face immense classroom pressure.

#### Key Benefits of Tamil Nadu Open Board:

- **Inclusivity:** Provides an equal opportunity to acquire certificates and diplomas for disadvantaged groups, individuals living in remote rural areas, and working professionals who cannot attend regular classes.
- **Flexibility:** Eliminates rigid daily schedules and strict classroom attendance constraints, allowing students to pursue their education at their own convenience.
- **Multimedia Learning:** Utilizes a modern blend of printed books, student study centers, and electronic media. Study centers located at convenient places serve as a storehouse of knowledge where periodic discussions and seminars are conducted on difficult topics.

**National Policy Alignments:** Under the **New Education Policy (NEP) 1986**, the Government of India laid particular stress on Open Boards, Open Universities, and Distance Education. On August 5, 1985, the Union Minister of Education stated in the Rajya Sabha that the Open Schooling/University framework would usher in a transformative era, serving as a role model for teaching the underprivileged and poor.

### **3. CONSTITUTIONALITY, RELIABILITY & LEGAL STATUS OF TAMIL NADU OPEN BOARD**

*(Tamilnadu Council for Open and Distance Learning)*

#### **Autonomous Framework & State Discretion**

In the legal structure of Indian education, all Educational Boards and Councils operate as autonomous bodies. Every State Government and University retains its sovereign/autonomous discretion to accept, evaluate, or recognize students migrating from another board or educational council for further higher studies or state employment, based on their internal recruitment and admission eligibility norms.

#### **Legal Status & Validations of Tamil Nadu Open Board**

**Tamil Nadu Open Board (Tamilnadu Council)** is a self-financed, autonomous educational body operating transparently within its legal charter:

- **ISO Certification:** It is an ISO-certified educational council, ensuring international standards of management and quality control in distance education delivery.
- **Government Registrations:**
  - Registered under the **Planning Commission (NITI Aayog)**, Government of India.
  - Brand/Copyright registered under the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)** (now Ministry of Education), Department of Education, Government of India.
- **Financial Autonomy:** Tamil Nadu Open Board does not receive any grant-in-aid or financial funding from the Government or from the UGC.
- **Applicability of Acts:** Because it functions as an independent, self-financed open school and vocational training council (rather than a formal university or a university-affiliated technical college), the provisions of the UGC Act, AICTE Act, or NCTE Act do not govern its internal non-formal courses and certifications.

#### **Constitutional & Human Rights Protections**

Autonomous educational programs operated by registered councils find strong structural validation under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**, which advocates for every citizen's fundamental right to education, skill development, and livelihood.

**Legal Reference:** For further legal jurisprudence regarding the functional boundaries and protections granted to independent autonomous educational bodies, reference can be made to the landmark principles outlined by the Supreme Court of India in **AIR 1993 SC 217B**.

**Tamil Nadu Open Board** remains strictly committed to the vision of providing flexible, affordable, and legally reliable open distance education directly to the doorstep of every student who needs a second chance at a successful life.

