

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON INSTITUTE
OF EDUCATION

SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN
EDUCATION PAST AND
PRESENT

Being three

JOSEPH PAYNE LECTURES
for 1935-6 delivered in the Institute
(with supplementary Memoranda)

by

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Published for the Institute of Education by
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

1939

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK
TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN BOMBAY
CALCUTTA MADRAS
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO
MY WIFE

FOREWORD

THE request of the Director of the Institute of Education that I should write a Foreword to the lectures printed in these pages comes as an honour which I appreciate the more as it enables me to express to Sir Philip Hartog the high regard in which he is held by many who, like myself, have spent years in educational work in India.

The lectures were given at the Institute of Education as the Joseph Payne Lectures for 1935-6. The thanks of the Institute are due not only to Sir Philip Hartog for delivering the lectures, but also to the College of Preceptors, whose generosity enabled us to arrange them. Sir Philip Hartog has added to the debt we owe him by permitting the lectures to be published in our series of *Studies and Reports*, and still further by supplementing the lectures by three valuable memoranda. We feel sure that the present volume will be welcomed not only by those who were privileged to hear the lectures, but also by many students of education in this country and in India. If, as seems likely, the Wardha Scheme, or some modification of it, comes into operation in the near future, we have indeed reached the end of an era in Indian education. Hence the time is opportune for a survey of the history of education in British India by one whose honesty and goodwill can be trusted.

Although the lectures were planned as a review of educational development in India from the first missionary influences over a hundred years ago to the vigorous educational movements of to-day, it was obvious to all students of Indian history present at the lectures that they were being presented with the results of much careful inquiry and research. Many have since expressed the hope that the details of these researches would be made available to them. Some of these details have been generously supplied in the form of the three memoranda which constitute the second half of the book.

In the first memorandum Sir Philip Hartog accepts the challenge of Mr. Gandhi to prove that India is more literate to-day than it was fifty or a hundred years ago. His answer is a convincing refutation of the all too easily accepted belief that the education of India has suffered

my request. It is the main sources on which he relied for his statement that have been scrutinized in the three memoranda which follow the lectures. I desire to acknowledge the courtesy with which Mr. Gandhi gave me the information at his disposal, both in writing and at a personal interview; and I shall not easily forget the charm and frankness with which he spoke, nor his ready promise, renewed in writing, publicly to retract his statement if I could convince him that it was not justified by the evidence.

It is to be admitted that there is some excuse for the errors which have been made in this matter. As I have mentioned, the legend of the '100,000 schools' in Bengal and Bihar found currency even among British writers, who had obviously looked at the First Report of William Adam of 1835, mainly based on second-hand information, but not read his Second and Third Reports, based on his own investigations; and the fantastic story of the destruction of schools in the Punjab, originated by Dr. Leitner, a British official though not an Englishman, was embedded by him in a mass of material not easy to wade through and analyse. I regret that my detailed analysis has been so long delayed owing to pressure of other work.

But Mr. Gandhi's views about the living present are, if I may say so, of more importance than his utterances about the past. The scheme of primary education put forward by him, and adopted in a modified form by the Wardha Conference in October, 1937, is likely to loom large in Indian education for a considerable time.

The main features of the scheme are as follows :

(1) a seven years' course of free and compulsory education (for children from 7 to 14 years of age) to be provided on a nation-wide scale;

(2) the medium of instruction to be the mother tongue;

(3) the process of education, throughout the seven years, to be centred round some form of manual and productive work.

The Conference resolved that it expected that this system of education would be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The Report of the Wardha Conference, together with that of the Committee appointed by it, under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir

Husain, to elaborate the scheme and to draw up a detailed syllabus, has been published in *Educational Reconstruction*.¹

Several provincial Governments have already decided to try the scheme and are training a nucleus of teachers for the new schools. Only trial can show how far the suggested syllabus in its original form is workable. Its authors, indeed, realized that extensive experimental work on lines indicated in their Report would be necessary.

Another far-reaching proposal for the conscription of hundreds of thousands of young men (and later of young women) for periods amounting to three years, to provide social services, including education, in the villages, has been put forward by Professor K. T. Shah, with Mr. Gandhi's general approval,² but the proposal has been criticized in other quarters. Dr. Zakir Husain's Committee suggested that conscripts might deal with adult education, and that a kind of 20 years' plan should be drawn up 'to provide basic education and to liquidate illiteracy'.³

These proposals have led to important campaigns in a number of provinces, initiated or supported by local governments, for the reduction of mass illiteracy by voluntary effort.

It should not be forgotten at this moment that since the foundation by Mr. G. K. Gokhale (the first advocate of universal compulsory education in India) of that remarkable organization, the Servants of India Society, at Poona, fine and notable work in popular education has been done by many public-spirited men and women and by social service leagues of various kinds. What is new about the present movement is not so much its character as the scale on which it is being started and the deep interest it has evoked both among the advocates of the Wardha Scheme and its critics. It is to be hoped that the enthusiasm for popular education stimulated by Mr. Gandhi will indeed be nation-wide and lasting.⁴

¹ Vora & Co., Bombay, Feb., 1938, price Rs. 1-4. The book is divided into two parts with separate paginations. For the summary just quoted see pp. 110-111 (first pagination). The book includes a number of articles reprinted from Mr. Gandhi's paper, *Harijan*.

² *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 15 (first pagination).

³ See *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 80 (second pagination).

⁴ In many countries of the world there has, of course, long existed a network of voluntary agencies for adult education, of which accounts are given in the Bulletins

A suggestion by Mr. Gandhi that no Government funds should in future be provided for universities, except to meet state needs, was, I think fortunately, not endorsed by the Wardha Conference. Its adoption would go far to kill higher education in India, and to lower the status of the country in the civilized world.

I do not wish to end my references to Mr. Gandhi on this note. One hears on many sides that the educated young Indian of to-day, whether Hindu or Muslim, is 'totally uninterested in religion'. That is true of large numbers; and yet the influence, the religious and inspiring influence, of Mr. Gandhi, who, unlike the religious recluse, combines mystical worship and solitary meditation with active work for his fellow creatures, is great. I should like to express my own sense of the spiritual value of his message of peace to his countrymen of all races and faiths, and to humanity, in a world now darkened by violence and the fear of war.

I cannot close without expressing my great indebtedness, first and foremost, to my wife, for her invaluable help in ways too many to enumerate; to my son, Geoffrey Hartog, who has given me untiring assistance; to my friends, Sir George Anderson and Professor F. W. Thomas, who have read the whole or a portion of the proofs and have

of the World Association for Adult Education and in detailed articles in the *Year Book of Education*. One of the English agencies, the National Adult School Union, has recently made an attempt to extend its activities to India. Indian reformers are, no doubt, giving special attention to the recent efforts on a large scale to 'liquidate illiteracy' in Russia and in China. For information in regard to the Russian effort Sir Bernard Pares has referred me to *Changing Man, the Education System of the U.S.S.R.* by Beatrice King; and Professor I. L. Kandel, of New York, has drawn to my notice the remarkable description by George I. Sánchez, in his book, *Mexico, A Revolution in Education*, of the great movement in popular education in a backward country.

Since this book was sent to the press, a Report on the Wardha Scheme has been issued by a Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education presided over by Mr. B. G. Kher, Prime Minister of Bombay, recommending the Scheme with a number of modifications, of which the most important are (1) that the age-range for compulsion should be from 6 to 14 years, (2) that in the lower classes there should be no single basic craft, (3) that diversion to any other kind of school should be allowed after the 5th class, (4) that 'the State should provide facilities as at present for every community to give religious teaching, when so desired, but not at the cost of the State', and (5) that no teacher should receive less than Rs. 20 per mensem.

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made valuable suggestions; to Mr. J. E. Parkinson, till recently Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, and to Mr. W. H. F. Armstrong, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, for copies of documents not available in this country; to Mr. W. T. Ottewill, Keeper of Records at the India Office, for his unfailing kindness and assistance in many ways; and to Mr. N. R. Malkani, M.A., one of Mr. Gandhi's disciples, to Sir Frank Brown, and to Professor R. L. Turner, Professor H. H. Dodwell, and Mr. C. H. Philips of the School of Oriental Studies, for information of different kinds.

Although the book is short, it includes much detail and many opportunities for making slips, for which I alone must be held responsible. I shall be grateful to any reader who will inform me of corrections which should be made if a second edition is called for.

P. J. H.

December, 1938.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Calcutta University Commission Report.*—Report of the Calcutta University Commission [presided over by Sir Michael Sadler]. (Calcutta, 1919.) [The Report comprises five volumes, together with eight volumes of Appendices, Memoranda, and Evidence.]
- Education in India, 1934-5* (and similar entries).—Education in India in 1934-35. (Delhi: Manager of Publications.) [NOTE.—This is an annual publication.]
- Hartog Report.*—Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (Review of Growth of Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee appointed by the Commission). (H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 3407, 1929.)
- History.*—History of Indigenous Education in the Panjab since Annexation and in 1882, by G. W. Leitner, LL.D. (Calcutta, 1882.) See also p. 93, footnote 1.
- Hunter Report.*—Report of the Indian Education Commission [presided over by Dr. (later Sir) William W. Hunter] appointed by the Resolution of the Government of India dated 3rd February 1882. (Calcutta, 1883.)
- Linlithgow Report.*—Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India [presided over by the Marquess of Linlithgow]. (H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 3132, 1928.)
- Long.—Adam's Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Behar, submitted to Government in 1835, 1836 and 1838. With a brief view of its past and present condition, by the Rev. J. Long. (Calcutta, 1868.) See also p. 76.
- Minutes of Evidence, &c.*—Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee [of the House of Commons] on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1832.
- Punjab Report.*—Appendix to the Indian Education Commission (Hunter) Report.—Report of the Panjab Provincial Committee, with Evidence taken before the Committee and Memoranda addressed to the Commission. (Calcutta, 1884.)
- Quinquennial Review, 1927-32* (and similar entries).—Progress of Education in India, 1927-32: Tenth Quinquennial Review. [NOTE.—The first volume of the series was entitled 'Review of Education in 1886', and covers the period 1881-2 to 1885-6 inclusive. The second volume was entitled 'Progress of Education in India, 1887-88 to 1891-92: Second Quinquennial Review', but it actually covers the six-year period 1886-7 to 1891-2. The third, with a similar title, covers the period 1892-3 to 1896-7. The fifth bears the dates 1902-07, and this nomenclature has been continued.]
- Richey, *Selections.*—Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records, Part II, 1840-1859, by J. A. Richey, C.I.E. (Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1922.)
- Sadler Report.* See under *Calcutta University Commission Report.*
- Sharp, *Selections.*—Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records, Part I, 1781-1839, by H. Sharp, C.S.I., C.I.E. (Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1920.)
- Simon Report.*—Report of the Indian Statutory Commission [presided over by Sir John Simon]. (H.M. Stationery Office, Cmd. 3568 and 3569, 1930. 2 vols.)