

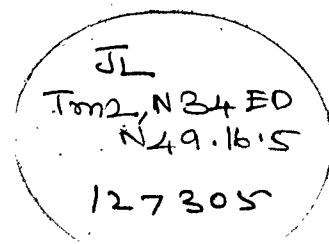
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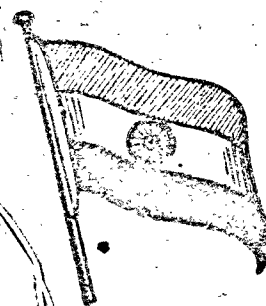
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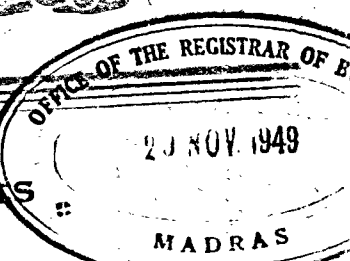
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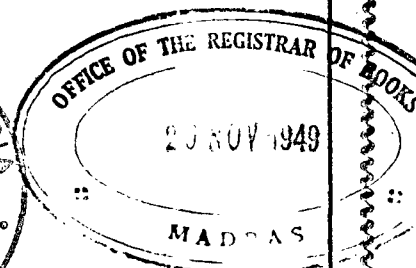
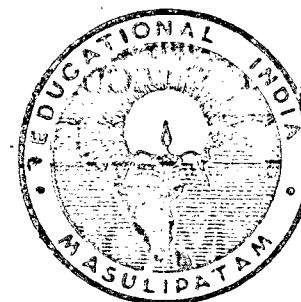
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New Problems of Adult Education

Dr. K. N. KINI,

M. A. (Hons.), A. M., Ph. D., dip-in-Edn. (Columbia),

Director of Public Instruction, Jodhpur.

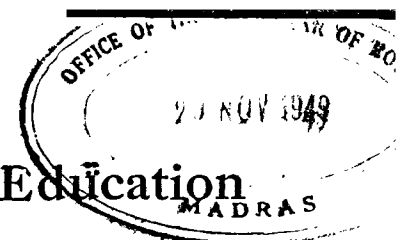
In a country like India where over eighty five percent of the people are illiterate, it is natural that Adult Education should in the first instance be mostly confined to the task of enabling the vast illiterate masses to read and write, including of course the imparting of an elementary knowledge of hygiene and sanitation, local geography and history and the very rudiments of arithmetic. Add to this, the adults once rendered literate should be enabled to retain their literacy by reading simple books on topics of interest to them and also journals dealing with our daily political and social and economic problems.

Vocationalize Adult Education :

But our country has to progress industrially and in agriculture and in producing first rate materials required for defence purposes. We should be, as far as possible, a self-sufficient nation. To produce these requirements our workers should be more skilled, evince greater intelligence and possess an elementary knowledge of science and practical mathematics and machine drawing. For example an ordinary labourer can hardly perform efficiently the tasks involved in the manufacture of electrical machinery and radio equipment, battle ships, destroyers and so on. Therefore after the ordinary literacy of the adult is achieved we should organize courses for them in elements of science and mathematics, geometrical and machine drawing and relate these to

the vocations they are following with the object of enhancing their vocational competency. An analysis of each of the jobs in which the adults of the locality are engaged should be done and the particular aspects of the above named subjects that are applicable therein should be taught to them. If the adults find that what is taught to them has relation to their vocations and will enhance their efficiency and therefore their earning power, they will surely be interested in the instruction imparted. In short, we should vocationalise adult education even from the lowest level. Specially qualified persons should be employed to do the job, analysis and produce suitable books for the use of the adults. Adult Education Teachers should also be specially trained to perform their tasks with zeal and efficiency and knowledge. They should keep themselves in intimate touch with industry and know their requirements.

In order to increase production in our country, which is the most important question of the day, we should organize as part of adult education programme "trade preparatory courses" for those already engaged in industry. An adult has chosen, say, metal-turning as his occupation. He finds that there is no future for it in the locality and that he would take to a new vocation, say plumbing. Opportunities should be provided for such new trade preparatory courses — at the



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artisan level in the evening or night classes.

Courses of "trade-extension" type should also be organized. An adult may not be very proficient say in "electric welding" and he wishes to up-grade himself in the same vocation so as to enable him to earn more or occupy higher positions in the industrial employment ladder. Courses should be devised for him to reach the highest proficiency. He should be taught the science, the mathematics, the drawing and the commerce connected with the trade, which knowledge will add to his cultural equipment also. Culture should and could also be sought through the vocation.

Up-grading in General Education

Another type of adult education greatly merits our consideration. A number of persons who have passed their examinations at various levels wish to enhance their qualifications. For example, an adult who has passed the sixth class examination wishes to study the subjects of higher classes and obtain higher certificates to enable him to upgrade himself in his profession. He is employed and cannot attend day school. He and other people like him should be afforded facilities to progress. Classes either in the mornings or in the nights should be organized for such persons and their qualifications enhanced. Indirectly, professions and vocations will get higher qualified persons.

Rural Universities in Adult Education

In all our programmes, especially of Higher Adult Education, we should not lose sight of the rural population. Evening courses both

literary and vocational are being gradually organized in the urban areas, but not in rural parts. This is partly so because we have not got higher institutions of learning in villages. We talk of food production but do not impart suitable instruction to the village folk in the art of modern agriculture and allied occupations, principally because there are no educational institutions there which can undertake the task. It is quite likely that, more and more middle and high schools will be established there. But it is highly improbable that the nation will think of higher institutions at the college and University level in rural areas.

I plead that we should establish new types of colleges and Universities in rural parts to suit the social and economic life of the rural population. Rural Colleges and Universities should be pre-eminently institutions for teaching people to produce food, clothing, and building materials required by the nation on modern scientific and technological lines. Agriculture, animal husbandry, textiles, forestry, pottery, fishery, rural electrification, rural building trades, soil conservation, small scale industries etc. should be the subjects of study *at college level in their natural setting* and the rural population should have opportunities of going up to the highest stages including research in these branches.

Laboratories for study of forest products and of problems on fisheries, agriculture and animal husbandry are being set up in cities, where there is no proper environment for these occupations. When an alien people, who were not earnest about these matters were occupying the highest posts, these

laboratories were constructed in cities so that they may all reside in the urban areas and enjoy club life with their compeers in other departments. They had nothing in common with our rural population. They did not really mean to solve these problems either. But when we Indians are at the helm of affairs, we should take correct view of the whole situation and see that what is due to the rural people is vouchsafed to them. I therefore strongly urge that colleges and Universities be established in the rural areas and all rural subjects be studied in their natural environment much to the advantage and benefit of the rural population, who have after all to produce the food that we need and who can produce many other articles for us, provided we afford them suitable opportunities to do so. If we do not effect this reform, the more intelligent rural people will flock to the towns to add to the numbers of the un-employed or under-employed people and cause economic waste and dissatisfaction in the land.

If rural colleges and universities would be established with the above objectives, adequate and suitable arrangements can be made for up-grading the cultural as well as vocational levels of the rural population in their own environment and at times suited to their hours of work. During slack seasons, the farmers could have day courses and in the agricultural seasons, they could have night classes. "Trade preparatory" and "Trade extension" courses can be easily organized in these institutions of higher learning at any desired level. Of course, these institutions for rural folk should not be run on the cast-iron principles of urban colleges and universities with their interminable

rules and regulations, ordinances and schedules which confuse even intelligent urban population. In rural universities, examinations should be all internal, more or less on the type of the *old Gurukulas where the pupils were not allowed to leave until they attained cent per cent competency*. The relations between the adults and the teachers would be more intimate and there will be no attempts by the candidates for examinations to steal question papers and for examiners to tamper with the marks. The performance of the pupils will be measured by their day to day performance and their studies will be continued until they satisfy the teachers that they are adequately competent.

Need for a New Philosophy of Life

In order to resolve the poverty, illiteracy, and ignorance in the land, we should develop a new philosophy of life and propagate it in classes for adults. The old slogan "Simple living and High thinking" has led to poverty and ignorance. We should adopt a new slogan "HIGH LIVING AND HIGH THINKING" which are not incompatible with each other. On the other hand high living goes well with high thinking in this materialistic world.

Production should be speeded up and the co-operation of adults is most needed in this matter "Slow and Steady" does not win the race. Instead "Quick and Sure" wins the race of life, and our people should adopt this principle in their occupations.

The colossal illiteracy in the land cannot be removed by the older method of "hasten slowly." A big programme should be adopted and worked most briskly. "Hasten

Rural Adult Education—Why and How?

Sri J. N. KAUL,

Senior Lecturer, Govt. Teachers' Training Institute, Ajmer.

"I will be perhaps too rash and hasty to foretell the success or failure of the UNESCO, but we must give it the credit that it has at least succeeded in giving a fresh momentum to the educational reconstruction of the progressive and the backward nations alike. Whether this spirit—the spirit of a "brave new world"—will come to stay is not so important as the fact that it has awakened nations, especially the backward ones, to the sore need of Adult Education and given a dynamic impetus where the old light was waning. The preamble of the UNESCO states, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.....The wide diffusion of culture and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty.....Peace must be founded, if it is not to fail, upon

(Continued from preceding page)

Hastily" alone will serve the nation in this matter. At our present rate, it will take, decades, if not centuries, to make India fully literate.

Defence should be a great concern of our nation. "Home guards" should be organized on a tremendous scale in towns as well as in villages. Adult Education movement and Home guards movement should be co-ordinated. Adults should be interested in the matter of protecting themselves and their goods. Every adult should be a soldier.

the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind." In order to buttress the defences of peace we must disseminate justice, liberty and light and give a square meal and a 'Kurta' to those who need.

In India especially, as in the rest of the backward countries, poverty and ignorance of the teeming millions forms a vicious circle. You cannot easily educate a hungry stomach nor a bare body. The rural adult education in India has so far been a big joke, because the problem was attacked on an isolated front. Perhaps our men at the helm did not recognize the problem in its proper perspective and its dimensions or perhaps they were powerless to approach it in a scientific way or perhaps it was in their interests not to recognize the acuteness of the problem. However it may be, we have to start a fresh-right from the beginning. We have not even any authentic preliminary statistics to guide us in our approach.

Our population is 85 percent illiterate and about 80 percent of Indians live and die in villages. The total population of the then British India within the age range 10-40 in June 1940, according to the Annual Report of the Public Health Commissioner with the Govt. of India for that year, was estimated to be 14, 86, 45, 389 (according to the provincial estimates of the 1941 census authorities). Out of these 14.6 percent, i.e. 2,17,02,227 are considered to be literate. The number of illiterate adults is there-

fore estimated at 12,70,00,000. Add to this figure now the illiterate adults from the princely states and you will get an idea of the staggering number of the people whom we have to reach. The last decade marked a rise in literacy from 8.3 percent to 14.6 percent. At this rate of progress it will take us only a century and half to spread literacy among our illiterate adults!

It is in itself an appalling state of affairs, what makes it more appalling is the abject poverty of these masses of India their wretchedness and apathy towards all reform, the conservatism of the women-folk and above all the stolid immobility of these dumb driven beasts. And unless we tackle the problem now and here it may assume very grave proportions which will be disastrous to our national interest. We are running a race against time and unless we take it by the forelock we may lose.

The Adult Education committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education made a modest estimate of expenditure. In its own modest way the Committee spread its Adult Education Scheme over twentyfive years which was to be launched after five years of preparation. It estimated the annual cost of expenditure at Rs. 3,00,00,000. Given that this money was forthcoming—say, somebody dropped it from heaven or who else would care to? —Where from will our teachers come? We need an army of teachers, a wealth of printed matter, expert personnel for direction and organization, right type of books and illustrative material, efficient system of transport, the services of the radio, the cinematograph, the press and the other

means of propaganda and we need a myraid of things more.

So, we see the problem in its many-sidedness. We see its magnitude so far as numbers (both in men and money) are concerned, we see the psychological, social and financial difficulties in their interconnectedness.

It is a stupendous problem. It is big enough to try the nerves of any big nation. But how long will we stand and wait? It is astounding how we Indians wait for somebody else to do our job. We are paying too heavy a price for our inertia. Three fifths of the human race are still ignorant and we have a preponderant share of that shame to share. Our illiterate adults in the rural areas are disqualified for skilled labour. Technical industry must be carried on in India by the 15% of its literate population, the rest concentrating on primitive methods of agriculture which is none too profiting.

Rural areas where there is the concentration of these unfortunate illiterates are the centres of resentment, unrest and dumb revolt. True, they have been always so but today when communism is knocking at our doors that dumb terror becomes all the more portentous. The underprivileged will hate us because they have no opportunities open to them. They are sullen with despair, frustrated beyond hope; freedom has meant little to them for they believe it is only a change of masters. There is no new vision, no new faith. They have lost all sense of mastery over their fate; nothing stirs them to self-reliance, nothing destroys their defeatist complex. Ten thousand years of human civilization are

locked up for them and they are themselves locked up in that strata of society where they don't feel one with the current of human history. They are afraid to try the unknown and fear is their only defence.

These very illiterate adults are the rock-bottom base of our Democracy. We shall leave them alone at our own grave risk. What will be the quality of our Adult Franchise when these people will vote? Some unscrupulous politicians will have us believe that there is an innate good sense in the Indian peasant even if he can not sign his own name. But, wouldn't that innate goodness increase a thousand-fold if this Indian peasant were also a literate and an educated man?

Our Basic National Education too stands to lose by adult literacy. We are handicapped by illiterate fathers and more so by illiterate mothers. The literacy of women doesn't need any special pleading. It is a matter of common experience, if you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family.

We, as a nation, claim the leadership of Asia or perhaps it has been thrust on us. However that may be, we must first justify that claim before proclaiming it to the world or letting the world proclaim it for us. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany claim a literacy of over 99%. Bulgaria which has the lowest rate can claim a 30% greater rate than ours. The United States and Canada and England have about the same literacy rating 97%+. Russia has achieved amazing results in the last two decades. Almost everybody in Russia can now read and write.

Let us see how other countries tackled and solved their problems. Adult illiteracy is mainly a rural problem; but it was so especially in Denmark, Turkey, China and Russia. It will be instructive and illuminating to know what they did.

The creators of the Adult Education movement — the "Danish Peoples High Schools" were a clergyman called Grundtvig and a working cobbler, called Kold — a very strange but a successful partnership. The idea and inspiration came from Grundtvig: Kold, a man of the people and of a more than usual share of determination, founded schools, taught and drew men after him by strength of character and spiritual force. In 1864 came the disastrous war with Germany. The Danish reply to defeat was to create more Peoples High Schools. These Schools, about one hundred, were nearly all residential with a summer term of three months, chiefly for women and a winter term of five months chiefly for men. They were all private enterprise. The Govt. gave grants-in-aid. The people were mostly farmers and small holders and in a less degree labourers. All students were over 18. The High School would not take them younger. There was no compulsion to attend and no reward in the form of a degree or diploma. The cost of maintenance was borne partly by the students and partly by the Govt. And these Peoples High Schools made Denmark a dairy for the whole of Europe and a prosperous country too. The students were not coerced to go to School but, then, what was the driving force behind them? Going to the School put more money in their coffers. During those days of revolution one of the most success-

ful of co-operative movements in history was launched. Co-operative farming, dairying, transport, exchange, distribution—all this means more bargaining power. Co-operative societies did all this for them and, in the bargain, gave them a general education just for a mere pittance. The spirit caught and it worked superbly well. Here the predominant incentive was the economic gain.

In Turkey, Kemal Pasha started the literacy campaign immediately on assumption of his office as dictator. Almost overnight the Arabic Script was replaced by Latin Phonetic alphabet. Eminent educationist like Dewey and Paul Monroe were invited. Suspicious of the custodians of religion, Kemal Pasha entrusted this work to his party, the People House. The Dictator himself set an example by teaching a few adults, others caught the contagion so much so that during the next seven years (from 1928) two and a half million men and women attended the folk Schools and more than half of them learned to read. By 1935 about 30% of the adult population were literate. It is reported that persons, actuated by that missionary zeal are still carrying on the campaign. Here we have an example of what an iron will of a dictator can achieve in such a short spectacular time.

In China the protagonist of the Chinese Renaissance was Dr. Hsueh, a Professor of the Peking University. He threw overboard the aristocratic language of the times. He developed the "White words" language to such an extent that a good many newspapers in that language of the common people came into vogue. It was, however, Dr.

Y. C. Yen who later intensified the adult literacy drive. A national organization under his leadership was established which had well developed campaigns in Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsu and Kwangtung Provinces. In 1931, says Laubach, Dr. Yen estimated that five million students, including soldiers in the Chinese army, had enrolled in his mass education classes and between one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand men and women taught daily, without any compensation, in rural and urban Schools.

Dr. Yen says, he had to go to France to learn about his own countrymen—that they were a republic without citizens. During the Great War I the Y. M. C. A. called Dr. Yen to work among the Chinese labourers who were building trenches in France. There they were friendless, penniless and homeless. They were working for war effort but had no news about the war. Then Dr. Yen, with his usual crusading spirit, wrote text books for them, taught them, compiled a list of 1,000 basic Chinese words, published a paper for them within the same concise vocabulary and thus won their trust and gratitude. When Dr. Yen returned to China in 1917, many University Professors and students responded to his appeal and moved into mud huts to live with the farmers. Every different Province undertook a different experiment. In order to create a "climate of willingness" to go to School they printed 1,500 Posters picturing how China was hindered by ignorance. The Governor sent out 500 proclamations that the people must learn to read. Thousands of handbills urging education were distributed. There were meetings of sho—masters. A parade by

College and middle School students bearing banners was quite impressive. Then seventy-five teams went to visit shops, homes and the people in streets—and they found fourteen hundred volunteers in three afternoons.” Here in China is an example of what a crusading spirit and human touch of healing coupled with an efficient organisation can achieve.

Lastly, we consider Russia. There is a close parallel between its adult literacy problems and those of ours. Before the revolution the policy of the Czar Government was, “...to teach the mass of people, or even the majority of them, how to read will bring more harm than good.” But after the revolution Lenin said, “We must do away entirely with illiteracy or semi-literacy. We must see to it that every factory and every electric power station shall become a centre of enlightenment.” One of the first things Lenin did immediately after the revolution was to sign the total liquidation of illiteracy. The members of the Communist party were disqualified if they did not pick up alphabets within a given course of weeks. A Latinized and phonetic alphabets was introduced. Seventy nationalities used this and many spoken languages were reduced to writing. Turkomans, Uzbeks and Tadzhiks registered a rise in literacy rate varying between 60% and 70% and all this from a paltry 2% and odd in 1923.

The Soviet method here, as every where else, was ruthless, uncompromising, direct and totalitarian. An illiterate adult had to go to the school—provided by the local Soviet, if he willed it or not. All sorts of punishments were meted out to those who defaulted. Since state controlled everything including food,

a man could refuse only on the risk of imprisonment, hard labour, all sorts of inconveniences. But later on when the spirit caught on, the demand for teachers outnumbered the supply. The Government was determined to liquidate illiteracy, and nothing would stand in its way. In one country alone in 1922 there were 300 training centres for teachers, over 1,50,000 Adult Education centres and 48,00,000 people had been taught to read. Senior and the junior “Cultural Brigades,” the “Pioneers” from the Schools went to every nook and corner with the message of the Revolution, students from Schools and Colleges went in squads to the countryside during their summer vacation; every new factory opened its own adult classes—in fact a nation was struggling against heavy odds and it succeeded! During 1927-28 in Russia 13,00,000 were taught, in 1928-29, 27,00,000, in 1929-30, 1,05,00,000 in 1930-31, 2,20,00,000. All this staggers one's imagination but it is, nevertheless true. All these literacy centres became progressively all-round Education Centres and today they have become the nation wide “polytechniques”.

It pained Wordsworth to see what man had made of man, but one is simply amazed and dazzled at what man has made of man in Russia. There they had a faultless plan, a driving faith, worship of ideals. The spirit that permeated the plan is responsible for its results. It was the faith of a crusader and the fanaticism of a man of religion. There they dethroned the old gods and created new ones. Gods, old or new are usually bad, but, sometimes, they serve a useful purpose. For example, what was our ‘Charka’ in the days of our freedom struggle?

I have taken the instances of Denmark, Turkey, China and Russia because there is a close identity between our problems and theirs. Before proceeding further let us sum up. The driving force behind the Adult Literacy campaign in Denmark was the struggle for survival against the forces let loose by the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century and against the German aggression in 1864; in Turkey it was the iron will of a dictator who was the national expression of the will to convert a “Sick man of Europe” into a healthy growing individual; in China it was the sweet reasonableness and the milk of human kindness that runs through the veins of missionaries, also the will of the Chinese to live a unified national life; in Russia, it was the will of the people, after the silence of centuries, to carve out a new pattern of life out of the chaos to which they had been subjected; it was also a challenge to the rest of the hostile capitalistic world; it was an ambition to usher in the era of economic democracy throughout the length and breadth of this world.

Here in India too, we are in the birth pangs of a revolution and this is the ripe time for launching a campaign for adult literacy in the villages. We are still on the threshold of that revolution. Political democracy, for various national and international reasons, has not been translated into economic democracy. A few only have seen the first flush of freedom but our countrymen in the countryside are still blinking like dromedaries in a zoo. All revolutions reveal a wide capacity for leadership among hitherto unknown men. We have still to broaden the basis of power in society so that we may have greater

number of leaders. If 15% of India's literate population could produce a Gandhi, a Nehru and a Tagore, surely the rest 85% could be trusted to produce a greater number. The sense of wide horizons opening to a people hitherto confined to the boundries of a village is bound to evoke what is best in the spirit of a people. Past promises have to be translated into bread, cloth, a home—even a mud hut and a modicum of social security. A stone cutter in a village knows no change today except that his implements are unavailable, except that the value of his rupee has fallen to less than four annas. He is disgruntled, dismayed but he patiently bears the yoke of centuries.

Gandhi reached the people and touched their hearts. His reward was that he won their hearts. The same problems confront us too who would like to see the liquidation of adult literacy. We have to reach the people, sell our ideas to them and stir them out of their age long slumber. I don't think we have less brains than Russians; I don't think our financial condition is worse than that of Russians after 1917; I don't think we are confronting a more hostile world than Russians did in 1917 and after; in fact we are better off every way, every inch.

Then, why don't we go about it? For all the excuses of the Secretaries of the Govt., I think we could start right now. Lack of teachers, text books and material, lack of funds or lack of School buildings never deterred any nation. Given the right psychological revolution among the masses we could do as others have done, we could attempt perhaps better. It is not crying for the moon as some believe.

Others have done it; we too can. But that psychological revolution too presupposes some sort of an economic democracy. When, for example, an appeal is made for voluntary teachers and for selfless service, it falls flat on people's ears: why make sacrifice when a few businessmen on the top are bleeding us white? If, for example College and School students are approached, they refuse to work. But give them an idea that social and economic justice will be given to all, it may well be impossible for you to restrain their enthusiasm. Students are the vanguard of all national movements everywhere, they could liquidate illiteracy as quickly as you wished, but how will you approach them?

After this preliminary condition of the revolution is satisfied, we have to treat this campaign on a war-footing as Grow More Food Campaign is. There should be an efficient administration from the centre to every village unit. I think some unofficial organization with Government and private aid could take up this work better. Why doesn't it strike the R. S. S. or the Socialist party of India to make this campaign a No. 1. tenet of their programme? Why doesn't the Govt. make it obligatory on every employer to remove illiteracy among the employees? Why are not 14% of adult literates compelled by some ordinance to follow, by force if need

be, the Programme of *Each one Teach one*? Could not our Universities see that every prospective candidate educated at least one person each year of his or her college career? Why don't our students go to the neighbouring villages during their summer vacation and do some useful work there?

I believe that no useful purpose will be served by pious resolution, by acts of parliament, by committees and sub-committees. We have the strength of a volcano, but it is dormant. We have potentialities, but they are latent. I believe we have enough men and money. But we are fumbling and groping in the dark.

The minimum necessary condition for the liquidation of rural adult illiteracy is the right type of psychological change which is born of social, economic and political justice. Till then we shall be only tinkering with the problem, building on the uncertain sands of deception and self deceptions. No patch-work will do, no half way house will stand. If we would succeed we must combine in our campaign something of the Danish mood which faces a national crisis, something of the iron dictatorship of Kemal Pasha, something of the sweetness and light and organizational capacity of the Chinese, something of the ruthlessness with which a whole Russian nation obliterated illiteracy.

"All thinking men and women are concerned for the betterment of the conditions of human life and are moved to the service of mankind. And the way of that service lies through knowledge."

Rural Adult Education — Its Foundations

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PEACE and contentment can never be secured for the nation unless the downright poverty and the colossal ignorance of the nine-tenths of our population are removed to an appreciable extent. A high level of knowledge and character must be secured if our Sovereign Democratic Republic is not to break down under the burden of its responsibilities. The problem of rural education is very intricate and complex. There are over 290 millions of villagers scattered over 18 lakhs of square miles; and they live in more than 7 lakhs of village units. The religious, social and economic conditions obtaining in these villages are hopelessly varying; different and divergent. Therefore, no single scheme or unitary solution is possible of application to all villages in the country. In spite of the wonderful scientific inventions and the expensive army of agricultural officers, the villager is still using the primeval plough, and is blissfully ignorant of the tremendous researches carried on in agricultural institutes. The Panchayats and Co-operative Societies were inaugurated with the best of intentions; but in most cases in the villages they have degenerated into corrupt and mismanaged bodies. It is really unfortunate that even the official Agricultural Department makes no attempt to go to the root of the problem—the problem, namely, of the production of a race of agriculturists, who can adopt the most recent scientific and business principles to their affairs, and at the same time develop, rather than lose their own rural instincts and

traditions. The rural virtues are too valuable an ingredient of our national life to be lost; and as the urban factor tends to predominate it becomes all the more necessary that the other should be strengthened and individualised to maintain the balance.

The Village School

Any Scheme for rural uplift must reckon with the village school as the most potent force for its successful fruition. The villagers are pre-eminently an agricultural folk, and the aim of the rural school should be to help the village children to educate themselves as far as possible on modern lines for the pursuit of an agricultural career, and for the intelligent discharge of the ordinary duties of the present-day citizenship. It is therefore imperative that provision for fostering a love of country-things and preparing the rural lads for an agricultural calling should be embodied in the village school curriculum. Rightly did Dr. B. V. Nath, the Director of Agriculture (Madras) lament that "till now our efforts in imparting agricultural education to the children of ryots and of the land-owning class have failed to attune them to the conditions of rural life. On the other hand their education tended to take them away from country life and agricultural pursuits." The first step therefore in any scheme of rural uplift must be to emancipate the pupils from a system that turns them out with a preference for the towns, to fit them for an agricultural calling, and

adjust their education to the facts of their psychology and of their environment. The village boy is not dull, certainly he is not inferior in intelligence to the urban lad; only his environment has made him interested in different things. Tell him why the fields are green, how there came to be clay in one field and sand in another, where the village stream comes from and why it is part of all geography on a miniature scale; and he will be interested and his mind will follow you to grasp larger facts by analogy. There is unfortunately a false impression that agriculture does not need any preliminary training or probation; and this must be immediately removed.

What America has done

It would be instructive to note that in Canada and the United States of America, general education is given in village schools in such a manner that it prepares the ground suitably for the technical education that is to come. This method is called "Club Work," and consists in allotting small plots of land to boys and girls of village schools on which they grow corn, fruit, vegetables or rear chicken, pigs or whatever they are interested in under expert supervision. They are instructed in the latest methods and the latest scientific discoveries by these specialist teachers. Every year an agricultural festival is held at which prizes are given to those who have grown the best crops and produced the best stock under the most economic conditions, and to those who have written the best essays on their undertakings. The method has proved so successful that the system has been extended to include instruction to adults in the principles of crop rotation, fertilising soils and feeding stock. The object of

rural education should be not only to adjust instruction to the type of mind that is to receive it and to fit the students for agricultural pursuits, but also to inspire and nurse in every possible way love of country objects and country life, and to give them a pride in their calling.

Adult Education—Its Imperative Need

It is too late to argue that it would have been safer to educate first and to confer power afterwards. With the grant of adult franchise, a huge electorate must be accepted as an accomplished fact and it is up to us to see that it is educated. One trembles to think what the result of ignorance may be. Our priceless heritage in Philosophy, Religion, Fine Arts, Literature and Culture would seem to be at the mercy of an uninstructed popular vote. It is indispensable that national institutions should depend on knowledge as well as on racial conservatism. Our problems have never seemed more overwhelming than at the present time—capital and labour, religious funds, caste prejudices, food, housing, public health, transport, to say nothing of Education itself. To solve them Character and Goodwill are the first requisites, though quite inadequate without knowledge. There is no substitute for knowledge. If democracy is ignorant, it will ultimately have to give way to some other ruling power.

The meaning of adult education is the continued effort to learn by those past school age whether busily employed or not in earning their livelihood; its purpose is to produce and sustain the healthy mind in the healthy body. The

fundamental *assumption* is that in all adults there is a capacity for continued education of a high order, granted the right method of approach. Among the adults continuous study depends upon conviction and spontaneity. The grown-up man or woman cannot be driven to school. The sense of personal need and the sense of public duty must be present; and if not present, must be aroused. The life conditions of classes and groups must form the basis of education; and to take account of such conditions requires intimate local knowledge and intelligent sympathy.

The Duties of Universities

All activities of adult education in its higher forms should be the result of a stimulus issuing from the Universities and dependent upon their aid. It would be the natural result of missionary work in Education originating from within. The highest reward of service is a demand for more service. At the present time no service is more urgent or more hopeful in the interests of the nation than that of widespread adult education. In this service it is a matter of extreme urgency that the Universities should take their proper and full part. It would seem at the first glance that the University should only be concerned with scholars who are able to live within its precincts. But even in so narrow a view it is implicit that scholars should go out into the world in order to purify and enrich the common life by the exercise of the spirit and the dissemination of the knowledge so developed and acquired. The influence and teaching of University men must necessarily be a finer and better thing from that of other men, or the University

stands condemned so far as its practice is concerned. Further, a University must send out its roots and branches. It can never be a close and secluded society. The day of patrons, so far as places of learning are concerned, is over. The common man, the man in the street, has come to his own, and has asserted himself. A University, if it would fulfil its mission must so interpret itself as to gain the affection and support of the people generally. In other words, it must have a direct and practical interest in the education of adult citizens. There is no reason why courses of lectures given by accredited University teachers should not form part of the educational system of every town and village. One argument for leaving the task of providing opportunities for adult education to the Universities is that under their aegis men and women who differ in their social, industrial, religious status can meet on equal terms. Many adults of the upper and middle classes are content to live on their intellectual capital; and unless they can be induced to recognise that the man who has ceased to learn has ceased to live, they may lose the influence that legitimately belong to them in the political life of the nation.

Specific Rural Problems

We may here indicate in a rough sketch a few lines of approach to the problem of sound and effective rural education. The foundational fact regarding rural mentality is its essentially religious nature. The only potent appeal to the village folk is through religion. Collective prayer at the beginning and close of the session, organisation of Bhajanas, say on Saturdays, and

celebration of religious festivals in local temples help the teacher to become popular and wield a powerful influence over the masses. Secondly, the villagers are extremely conservative, and cling to outworn traditions. The enlightened teacher has here a fertile field for the exercise of his talents and the realisation of his ideals. The path of progress must be evolutionary, and not revolutionary. *Natura non facit Saltum*. In these matters it is useless to preach and helpful to understand. The time-honoured institutions of our country have to be re-modelled according to the necessities of the times. The personal purity and sincerity of the teacher, his vitalising ideas, and selfless reforming zeal will have a miraculous and alchemising effect on the masses. The teacher should, moreover, train his pupils in giving dramatic performances of soul-elevating episodes from our epics and of expurgated stories of heroes which would help the villagers to visualise moral virtues and social values.

The villagers should be taught personal hygiene and elementary principles of sanitation. They must be made to realise that the only way to fight out epidemics like plague, cholera, smallpox, etc., is by adopting preventive and sanitary methods on the latest scientific principles, and not by pathetic propitiation of the demons and spirits by sacrificing goats and fowls.

One very heart-rending fact has to be mentioned here, since it is the

most discussed subject, namely—rural indebtedness. Growing taxes and high cost of living are pointed out as the sole causes of the villagers' debts. But the truth of the matter is that they are not the main, but only contributory factors. The village festival, marriage and funeral, Dipawali and Pongal, party feuds and caste pride—all these are occasions for inordinate expenditure; and money in all these cases is unhesitatingly borrowed in a reckless manner. Add to these drink and litigation, and you get a fairly full catalogue of the causes of the indebtedness of the villager. The most urgent thing therefore is to teach the villager to live within his means, and restrain him from embarking on spectacular expenses. The villager is fortunately far away from the temptations of coffee-hotels, gambling-houses, race-courses and similar other curses of city life, and he is a perfect stranger to the numberless diseases that are the monopoly of the townsmen. If therefore anybody has the natural right to enjoy life, it is the villager, but what a picture of misery and what a tale of woe we have of the villager!—all because he has not the right education and proper guidance. It is ignorance that makes beasts of men and let us not forget that the Government, like water, can never rise higher than its source, that education properly designed and administered is one of the truest forms of wealth that we can create, and that money spent on Education is really money invested, even if we have to wait for a generation or two for the dividend.

RURAL ADULT EDUCATION

—Fundamentals for a Programme—

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IN most respects our country is different from others. What may not be a problem elsewhere becomes a serious problem to us. In a country like America, the aim of adult education is only to enrich the individual's knowledge and liberalize his outlook. Therefore there is emphasis on the spread of libraries. Or in other countries where literacy is not very high, or is only slightly less than the maximum, there is emphasis on literacy alone. Mr. Bryson says, "Adult education as an organised social movement is comparatively new in American life." In America itself it is new.

The position in our country however becomes altogether different and miserable. The population is vast. The country is economically backward. People are steeped in ignorance. Literacy is very low. Illiteracy is appallingly high. Therefore there is need for an all-round development. All-round emphasis is necessary but it is meaningless. Emphasis on literacy alone will not do.

An attempt at diagnosis reveals some popular mis-conceptions. One is that rural reconstruction is an economic problem; another is that education is the achievement of literacy. On the other hand it is not hard to comprehend that rural reconstruction is a spiritual and psychological problem, that economic improvement is a byproduct of the desire to rise and education must produce the desire. Without doubt, the aim of education is to liberalise

the outlook, while education and rural reconstruction may be viewed as two facets of the same concept. Herein lies the crux of the whole problem.

In this connection let us not ignore certain postulates of the problem. In the peculiar position of the country, the literacy figure is only 14.7 per cent. Sometimes a doubt is raised about the utility of educating adults, particularly of '80 year olds' and '90 year olds.' If education is to kindle the desire to learn, then it will at once be conceded that evoking an adult's desire to learn is equal to evoking that desire in the minds of *hundred members*, hundred descendants of his. By a parity of reasoning educating an old woman is calculated to carry the torch of learning to *hundreds of families*.

Examining this aspect of the problem more and more we light upon a serious situation. It might almost be said that we have reached a critical stage in our national history. The day of the politician has passed. The foreign foe has been removed from the scene. But there are several internal foes to freedom i.e. to the exercise and enjoyment of social freedom as different from individual liberty. Their attacks are none the less serious. We have attained independence and freedom. But of what use is it if we do not know how to value it and cherish it? It would be like a jewel, a priceless possession in the hands of an ignorant and foolish

child. It might even be termed casting pearls before swine.

For we are aware that adult suffrage without universal literacy is not a mere snare, it is a real menace. To quote Joseph K. Hart "It is not education of children that can save the world from destruction: it is the education of adults: it is the adult who must be weaned from his provincial-mindedness, his animistic prejudices, his narrow customs, his obsolete habits; it is the adult who must be given the chance to become free in a world of science, tolerance, human sympathy and intelligent organisation." We are between two worlds, one dead, and the other powerless to be born. The *puranic* expositions and *harikathas* of the old, the old instruments of learning are now lost to us. Nor are we yet on the path of universal literacy and numerous libraries, the hall-marks of modernism. The crisis calls for an urgent remedy from all points of view - economic, political and social and warrants an ordinance too.

There are a few more postulates for us to consider. Our country is a land of villages. If villages do not go to schools or centres of education, education must go to their doors. So far as adult education is concerned, its spread may not altogether depend on the number of adult schools opened. Of course the major responsibility will be in the field of literacy education. More of propaganda will have to be conducted.

In actual experience in the past it has been found that achievement of literacy as an object in itself and as the main end of rural education has been a failure. Literacy is only a bye-product of education. The duty of adult education is to inspire people with the desire to seek know-

ledge and culture contained in the written and printed word. Now there are what may be called, *instruments* of adult education. Education is achieved not merely by books and schools but by newspapers, cinemas, lectures, magic lanterns, wireless, broadcasting, exhibitions, demonstrations, shows, competitions and every other method of modern publicity.

In the spread of adult education rural libraries may play a large part. Besides books for rural folk for which arrangements will have to be made, popular pamphlets should be printed and distributed free to village folk. They may bear on subjects like agriculture, common industries (Cottage or factory) transport, posts and telegraphs, machinery of government, legislature, new constitution etc. It may be ordinarily expected that there will be at least one literate member in every family. It is possible that he will in his turn educate the other members. Let us remember all the while that for purposes of adult education programmes, the emphasis will be on life rather than on culture.

The approach or the venue in adult education shall be the occupational life of the villager. It shall be the pivot or the core of instruction and talks. The course may be for two months or three months or a longer period in the agricultural off-season. In the preliminary steps the stress may be on oral talks which may be largely informational. Then the stress on book-centred instruction shall be the minimum.

The talks may be illustrated with or accompanied by aids and slides. The cinema projector may be requisitioned. Sounds, shows, sights may be indented upon. The talks may bear on science, sanita-

tion, hygiene, social studies. Of course, these "non-class-room-instructional" talks should all be part of an integral scheme and co-ordinated plan.

Of course it will be clear that industrialisation and literacy go side by side. The more industrial a country, the greater the facilities are for literacy and indirectly for adult education also. This observation is borne out by conditions in England, Germany, America, Russia and Japan. Mills and factories provide facilities for adult schools. Arguing on this score, in industrial India, there may be greater facilities for increased literacy and better adult education. But to wait for industrialisation will be to wait for an indefinitely long period and perhaps with diffidence and depression.

The place of radio in adult education can by no means be overlooked. Though the majority are illiterate, still the people still conserve some of the highest legacies of our race. For there is the age-old tradition that could teach the people the elements of social, political and religious principles in the simplest and the easiest way. The spoken word which is the life-force of broadcasting has a great hold on the public mind in our country. The only thing is that when in the past religion was the vehicle of education, in modern conditions, life has to be the vehicle.

Broad-casting is the most powerful factor in educating the masses and the women of the country. Book-learning is not sufficient to educate a man in the true sense of the word. If learning supplies the key to knowledge, education supplies the secret of applying that knowledge to life.

In the campaign of rural education or uplift, it is good to enlist

the housewife, for women are citadels of tradition, custom, superstition and orthodoxy. An army of missionary women-teachers imbued with the ideal of service can be depended on to attack and slay the demon of ignorance and illiteracy. More than the male member, the woman worker will be useful, provided she has the necessary spirit and competence.

What is needed in rural adult education is a real stir. For there is a general stupor and lethargy in the village life. Something of the spirit of vivacity and variety characteristic of city life may be sought to be attempted by radio and broadcasting.

Of course a modern Indian, a villager or a townsman has to realise his own obligations. He is not only the male head of a family. He is the member of a society. He is a voting citizen. He is expected to take an intelligent part in *national* politics without getting into the mire of power, parochial or communal politics. An illiterate voter is sure to degenerate into a national and universal curse.

In the matter of recruiting personnel for adult education workers, a few points have to be considered. There is a suggestion to conscript every graduate and every person before getting into Government service. The latter may be more suitable. As regards the first, it may be pointed out at once that conscripting a graduate may not altogether be a happy suggestion, for his zeal and enthusiasm in his studies, course or training, may wither away during a period of enforced service. For that matter a wiser course will be to recruit retired people, if they are active and energetic. They will be more responsible and more useful and any day because of their

experience, their work will be of a better quality. At the same time the magic lantern, the radio, the gramophone, the theatre and the cinema shall be conscripted as aids.

When all is said and done one may very well wonder what the benefits of adult education may be. It may be answered at once that it will help to bridge the gulf between member and member in the same family, between the educated and the uneducated, between town and village, between the buyer and the seller between the producer and the consumer, between capital and labour and above all between the government and the governed.

Thus adult education will help to improve and liberalize the individual's out-look.

Ford's ambition was to provide a motor car for every American. It has been almost achieved for every alternate American at least owns a car at present. As one interested in adult education, I for one wish that every Indian home had a radio. It is up to the rich, the public and the governments to work for the fulfilment of this devout consummation. I strongly hold that this will be an essential step in the implementation of any useful adult education programme and will step up adult education.

Rural Adult Education in India

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OF the manifold immediate complicated problems Independent India has confronted today, the problem of Adult Education is in no way less taxing. The urgent importance of this problem cannot be overemphasised, especially in view of the present changed political condition of the country. India is no doubt politically independent, but not completely so in as much as it has been still tagged on to the British Crown, nominally though. It is going to be completely independent in the near future: it will be a sovereign republic. The people will elect their representatives to their legislatures. The Head of the Indian state also will be elected by them.

Democracy will work in India soon. This idea thrills with joy the whole soul of every Indian worth the name. But consideration of the

present poor mental outlook of the bulk of the Indian population who will elect their own democratic government cries halt to such a thrill. Adult Franchise has come. Quite good. But it has come without its necessary accompaniment namely Adult Education. It is up to the state to make immediate arrangements to enable Adult Education (especially in villages) to run abreast with Adult Franchise so that these adults who are now devoid of sense of responsibility can use their discretion in the impending election.

If we really mean business we have to educate our illiterate ignorant adults about the various common man's current problems which have to be solved by their new democratic government that is going to be chosen soon by them. To take the illiterate adults with a matured mind through the method of making

them first literate and then educate them through their reading books with proper guidance is beneficial in the long run in many ways. But under the present pressing circumstances the following suggestions may be of help to meet the situation in time.

India is too well known for its high age-long civilisation which had its hold on every individual either in the village or in the town. Apart from the educational "ashrams", "tols", and "pathasalas" for continuous education of children who grew into highly educated men through them, there were village centres one in each village called "melah" or "akhada" where adults gathered and discussed various current problems of life with a view to solve them. In these 'melahs' the people also read 'puranas' and other 'shastras'. Another regular feature of these village or street centres (melahs) was that there people developed their physical culture too. They did gymnastics including 'yogic asans' and 'pranayam'. In every centre there used to be a governing body. Even to this day we can see these "melahs" in most villages though ill-managed. Now is the time for the government to take possession of these centres wherever they be found and to start new ones in villages where they are not found.

The question of building is not so great. Temporary sheds will suffice, and these can be had for rent. But these centres should be equipped with the most up-to-date books in general knowledge covering mental, moral, material, social as well as political aspects of life. Newspapers should be provided. News items should be daily read and discussed. Political affairs of the

world should be invariably explained from the daily news and their bearing upon economic life of man should be classified. Occasional award of prizes to clever adults be instituted, and these prizes should be of such a nature as to be of immediate use to the adult so as to accelerate his interest for this his education.

The second item in this scheme of adult education should be the use of the travelling talkie (moving pictures) relating to the elections of highly advanced democratic countries. These pictures should include the proceedings of election campaigns of honest and competent candidates, the actual pollings, the gathering of the legislatures for some important decisions and so on. Thereby the ignorant adult will have his mental outlook broadened and will have some sense of responsibility infused.

Films of social functions, religious festivals like the Puri Car Festival, Tirupathi Sri Ramanavami Uthavam etc. may be included in this programme.

The moving film will especially help the education of adult females who are also granted franchise. Some separate arrangement has to be made for their education. Female educators would serve the best purpose, the 'melah' being used by shifts both by males and females at nights and middays respectively. If we Indians are really earnest that our adult females also should partake in the daily undertakings including the work at home in an enlightened way with a sense of responsibility, then our government must make immediate provision for compulsory attendance of ignorant adult women at these centres for receiving education.

Adult Illiteracy A Great Injustice

Sri GOPI NATH KOUL, B.A., B.T. (Srinagar)

I AM very glad to note that there has been a considerable activity during the past decade in the field of adult education. This is due to the frank recognition of the democratic ways of Government, in which an average adult is expected to take an intelligent part.

Ever since the scheme was set afoot, critics have not been wanting. A section of the people adopted a callous attitude towards it from the very beginning. There have been people, who believed that the scheme was bound to fail. Yet another section among the intelligensia opposed it on grounds of selfish motives. They visualised that they could not make any headway in their profession when the environment gets transformed into an enlightened one.

Thanks to the zealous work of certain pioneers, it has passed

(Continued from preceding page)

In conclusion I suggest that for every centre the government have to choose volunteers, if any, to undertake the task of adult education to be done within a year from now before the new elections. But as an emergency measure the Government may order for a general conscription of all educated men and women to undertake each the education of 5 to 10 adults within a year or so before the elections under the new constitution. If a year is not sufficient for this purpose the time may be prolonged postponing the new elections to some later date in view of the importance of the proper voting sense that is required of the electors.

through the initial stage of trial. There has been a great awakening among the masses, with the result that the public bodies have come to cooperate with it. There is no doubt, if all the departments of the Government work together and want to remove the veil of ignorance, this superb task shall surely become an easier one. The interest and the awakening among the people, is also proved by the fact that a large body of literature has been produced and special journals have been started, in which suggestions for tackling this difficult problem, have been made from time to time to the workers, in the field.

Those people, who associate themselves with this movement, should take it for granted that they are conferring a great boon to their country and by their selfless work they are surely bringing an era of peace and happiness to the whole of India.

Scope of the Scheme

The aim of adult education must not be only literacy but the spread of up-to-date knowledge of useful subjects, pertaining to their every day requirements. So it becomes necessary for us to attend to the following important subjects.

1. Hygiene, 2. Common place Geographical knowledge of the environment, 3. Easy stories of the Historical personages, 4. Scientific information regarding agriculture and the maintenance of cattle, 5. Dialogues on current topics, 6. Fundamental economic facts about trade, 7. Village upliftment and its allied problems.

Before suggesting the ways and means of making available this useful knowledge to the adults (male and females) let us review the present day situation that is obtained in rural parts in India.

In a village, a woman has to work in the capacity of a slave. She gets up early in the morning. Sweeps and cleans the Stable. Removes filth from the house and deposits it far away in the fields. After doing the cleansing work in the kitchen, she takes up actual cooking process. When she finishes the service in the kitchen in the forenoon, she begins thinking about the evening meals. Whenever her children fall ill, she finds no time to attend to them. She has, in fact, no knowledge of the demands of the young children, who are kept in her charge. She sees her children, playing with dust and dirt but does not think it her duty to dissuade them from doing so. Wherever there are schools, a small percentage of children of the school going age attend it. Girls are not at all considered fit to receive this education.

Turning now to the males, we find that they are—absolutely ignorant of social behaviour in the society and the clubs. Their behaviour with their ladies, is not much. They lack in cooperation and team-spirit. They indulge in unhealthy competition. It is a great source of trouble in the society. They are almost ignorant of social hygiene. They never refrain from throwing rubbish and dirt on the public lanes. They do not even hesitate from keeping objectionable refuse, under their very nose, in the compound. Very often, it makes the external ventilation of the house, harmful and thus becomes a breed-

ing ground, for the spread of contagious diseases.

It is thus obvious, that there is a great need for socialising the adult education, especially in the rural parts of India.

How to Proceed?

Since we have not to teach young children but adults (the men and women of the world) our approach to the problems should be practical. Besides making them literate, we have to help them, in the art of living, as useful citizens of the state.

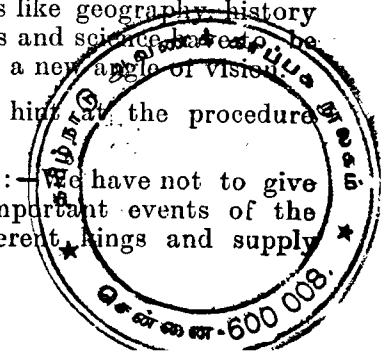
A province or a state should, perhaps, be divided into social centre zones, roughly corresponding with some administrative units. A centre should be opened in it. It should serve as a community centre for the adults of the circle. From the very beginning, it should be handed over to a man of wide vision, who should make it as the centre of activity for the adult community. There should be provision for indoor games and interesting pastime. The idea behind all this is, that they should consider it as their own—centre of activity and should come to love it. They should consider that they have lost a good thing if they remain absent from it even for a single day.

Reading of the 3 R's should be done sometime after when the adults feel keen about it.

Subjects like geography, history, mathematics and science should be taught from a new angle of vision.

Let me hint at the procedure below:—

History:—We have not to give them, the important events of the reign of different kings and supply



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them with lists of important battles. Here, we can profitably introduce stories of the growth of civilisation and trace the progress of the culture of the community in which he happens to live.

Geography:—We should help the adults in understanding the study of man as a whole in the surroundings in which he is placed.

Subjects like the change of seasons, rain, clouds, storms, hail, snow, sun, eclipses, earthquakes etc., etc. can be taught with understanding to the adults.

Mathematics:—No G. C. M., L. C. M., contracted division + Multiplication shall do. Instead such rules, as have direct bearing on social life shall have to be taken up. Simple questions on interest, discount, unitary method etc., etc. should be carefully taught in a play-way manner. Regular visits to the markets, banks and share markets should be organised.

Science:—We ought to make the adults acquainted with the broad principles of science. Questions like the following may be taken up:—

1. Why an apple falls to the ground?
2. Why do we get colours in the rainbow?
3. How do we hear the voice of a distant friend?
4. How and why do we get messages through a wireless apparatus?
5. Why a body floats in water?
6. How and why to wash?
7. What is the object of cleanliness?
8. Why to keep our houses, clothes and bodies clean?

Turning to the illiterate females of our rural parts, our aim should not be to make them fashionable society girls, but to guide them in such a way as to make them live a happy home life. Proper instructions

with regard to the punctuality to be observed in cooking meals, taking a bath, cleaning the clothes and serving meals at regular intervals are to be given. She has to know the art of first aid when her children receive slight injuries, or have sore eyes. She should also have the working knowledge of the use of a doctor's thermometer, of the venereal and contagious diseases. She should be fully aware of the uses of the medicines usually found in a first aid box and should know how to bandage a simple wound.

It should be cleared before her that allowing of dirt and dirty clothes, just and after the labour period, is dangerous both for the mother and the new born babe.

Introduction of other Topics

The topics are varied and inexhaustible. Suitable stories, fables, anecdotes, and poems should be hunted out which will clear before the adults the uses of kindness, politeness, cleanliness, care in keeping the household, furniture, grounds, rooms etc. clean. Necessity of good manners in streets, behaving with restraint, while on a public thoroughfare deserve to be demonstrated. Instruction in hygiene will teach them the necessity of observing sanitary conditions at home and outside. While hearing certain topics in this subject, they shall know the value of a good diet and pure water.

Agencies beyond our control

The Govt. shall have, (under the auspices of the educational advisory board) to supervise, and prepare cinema films and the talkies to suit Indian conditions.

Miscellaneous Agencies

The most reliable method of uplifting the masses, in India, is

the use of suitable magic lantern slides. It is effective, cheap and ready at hand.

So far as my information goes the adult education league at Poona has tried this method quite successfully. They have prepared a number of slides on different subjects concerning the rural and urban problems of the people. As far as I can remember, they have invented a cheaper variety of magic lantern, called "Adult Educator". Work can be started on similar lines and improved upon.

Harikatha method can also be pressed into service. In it much depends on the man at the helm of affairs i. e. the Harikatha performer.

Broadcasting through the radio is another means of educating the adults. Regular talks on sanitation

health problems, manure and its preparation in pits, cooperation etc. should be broad-cast from the radio stations. This clearly means that we should have to set up receiving sets in large numbers in the rural areas throughout the Indian Union.

Recently, however, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, under the very able guidance of Mr. Asadullah Qazimin, M. A., M. Ed. the Director of Education, has evolved a scheme of adult education. It has to be started on broader principles. A training centre was opened where the prospective adult teacher has to be trained in the tools of his trade. There appears to be much that is commendable in the scheme but it is much early to pronounce any judgment as yet on its working.

Mass Uplift Schemes and Adult Education

Sri M. V. APTE (Poona).

LITERACY can only be taken as one of the means of acquiring knowledge. We see every Adult acquiring knowledge through Apprenticeship system by practical experience, from his father, brother, neighbours or masters and it would be foolish to call him uneducated simply because he is unable to write in some particular characters. Not only this but the knowledge acquired by him in agriculture or any other industry will be found more valuable than his ability to write letters alone. It is true that he would occasionally require the help of a writer and he will take it on payment, as he is expected to take the help of a Doctor, a Lawyer or an Engineer. Several business firms are doing such sort of work.

In short, though literacy has some important value in man's life

it is no use to make the Adult only literate. I may say that it should be made compulsory to children with due regard to the difficulties of their parents. It is useless to ask the Adult to wear a child's coat.

Thus the aim of adult education must not be only literacy but it should be the spread of up-to-date knowledge of the useful subjects of their every day requirements. The Adult may not know the theory of Geology, Electricity, Radio and Accountancy but he must be able to know how to lead a good family life, how to ensure satisfactory hygienic conditions, how to improve methods employed in his normal business and how to cut his coat according to his cloth. Moreover, the Adult Franchise being at his doors, every adult must have the Knowledge of all the political working systems of

the country from Grampanchayats, Municipalities and Local Boards to the Provincial and Central Legislative Assemblies.

In this sense, the scope of Adult Education is extremely wide and is very closely connected with every part of the country (cities, towns and rural areas alike). The mass uplift schemes, therefore, must be closely and inseparably linked up with Adult Education.

To expect to get the Adult acquainted with the knowledge of all these subjects through literacy, is a question of time. Similarly, the institution of public libraries provided with cheap and popular books on various subjects dealing with the individual needs of the Adults and capable of creating taste amongst them, is a thing for which we shall have to wait for years to come. The lectures with or without radios impress only on ears and have a mere temporary effect. Moreover, the difference in the colloquial languages is also a great drawback.

The good museums have some educative value but they also will take several years for their development. However, the masses will not get time to have occasional visits to them on account of their poor economic circumstances.

The Cinema Film and the talkies especially prepared to suit the Indian circumstances, will be of great value but they also will have to be discarded, at present, being the costly means of spreading knowledge. They will even be unadoptable owing to the variety of local, social, geographical and economic conditions of the masses.

The use of suitable Magic Lantern Slides, dealing with lectures on different subjects, concerning the millions of Adults in India, is the only method which is reliable, effective,

cheap, ready at hand, and capable of considerable adaptability. With the help of these we can easily have sufficient spread of knowledge and bring about the uplift of the masses. We have, therefore, while building up our system of Adult Education, to depend much on this method and gradually add to the list, when time, circumstances, and money permit.

The Adult education League of Poona which is founded for the very purpose of stamping out ignorance and increasing knowledge of the Adults, useful for practical affairs, has adopted this method. It has prepared a number of slides on different subjects concerning the Rural and Urban problems of the people and has also invented a portable and cheaper variety of a Magic Lantern, called the "Adult Educator." It is designed to suit the particular needs of the country and the slides are either sold or lent to any worker throughout India. Demonstrations are also given to show the advantage of the system and thus induce the expected worker to undertake the work. In the future scheme of Adult Education therefore the Magic Lantern will play an important part and will ceaselessly demand a band of enthusiastic workers to spread the rudimentary knowledge of human life and make the life of the teeming millions happy and contented.

Finally, I hope that the present Government will tackle this vitally important problem in the political, cultural, social and economic life of India and start in right earnest to build up a sound machinery for the propagation of Adult Education, stamping out the general appalling ignorance of the teeming millions and diffusion of the treasures of knowledge to them to make their life happy.

TO OUR READERS

Owing to severe cyclonic weather on the 27th and 28th October all communications have been cut off and electricity has failed.

Consequently, we are obliged to publish this Special Number on the 9th instead of on the 1st November 49, as scheduled.

—Editor.



EDUCATIONAL INDIA

MASULIPATAM, Nov., 1949

The Problems of Adult Education

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation is an international and intergovernmental organisation whose lofty mission is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture. During the short period that it has been in existence it has achieved tremendous things and this encourages us to hope that it will have a bright future. Realising the value of education as a constructive force for international understanding and co-operation, the UNESCO has addressed itself to the task of organising International seminars as one of the effective means to that end. The object of a seminar is to concentrate on the study of educational processes leading to

international understanding. It aims at bringing together experts from all parts of the world to study and compare the methods proposed in their respective countries for solving specific educational problems. It endeavours to pool the resources of all participants as a basis for the solution of these problems. It makes use of the study group method on an international level. It draws up plans for action in the home countries of the participants.

UNESCO Seminars

SO far the UNESCO has organised five Seminars. The first Seminar was held in Severs (France) in July—August 1947 and it engaged itself with the problems of "Education for International understanding." The second Seminar was held in New York in July—August 1948 and the problem it set before itself was "Teaching about the United Nations and its specialised Agencies." The third Seminar was run in England in July—August 1948 and the topic for discussion was the "Education and Training of Teachers." About the same time a fourth Seminar was organised in Czechoslovakia on the subject of "Childhood Education from 3 to 13." A fifth Seminar was also meeting at the same time in Brazil to tackle the problem of "Illiteracy in the Americas." And now a sixth Seminar is being held in Mysore to discuss the problems of Rural Adult Education with special reference to Asian coun-

tries. The last two Seminars have thus addressed themselves to the consideration of the problems of Adult Education.

An Urgent Problem for India

TODAY Adult Education has become an urgent problem in India. The liquidation of adult illiteracy is a necessary precondition for the successful functioning of a democratic government and the new sovereign independent Republic of India which is now in its birth-throes will be a blessing or a curse according as we succeed or fail in educating those who have become important factors in politics. The Adult has to be educated in order that he may make an intelligent and profitable use of the power that is now vested in him and even more, in order that he may not prove to be an obstacle in the way of the spread of primary education among his children. The percentage of illiteracy among the adult population in India is quite appalling and if the new democracy is not to sink under its heavy responsibilities but is to function efficiently so as to promote the welfare and prosperity of the teeming millions of this land, it is of the utmost importance that the problem of Adult Education should be tackled resolutely and successfully. Otherwise the freedom that has been won after so many years of constitutional agitation would taste like dead sea fruit in our mouths. The problem is one of equal urgency in the

other countries of Asia. Every where it is of first importance that the Voter and Taxpayer should at least be able to read the daily newspaper and use his vote intelligently on current issues.

Educate or Re-educate

THE problem of educating the adult is no less urgent in the case of those who are literate to a certain extent than in the case of those who are completely illiterate. In the nature of things it is impossible to impart a humane or liberal education to boys and girls in their teens, because many cultural subjects are unsuited to their immature minds. They read literature and they study history but their undeveloped intellectual faculties will not enable them to appreciate the one or benefit by the other. What has, therefore, to be done is to educate or re-educate the adult. This is being attempted in every modern country no less by indirect than by direct methods. Continuation Schools, Night Schools, University Extension classes, Adult training centres—these are the agencies that have been employed to impart instruction on general subjects like literature and science and on particular trades and professions free of cost and-sometimes even compulsorily to the men and women who have either never been to school or left it after the primary stage.

Progress in other Countries

The Continuation Schools of Germany—*Fort bildungsschulen*—were set up to give to the children of the working classes who have left the elementary school at fourteen two or three years of general education. Attendance at these continuation schools was made compulsory and the work was done by the teachers of the primary schools with the help of technical instructors. These schools work in the towns throughout the year during the nights and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and their work is closely correlated to the trades both in respect of the subjects taught and the hours chosen for the classes. In the rural districts these schools function during the slack season. Similar compulsion has been in vogue in Scotland since the beginning of this century and the schools are obliged to make suitable provision for the arts and crafts practised in the district. The same thing has been done in England where continuative education till the age of seventeen was made compulsory by by-laws passed by local education authorities. Similar arrangements have been made in France, Poland, Sweden and Canada. The greatest success has been attained in the matter of adult education in Denmark where the Folk High Schools are attended voluntarily and at their own expense by the small farmers and workers. Adult education has also progressed by giant strides in

Japan and courses in general education, civic education, mothers' education and wage-earners' education have been established at numerous centres. But in India very little has been done so far for the education of the Adult. The efforts that have been put forth in the past have taken the shape of University Extension lectures, Adult Education Talks, regular instruction in night Schools for mill workers and factory hands. Most of the work has been done up till now on a voluntary and unpaid basis. But gradually the government are waking up to the realisation that the education of the adult is one of the first duties of the state and we find that here and there they are starting Rural Adult Education Colleges.

Question of Administration

HERE we are brought to an important administrative question. It is a matter for careful consideration whether adult education should be undertaken by the state or should be left to private enterprise. The Linlithgow Commission was definitely of the opinion that adult education is best undertaken by private agencies, because "there is no hope of the adult getting the cake while the child is still without bread" in the present allocation of public money and also because private initiative is always psychologically more effective and efficient than state machinery. While this principle may be quite sound so far as the carrying out of humani-

toriam work is concerned it is not applicable to education where the organisation and supervision of the work require the steady control of the Government services. Fortunately not much money is needed for adult education. If only the elementary school teachers and the Health, Sanitation, Agricultural, Co-operative, and Municipal or Corporation departments whose officials travel all over the towns and villages will do their part in a spirit of public service, generously and willingly, the work can be done in a very efficient manner. These officers command great respect particularly in the rural areas and they have the necessary contact and influence to impose on the illiterate adult population of the country-side a benefit which they cannot appreciate until they have actually tried it. It is not money that constitutes the primary requisite for adult education. Money will, of course, have to be found for libraries and reading rooms without which lectures and centres will prove mere farces. This can be met by a small periodical grant out of the discretionary resources of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Development and from the Rural Development grant which has been sanctioned to meet such contingencies.

Organisation

THE organisation of Adult Education raises many important problems. The first problem

to be tackled is how literacy—for a vast majority of the adults in the country are illiterates—can be most quickly acquired. Thanks to his experiences, his stock of words, gestures, expressions, and a natural or acquired common sense, the adult can learn much faster than the child without depending too much on mechanical memory as the child is obliged to do. It is interesting to bear in mind the basic method advised by Dr. Frank Laubach—a method which has the advantages of being synthetic and not loading the memory overmuch. Men with special training will be required to work this method, but they will be available as soon as the method is put into practice.

The Curriculum

THE next practical problem that confronts us in Adult Education is the Curriculum. Mere university lectures are of little use. Music, handicraft, gardening and many other subjects are a part of adult Education no less than history, politics, science and literature. The Curriculum of the People's High School in Denmark, which is a poor and agricultural country like India and has regenerated itself instead of seeking conquests without and the work done in the evening schools, afternoon schools and word-reading schools which have been started in China in various parts of the country and which have served as a potent agency for the social and national regeneration of China, are of immense

interest in this connection. "The aim of the adult school (in China) is to train people of both sexes from 16 to 50 years of age in elementary knowledge and vocation in reading and writing, common sense and common knowledge of Citizenship, so that they may be able to adapt themselves to social life. The Courses of study in adult schools include word-reading, the Three Principles of Dr. Sun Yat Sen (i. e. Nationalism, Democracy and Social Justice), arithmetic, abacus-counting, singing, drawing, elements of history, Geography and hygiene, and vocational courses of agriculture, engineering or commerce according to the local conditions". The present condition of India is on a par with that of China when the National Government came into power and the methods that have been adopted in China to stamp out illiteracy both among children and among adults cannot be without interest to India.

READING and writing should be the first subject in the adult Curriculum. Once the adult has been taught to read and write, he is easier to educate than the child, because he has acquired the habit of looking after himself and has enough of perseverance to take him through the monotonous and arduous parts of his work. Lectures on trade, agriculture, hygiene, civics, and other subjects which every modern adult should know may be arranged by officials or non-officials. The Village school

may be made the centre of adult education. In the Central Provinces the *Vidya Mandir* has been used to conduct evening classes where adults are taught how to improve agriculture, sanitation and health, as well as the elements of reading and counting. The Visvabharathi has opened a new department, the *Loka Siksha Samsal*, and has prepared suitable text-books in Bengali for adult villagers on Bengali language and literature, Indian history and administration, general knowledge, arithmetic, popular science, geography, hygiene and domestic science. The department restricts itself to the work of preparing text books and conducting examinations and leaves the actual work of teaching to be done by local centres.

IT is not enough that the adult should be taught to read and write. He should be taught to more than he already knows about his own profession—a farmer more about soil, seed and cattle, a carpenter more about timber and the uses to which it can be put, a mason more about concrete and steel building. It is also of great importance that everybody should be taught a subsidiary occupation, "which may serve as a stand-by in the slack season or in time of unemployment or famine or flood". India is predominantly an agricultural country and so in most districts in the rural areas, where the inhabitants are mostly agriculturists—owners or labourers—what they chiefly

need to know is about improved methods of cultivation. As a result of the starting of adult classes in certain villages of the Punjab, the income of the farmer has almost doubled. The advice tendered by the Government Agricultural Demonstrators and Farm Advisers in South India has helped in the prevention of waste of manure and has enabled the peasant to combat the scourge of parasites in maize, paddy and sugarcane. The villages in the neighbourhood of Sriniketan have blossomed into a new life as a result of the adult education undertaken by a few enthusiastic disciples of Gurudev. Similar experiments in Shegaon and Wardha have also succeeded beyond expectation even with backward and untouchable villagers.

Education in Towns

PERHAPS it is comparatively more difficult to organise adult education in the towns with their varied trades and with the varying aptitudes of the people. A complete choice of vocational courses will be difficult to provide. Still in the mill and factory areas, where the poorest people live, a common occupation can be found. This is actually done in the private adult schools started by the Tata Iron Works in Jamshedpur, the Buckingham & Carnatic Mills in Madras and the Harvey Mills in Tinnelvely and Tuticorin. These schools teach the workers the trade they are actually engaged in. In a simi-

lar manner in all towns the adult education imparted in them may be made to centre round the most prevalent handicraft or industry in the locality. That the adult should be educated through a handicraft will be accepted on all hands, now that the advantages of craft-centred education have been clearly proved and demonstrated in the basic schools of today.

THE teaching of Indian history and Civics is of great importance to the adult both in the town and in the country. The political advancement of the people will be greatly hindered unless the adult who has now come to occupy an important place in the political sphere is taught the history and geography of his country, so that the lessons of the follies and failures of the past may enable him to tide over the dangers and difficulties of the present and realise his hopes and aspirations of the future. At the same time in the attempt to awaken national consciousness and patriotism care must be taken to avoid inculcating a spirit of jingoism.

THE "crazy combative patriotism" and "the furtive anti-patriotism of the leftist teacher" are both dangers to be guarded against. Neither should history teaching degenerate into "an obituary of kings and queens" or "drum—and—trumpet history"—The teaching of history should aim at fostering in the adult a spirit of liberal enlight-

ened patriotism consistent with a spirit of world-citizenship. The teaching of civics is of the utmost importance as the citizen in the new set-up is saddled with heavy responsibilities and must therefore be taught the rudiments of civic life and educated into a civic or corporate sense. The adult should also be taught some of the elements of economics.

OTHER subjects may be added to adult curriculum according to circumstances and needs. In the more well-to-do centres some hobby or art may be provided and the radio and the cinema may be used as potent instruments of popular culture. But the prime need in India is to educate the adult systematically in the principles of sanitation and hygiene and to give him a sort of general education. Ignorance of the elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene accounts for the large incidence of preventable diseases in this country and the spread of knowledge will contribute to the elimination of disease and the promotion of health.

The Objectives to be aimed at

THE methods to be adopted and the difficulties to be overcome may vary from place to place. But whatever the means adopted the end is always the same. The adult has a right to the education which has been either denied to him or but meagrely doled out to him as a child. His education should be made a charge on the state hav-

ing high priority. The farmer or worker must be enabled to think for himself and form his own opinions on the burning problems of the hour; it must be possible for him to take an interest in the things of the mind; he must enjoy relaxation from work in elevating pastimes; he must react as a free responsible personality to the political, social and religious stimuli that impinge on him from all sides. It is the grand objective of adult education to make all this possible.

IN this supreme task of adult education everyone can help and everyone ought to help to the extent of his opportunities and resources. The educated adult must realise that he has a duty to discharge by his brother, the uneducated adult. If all contribute their mite the average intellectual level of the community can be considerably raised. This is a matter of great importance as Lord Morley pointed out long ago. "What we see every day with increasing clearness is that not only the well-being of the many, but the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the *average* interest, curiosity, capacity are all highest.....we cannot, like Beethoven or Handel, lift the soul by the magic of divine melody into the seventh heaven of ineffable vision and hope incommensurable; we cannot, like Newton, weigh the far-off stars in a balance, and measure the

SOCIAL EDUCATION

OF the many tasks which faced India after the advent of independence, perhaps the foremost was that of providing education to her teeming millions. The percentage of literacy in pre-Independence India was not even fifteen. Side by side there was colossal poverty. The realisation that any improvement of material conditions demanded the prior eradication of ignorance led the Government of India to consider the problem of providing facilities for universal compulsory education for all children of school going age. It was equally necessary to remove the burden of ignorance and illiteracy which weighed down the majority of our adult population. If education of children is important for the future welfare of the State, the education of adults is essential for the very existence of a young democracy.

(Continued from preceding page)

heavings of the eternal flood; we cannot, like Voltaire, scorch up what is cruel and false by a word as a flame, nor, like Milton or Burke, awaken men's hearts with the note of an organ-trumpet; we cannot, like the great saints of the churches and the great sages of the schools, add to those acquisitions of spiritual beauty and intellectual mastery which have, one by one, and little by little, raised man from being no higher than the brute to be only a little lower than the angels. But what we can do—the humblest of us.....—is by diligently using our own minds and diligently seeking to extend our own opportunities to others, to help to swell that common tide; on the force and set of whose currents depends the prosperous voyaging of humanity."

DELHI

A beginning has been made with Social Education in Delhi. A three week training camp was organised at Najafgarh where 52 volunteers including refugees and students were trained in the technique of social education. These volunteer teachers have now been posted to 23 villages. Two teachers will work in each village for a period of three to four months, during which time they will also train village workers to carry on the work of social education after them. It is thus proposed to cover all the 300 villages in Delhi province in a period of four years.

In order to make the programme of Social Education one of immediate interest and utility to villagers, it was decided that village schools should be not only places of instruction for the village children but also centres of community life in the village. Detailed syllabuses have been prepared with the cooperation of the Ministries of Health, Information and Broadcasting, Labour and Agriculture. It was decided to hold Education Melas or fairs from time to time in order to arouse the interest and enthusiasm of the Villagers. A few such melas have already been held in which villagers have produced their own dramas as well as exhibited products of local industry and craft.

BOMBAY

For the organisation of Social Education, 80 compact areas have been selected in Bombay. In addition the city of Bombay has launched a social education programme which has already met with considerable success. A beginning has also been made at the Labour Welfare Centres in Ahmedabad, Sholapur, Khandesh and Hubli.

C. P. & BERAR

The main emphasis in the province has however been on the spread of Social (Adult) Education. During the period under review 451 social educa-

tion camps were organised where 41,274 miles and 20,924 women were given social education. Camps were also organised for training voluntary workers as well as village school teachers in social education. The Provincial Government proposes to grant the village school teachers special allowances for conducting adult classes and an award of Rs. 2/— for each man and Rs. 5/— for each woman who secures the Adult Education Certificate. They have also made arrangements for the supply of radios to about 1,000 villages in the province.

MADRAS

As regards adult education a scheme of citizenship training has been drawn up. The Government has sanctioned the opening of six rural colleges and 100 citizenship schools for adult education. Six training centres—two each in Tamil and Telugu speaking areas and one each in Malayalam and Kanares areas have already been sanctioned for training the staff in adult literacy work. The method followed will be the Laubach method assisted by magic lanterns, community singing and village library movement.

U. P.

The Government have also taken steps for an intensive campaign of social education and have set up a special unit for the purpose. During 1948—49 there were 49,392 persons enrolled in the Government adult schools; 5,219 men in the aided adult schools for men and 997 women in aided adult schools for women.

RURAL EDUCATION IN THE U. S. A.

Public schools in rural areas of the United States serve 43.4 per cent of the total population of the country, about 30.5 million living on the farms and 26.7 million living in the villages with a population of 2500 or less. They have a total enrolment of over 12 million pupils or about 48 per cent of the total number of public school pupils. They employ nearly half a million or about 52 percent of total number of the teachers; and they spend a total of about 90 crores dollars annually.

PUBLIC OPINION

Dr. Sir A. L. MUDALIAR:

Adult Education is not merely adult literacy work, but it is a continuation of education a student has received in his earlier years. The most important thing about adult literacy was wastage or leakage should be prevented. The problem should be approached in two ways: One was to prepare teachers to carry on the scheme and the other was to prepare and publish such books as would encourage the continuance of literacy in the students. The approach to adult education should be different from that of the child education or of the education of the juveniles. The adult must be made to feel interested in his study. His education should therefore, consist of useful information not only in the shape of material conveyed through newspapers but also about various events in the country.

Prof. AMARNATH JAH:

Adult Education should aim at continuing education throughout life for all types of adult individuals, for the University graduates as well for the peasant, as much for the landlord and the mill owner as for the factory labourer, as much for the legislator as for the office clerk. Education in maturity is of value to all: it recreates and provides new standards of value. This throws open a limitless field; hitherto the Adult Education movement had embraced only the literate or the half educated. But if it includes—as it should—even those who have in their youth received advanced education, how vast does the problem become and heavy the responsibility of those in charge of the movement!

Women's Role in Adult Education

Begum MIR AMIRUDDIN

No one can deny that the need for adult education is as great as for men. When we educate a man, we educate but a single individual, whereas when we educate a woman we educate a whole household, for no literate woman ever allows her children to remain illiterate or lapse into illiteracy.

So all women's associations must direct their immediate attention to this matter and launch an attack by two methods, namely by holding adult classes and by organising intensive propaganda for checking stagnation and wastage in girl's Schools.

Adult education should also become a part of the maternity and child welfare movement. Women who are connected with this movement should organise adult classes at the centres with the assistance of the health visitors.

The main difficulty is that, women usually find it inconvenient to attend classes because they have children to look after at home. Hence, wherever adult classes are organised, it will be necessary to have women volunteers to arrange for the collective care of small children while their mothers are receiving instruction.

The only hope that can be entertained with regard to the education of women who are employed in industrial places and who have to give all available time after working hours to the care of the home is to have classes held in the premises of the industrial establishment where they are engaged. So an appeal should be made to the industrialists to regard the eradication of illiteracy among their labourers as a social and moral duty and arrange classes for them in the company premises, during working hours.

It is comparatively easier to launch an attack upon the illiteracy of the

urban women than on that of rural women because of the paucity of educated women in rural areas to teach adults. Women teachers from towns find it unsafe to live alone in the villages. Two methods by which women teachers from the towns can be secured for rural work is by establishing a sort of settlement in the village, where a teacher, a health-visitor and a midwife may live together and work as a team. This, I understand, has been done in some parts of the Punjab and has proved a success. The other method is to have for rural work married couples with the necessary training, so that both the husband and wife may serve in the educational programme.

Preparing the Way

In the villages, before launching a campaign the adults will have to be convinced that literacy will result in social and economic benefit to the family and that the process of learning besides being easy is within their reach. Thirdly it will be necessary to do what is possible to relieve their economic distress. Hence rural reconstruction should proceed alongside with a campaign of mass education.

In the adult schools for women, sewing classes or the teaching of some simple cottage industry should precede the actual classes to encourage women and induce them to attend regularly. Music, too, should be provided as recreation. In the olden days in this country, knowledge used to be imparted to the people through music and song, and through the narration of stories. No wonder it attracted the rustic mind. Only when the adult school is run more or less on the lines of a community centre than on those of a school will it succeed in attracting the women.

Another point to which I wish to draw attention is that mere literacy should not be the object of the adult education programme. Education also

depends upon the true understanding of the facts of life. The women's range of information should be widened by talks and magic lantern lectures, and wherever possible, by the cinema and the radio which in Russia have proved of immense value in eradicating illiteracy.

Another urgent requirement is a library in every village. In regard to the establishment of libraries, apart from necessary funds, the creation of suitable literature in the local languages is a pressing desideratum. I hope educated women who have leisure will take

up the work of writing simple books in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindustani on matters of interest to women. I also hope that rich citizens will continue to help the creation of libraries. What we need in this country is a number of Andrew Carnegies and Passmore Edwards.

To make India literate is a stern challenge to intensive work on the part of all well-wishers of the country. Shall we not rise up to that challenge?

The success achieved by Russia and the Far East indicates that the problem is not beyond solution.

Adult Education for Women

Mrs. M. ENGLER, M. A., L. T.

TO the vast majority of adults, we are not, at present, able to give literacy, chiefly because of economic considerations, and also because of all absence, on their part, of any desire for this attainment. But we can aim at developing their minds to some extent and for this purpose, we have two potent factors in the Cinema and Radio.

We know what a great part the eye plays in education. Education will impress upon you that one eye is equal to two ears, and we are aware that we remember what we see far better than what we merely hear. Hence the great value of the Cinema in teaching, more particularly in the mental development of the literate.

The radio takes the second place only to the cinema; for though it does not appeal to that great channel, the eye, in the acquirement of knowledge, though it has its drawbacks in atmospheres, the fact remains that, wisely directed, it is no mean aid in Adult Education. Even the appeal to the eye can be effected by charts, sketches, and pictures, which could be used by the listener as well as by the speaker before the microphone, and which could be made by the Drawing teachers attached to schools. The method has been adopted in Australia with great success, and has proved of immense value in Adult Education.

If each Educational Office were supplied with a small cinema and with different sets of suitable films, and arrangements were made with other educational centres for the loan of temporary exchange of more films, and if the radio were utilised for the broadcasting of suitable talks, how much colour would they not be the means of bringing into the lives of poor, ignorant, hardworked women? The subjects may among others, comprise Hygiene, Child Welfare, First Aid, Simple Home Remedies, how to deal with epidemics, Agriculture and Rural Reconstruction.

With the further education of the adult who has made some foundation laid in her early days, and who has a desire for mental development, there would be in addition to the Cinema and Radio, systematic instruction in suitable subjects.

In this scheme of studies, special stress must be laid on such subjects as would make for the greater comfort, the greater beauty, the greater sanctity of the home. It would include Child Psychology, First Aid and Home Nursing, Food Values, Invalid Cookery, Needle work and Art. The reading of newspapers, and intelligent discussion of the topics dealt with therein should form an important branch of this training.

The Editor Answers

Q. In these days when we hear so much about Adult Education, is not one justified in expressing a doubt, on psychological grounds, that it is an uphill work and that adults are not easily educable?

Answer: All the evidence from psychology and from practical experience is against your doubt and it is well worth our while looking at certain authoritative statements on the subject. In western countries where Adult education is a popular and integral feature of mass education the progress has been most promising and the results astounding. Dr. E. L. Thorndike, a great authority on education says, "A man or a woman under 50 should seldom be discouraged from trying to learn. To a lesser degree this is true after 50 years."

Consider along with it what Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart of Kentucky said in the World Educational Conference at Edinburgh in 1925. "In our experience we find that a man or woman can learn to make their signatures in one evening, to write a legible letter in ten weeks, and some of them in one week's time. They can learn to read an ordinary elementary reader in six weeks' time and they acquire the minimum essentials of History, Geography and Civics in six weeks' course. Some of them think that it is something which comes about in a miraculous way, as Manna from heaven." This is corroborated by Dr. Ping Ling from his experience in China. He says, "it is never too late to learn. We have a lady of sixty-seven who learned to read and write in four months and she got a diploma for that." In fact, it is not only possible to educate adults but it is also cheaper and more easy. So we would advise you, dear doubter, to dispel your doubt forthwith and plunge with all your energy into the task of educating adults.



RASHTRA BHASHA

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