

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA
SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT
AND EXPANSION

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GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

“ Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people’s illiteracy is no mean achievement. ”

G. K. Gokhale

“ A State which fails to offer an equal level of educational opportunity to its citizens is penalising the poor for the benefit of the rich. There cannot be a responsible State until there is an educated electorate. ”

Harold J. Laski

PREFACE

The aim of these chapters is firstly to take a survey of the present system of primary education in British India from the point of view of the toiling masses, secondly to show the defects in the system and how to remove them, and thirdly to suggest a practical scheme of compulsory mass education. To the masses the school is not a luxury that may be limited in a fit of economy, but a necessity that can be starved only at the national peril.

The booklet was originally written as a Paper submitted to the Servants of India Society in June 1938. The Council of the Society having decided to publish the Paper, it is now being presented to the public for what it is worth.

My thanks are due to my esteemed friend Mr. R. V. Parulekar, Secretary, Schools Committee, Bombay Municipality, for kindly going through the manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

*Servants of India Society,
Girgaum, Bombay.
November, 1938.*

DINKAR DESAI

CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Preface | v |
| I. Introductory | 1 |
| II. The Problem of Compulsion | 5 |
| III. Wastage and Stagnation | 14 |
| IV. The Duration of the Primary Course | 28 |
| V. The School Age | 38 |
| VI. The Size of Classes | 46 |
| VII. The Shift System | 52 |
| VIII. The Supply of Teachers | 66 |
| IX. The Curriculum—The Wardha Scheme Examined | 76 |
| X. Other Suggestions for Improvement and Expansion | 85 |
| XI. Administration and Control | 93 |
| XII. The Problem of Finance | 103 |
| XIII. Summary of Suggestions | 117 |
| Bibliography | 123 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

It is recognised on all hands that a system of universal primary education is essential for the political and social development of a country. The progress of India is largely dependent upon the existence of an effective system of mass education. The higher the degree of literacy that is attained by the people, the greater the possibility of Government by the people being conducted on sound foundations. The Indian Statutory Commission rightly remarked: "...we need hardly labour to establish the proposition that education does help in the formation of an electorate which will be potentially more capable of understanding issues submitted to its judgment and hence *prima facie* better equipped to exercise political power."¹

The problem of mass education in India is so important and urgent that it cannot be delayed any longer. The late Mr. G. K. Gokhale described it as the question of questions. "The well-being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the humanising influence of education depends upon it," said Mr. Gokhale. Since Mr. Gokhale uttered these words in 1910, the position with regard to the spread of primary education in our country has remained almost the same. More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since then, and what do we find to-day? The progress made during all these years is exceedingly slow and disappointing, as can be seen from the official figures.

¹ *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol. I, pp. 381-82.

DISHEARTENING PROGRESS

The number of primary schools in British India was 124,000 in 1912.² The number rose to 197,000 in 1936.³ The number of pupils attending these schools was 5,000,000 in 1912.⁴ It rose to 10,400,000 in 1936.⁵ Thus, in the course of a quarter of a century the number of children undergoing instruction in primary schools is only doubled. Considering the increase in population since 1912, it must be admitted that this progress in the spread of primary education in our country is disheartening. Literacy has remained practically where it was at the close of the last century. According to the Hartog Committee's Report, (p. 45) between 1892 and 1922, a period of 30 years or one generation, the percentage of literacy among males increased from 13 to 14 and among females from 0·7 to 2·0. Taking males and females together, it may be said to have gone up since from 7 per cent to 8 per cent in 1931. If we were to carry on the work of spreading literacy and education at this rate, it would take centuries for India to reach the ideal of universal education.

THE TASK BEFORE US

The task before us may be briefly described as follows. The total number of boys in primary classes in British India in 1936 was nearly 77 lakhs.⁶ In other words, only 6.1 per cent of the total male population was at school. This means that

2 *Seventh Quinquennial Review of Education in India, 1912-1917*, p. 102.

3 *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 113.

4 *Seventh Quinquennial Review of Education in India, 1912-1917*, p. 102.

5 *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 114-15 and 116-17

6 *Ibid*, p. 35.

about 50 per cent of the school-going male population was enrolled in primary classes. With regard to girls, only about 27 lakhs were in primary schools during the same year.⁷ According to the basis of 12 per cent of the population, which represents the percentage of children of school age, there are about 326 lakhs of boys and girls of school-going age in British India. As stated above, of these 326 lakhs of school going children, only about 104 lakhs (77 lakhs of boys and 27 lakhs of girls) or about 30 per cent are in schools to-day. This means that out of every hundred children, only 30 attend schools. As many as 70 per cent of our children are without schools. The provision for primary instruction available at present must, therefore, be more than trebled in order to bring all children to schools. Thus we have yet to bring in an additional number of 222 lakhs of pupils. This is the present situation.

If we really intend to reach the ideal of universal education in India, we must think very seriously of the problem before us and immediately devise some ways and means for the wide extension of primary education, so that we may be able to achieve our cherished goal within a reasonable period of time.

The object of the following pages is to examine the present system of primary education in British India, and to suggest in the light of that examination a practical scheme of compulsory mass education. The various suggestions that appear in the following chapters are made only after taking into consideration all the obstacles in our way, chiefly financial. What we require to-day is a scheme of sound but cheap elementary instruction to all classes of our people. Primary education should be made free and compulsory. Education for the masses does not and cannot necessarily mean

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

only the capacity to read and write. It also means an opportunity for every child of the nation to acquire such general knowledge as would be useful to the average citizen in his daily life. In fact, it may not be wrong if we regard the elementary school as a kind of waiting-room for life.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF COMPULSION

Compulsory primary education has been the declared policy underlying the Primary Education Acts that were passed in various provinces during the years 1918 to 1926. These Acts give powers to the local authorities to introduce a compulsory system of primary education in their respective areas. Though the Acts are different in different provinces and the powers given to the local authorities vary to a considerable extent, they all recognise the great need for universal instruction. In the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa compulsion can be resorted to, under the Acts, in the case of boys only. In the United Provinces it should be first enforced in the case of boys, and later on, on the application of the Municipal Board, the Government have the power to notify that it should apply to girls as well. In all other provinces, compulsion can be enforced in the case of both boys and girls.

PROGRESS OF COMPULSION

It must be admitted that the number of towns and villages where compulsion is introduced, is not as large as it ought to have been. This is evident from the following table showing the number of municipal and local board areas under compulsion during the year 1935-36:

AREAS WITH COMPULSORY EDUCATION.¹

| Province. | Number of Areas under Compulsion. | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| | | Towns. | Villages. |
| Madras | ... | 28 | 104 |
| Bombay | ... | 10 | 150 |
| Bengal ... | ... | 2 | — |
| United Provinces | ... | 36 | 1,224 |
| Punjab ... | ... | 55 | 8,413 |
| Bihar and Orissa | ... | 1 | 15 |
| Central Provinces | ... | 27 | 433 |
| Delhi ... | ... | 1 | 16 |
| Total | | 160 | 10,355. |

Thus in the whole of British India, compulsion is resorted to only in 160 towns out of a total of 1568 towns, and in 10,355 villages out of a total of 499,359 villages. In some of these towns, compulsion does not extend to the whole municipal area. For instance, it is confined to only two wards of the city of Bombay, to only three wards in Sholapur and to only five *Peths* of the Poona City.² Unfortunately, we are not in possession of official figures for British India showing the entire population of those towns and villages where compulsion has been introduced.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF COMPULSION

As to the success or failure of the various experiments carried on in the direction of compulsory education, it may be

1. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 43.

2. *White Paper on the Programme of the Council of Ministers*, Bombay, 1937, p. 7.

stated that success has been achieved in many areas. But in some places, where compulsion was introduced, no marked progress in the spread of education was noticeable. According to a statement prepared by the Education Department of the United Provinces, it was adjudged that voluntary primary education had an efficiency of 25 per cent, i. e., out of four boys admitted to the primary school, only one became literate, and the efficiency of compulsory primary education was 20 per cent, yielding one boy to five.³ Thus, it was recorded that "compulsory primary education is not even as efficient as voluntary primary education."⁴ On the strength of such instances, it is often argued, especially by officials, that any scheme of compulsory mass education is bound to be a failure under the present-day conditions obtaining in India. The following remark by the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India is very typical on this point. He writes: ".....yet at the present time the passage of a law making primary education universal and compulsory would create more difficulties than it would solve."⁵

Let us see how far this view can be shared by many of us. In the first place, as already stated, the introduction of compulsory primary instruction has given satisfactory results in many places. This has been admitted in official reports. One Inspector of Schools in the Punjab holds that in certain areas of the province, compulsion "has been attended with success and worked with thoroughness and vigour."⁶ Again, we are told that "A much more rapid advance in compulsory primary education is possible in many provinces. The most promising

3. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 44.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

lines of advance seem to be those of the Punjab.”⁷ Coming to Central Provinces, we find that “In the case of certain compulsory areas fair progress was noticed.”⁸ With regard to Bihar and Orissa, the Report states: “Compulsory education continues to work smoothly and efficiently in the Ranchi Municipality and the Banki Union.”⁹ These quotations clearly go to show that, if proper methods and sincere efforts are made, compulsion is bound to be a success in India. It may be pointed out, in this connection, that the introduction of compulsion has almost achieved universal education in the State of Baroda, where 81.7 per cent of the population of school age attend primary schools.¹⁰ If success can be achieved in Baroda, where the social and economic conditions of the masses are almost similar to those of British Indian subjects, why should we be pessimistic in the matter of compulsion in other parts of the country?

Secondly, imaginary complaints as to the failure of compulsion are often made. The Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Presidency, thinks that the introduction of compulsory primary education in the Presidency has not revealed satisfactory progress because “only about 75 to 80 per cent of those enrolled on the average attend school.”¹¹ The Director seems to be under the impression that the moment compulsion is resorted to, the average attendance should be nearly cent per cent. He forgets the essential truth

7. *Ibid*, p. 46.

8. *Ibid*, p. 44.

9. *Report on the Progress of Education in Bihar and Orissa*, for the year 1935-36, p. 28.

10. *Baroda Administration Report*, 1936-37, p. 251.

11. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency*, 1935-36, p. 59.

that in the initial stages of a nation's educational advancement it would take years to accustom the children of the poor and ignorant masses to attend school regularly, even if compulsion is enforced. That even England had to pass through such a period of "unsatisfactory" attendance should be carefully noted. We are told that "of the 754,000 enrolled in the elementary schools of London in 1899, 145,000 per day were absent."¹² This gives us an average attendance of a little less than 81 per cent. If this was the state of things in the city of London 29 years after the introduction of compulsion, we in India need not be discouraged with the average attendance ranging from 75 to 80 per cent. It may be of further interest to point out that the average attendance in the primary schools of Japan was only 58·7 per cent in 1893 and 81·7 per cent in 1900.¹³ In 1902, twenty years after primary instruction was made obligatory in France, the actual attendance varied "between 87·6 per cent of the number registered in public schools and 49·8 per cent in June in the grazing districts of the south where children are used as herdsmen."¹⁴ The position was almost the same in France even as late as in 1911. We are told that on the 1st of June 1911, out of 5,502,520 children inscribed on the school lists, 1,252,776 were running the streets. This is one-fifth of the scholastic population.¹⁵ In this connection, it is very interesting to note what Senator Pinard said in the French Parliament in 1921. He said: "In spite of all the Senate does, you will accomplish nothing

12. J. C. Greenough, *The Evolution of the Elementary Schools of Great Britain*, p. 185.

13. Baron Kikuchi, *Japanese Education*, p. 137.

14. Peter Sandiford, *Comparative Education*, p. 321.

15. F. W. Roman, *The New Education in Europe*, p. 116.

for the improvement of school attendance, until you enable the father of the family to live without being obliged to send his children, from their seventh year, to look after the cows."¹⁶ Coming to U. S. A., we find that the average daily attendance in 1901-1902 was only 69·1.¹⁷ In Ireland, the total average attendance amounted to less than 69·1 per cent in 1909 under compulsion.¹⁸ Again, even as late as in 1914 the average attendance of the primary school children in Canada was only 66·53 per cent.¹⁹ In the face of these facts, it would be absurd to maintain that compulsion has not borne satisfactory results in India because the average attendance is nearly 80 per cent.

REMEDIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMPULSION

Having explained why it would be unreasonable to stop the rapid expansion of primary education either on the plea that compulsion has not been attended with success in certain parts or either through the fear of unsatisfactory attendance, let us proceed to examine the causes that led to unsatisfactory results in the past, so that we may go ahead with our task in future with proper remedies to solve the problem.

The main reason why compulsion has not yielded sufficient results is that compulsion was not strictly enforced. Let the official reports speak for themselves on this point.

The Bombay Report states : " In most cases compulsion is only on paper.....No local authority has cared to face

16. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

17. E. G. Dexter, *A History of Education in the United States*, p. 165.

18. Graham Balfour, *The Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 110.

19. Peter Sandiford, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

enforcing compulsion. In many cases only notices are issued and no further action taken."²⁰

In the Central Provinces, "The attendance authorities, generally speaking, failed to show courage in sanctioning the prosecutions of defaulters."²¹

The Bihar and Orissa Report for the year 1935-36 records: "Hitherto, however, the compulsion has been purely nominal, for there has been no attendance officer to enforce it."²²

After going through all the Provincial Reports, the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India comments: "It is obvious that compulsion has not been as successful as it should have been in any province mainly because the local bodies responsible for its enforcement have not taken it in earnest."²³

Last but not the least, the words of the Hon. Mr. B. G. Kher, the Premier of Bombay, are worth quoting: "In theory there is compulsion, but in practice there is no compulsion,—you have no case of any boy not attending school coming to the courts, and you have no case or hardly any of magistrates punishing the parent of the boy for not sending him to school, and therefore it is no good saying there is compulsion."²⁴

20. *Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency*, for the year 1935-36, p. 59.

21. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 48.

22. *Report on the Progress of Education in Bihar and Orissa*, for the year 1935-36, p. 28.

23. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 48.

24. *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, September 20, 1937, p. 1216.

Compare this state of affairs in British India with that in Baroda where real compulsion exists. The extent of rigidity in enforcing compulsion in Baroda can be evident from the fact that the total fine recovered during 1936-37 in the State under the Compulsory Education Act from defaulting parents amounted to Rs. 36,423.²⁵

Without having real compulsion, we cannot complain that compulsion has been a failure.

Though the main remedy for bringing children to school and keeping them there is the strict enforcement of compulsion, it is important to realise that effective compulsion may not be secured unless it is accompanied by other remedies also. It is, therefore, necessary that the following remedies among others should be adopted in order to achieve the end in view :

1. The system of part-time instruction should be adopted, especially in villages, so that non-attendance or irregular attendance due to economic reasons may be less and less. Similarly, the school-terms and holidays should be so arranged as to enable the boys in villages to render help to their parents during harvest times.

2. The period of compulsion should not be unduly long, as has been provided for in the Bombay Primary Education (Amendment) Act, 1938, which prescribes a period of seven years' compulsion. To begin with, a period of four years' compulsion will serve the required purpose, compulsion being in force between the ages of seven and eleven. However, if a child could not complete the fourth class at the age of eleven, he should be further required to remain at school for a year more, in which case the compulsory period will cover five years.

25. *Baroda Administration Report, 1936-37, p. 257.*

3. Primary education should be made free. In fact, free education is the natural corollary of compulsory education.

4. Children of very poor parents should be supplied with slates, pencils and books. If funds permit, they should also be provided with necessary clothing which the children should be required to wear during school hours.

CHAPTER III

WASTAGE AND STAGNATION

One of the serious defects in the system of primary education in India today is the existence of appalling wastage and stagnation. The extent of this wastage is not ordinarily realised. Only a very small percentage of the boys and girls who attend primary schools ever reach a stage where what they have learnt is of permanent value to them. It is this fact that makes the number of schools and the number of children attending them less valuable as an indication of the educational merits of the existing system.

An adequate idea of the extent of this wastage can be had from official figures. Out of every 100 boys who join the class I, only 27 reach the class IV. This is made clear in the following table :

WASTAGE AMONG BOYS IN PRIMARY CLASSES.¹

| Province. | Proportion of Boys in | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Class I in 1932-33, | Class IV in 1935-36. |
| Madras | 100 | 33 |
| Bombay... .. | 100 | 45 |
| Bengal | 100 | 14 |
| United Provinces | 100 | 26 |
| Punjab | 100 | 26 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 100 | 30 |
| Central Provinces | 100 | 46 |
| Assam | 100 | 38 |
| N. W. F. Province | 100 | 22 |
| British India (including other smaller areas) | 100 | 27 |

1. *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 38-39.

Wastage among girls is still more appalling. Only 14 per cent of the girls reach class IV, as is evident from the following figures :

WASTAGE AMONG GIRLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.²

| Province. | Proportion of girls in | |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Class I, 1932-33. | Class IV, 1935-36. |
| Madras | 100 | 18 |
| Bombay | 100 | 28 |
| Bengal | 100 | 4 |
| United Provinces | 100 | 11 |
| Punjab | 100 | 19 |
| Central Provinces and Berar... .. | 100 | 23 |
| Assam | 100 | 25 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 100 | 19 |
| N. W. F. Province | 100 | 17 |
| British India (including other areas) | 100 | 14 |

These figures clearly show that the wastage is enormous. If this unfortunate state of affairs continues without showing any improvement for the better, the work of spreading literacy and education will be seriously handicapped. Every effort should, therefore, be made to find out the various causes that lead to this wastage and remove them.

The following may be said to be the main causes that are responsible for wastage in our primary schools :

I. SINGLE-TEACHER SCHOOLS

The first and the foremost cause for wastage and stagnation is the existence of a large number of single-teacher

2. *Ibid*, pp. 60-61.

schools. A comparison between the wastage figures and the figures of single-teacher schools in different provinces will make our point quite clear. In those provinces where the proportion of single-teacher schools is large the wastage is large. Thus for instance, in Bengal where 80 per cent of the primary schools are single-teacher schools, the proportion being the highest in British India, the wastage also is the highest, being 86 per cent.³ The Central Provinces which has the least wastage percentage, namely, 54 per cent, has the least percentage of single-teacher schools, namely, 23 per cent.⁴ These comparisons clearly establish the fact that greater the number of single-teacher schools, larger the wastage in our primary schools.

It is very unfortunate that 57.5 per cent of the primary schools in British India are schools which have only one teacher, as can be seen from the following table :

SINGLE-TEACHER SCHOOLS FOR BOYS IN 1935.⁵

| Province. | Percentage of single-teacher schools to the total number of schools. | |
|---|--|------|
| Madras | ... | 44.4 |
| Bombay | ... | 40.3 |
| Bengal | ... | 80.3 |
| United Provinces | ... | 39.6 |
| Punjab | ... | 27.3 |
| Bihar and Orissa | ... | 71.2 |
| Central Provinces and Berar | ... | 23.2 |
| Assam... | ... | 73.8 |
| North-West Frontier Province... | ... | 62.1 |
| British India (including other smaller areas) | ... | 57.5 |

3. *Ibid.*, 1934-35, page 44.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

A majority of these single-teacher schools are full primary schools with four or five or sometimes six classes. It is obvious how difficult it is for a single teacher to give effective instruction to five or six classes at one and the same time. It is easier for a teacher and better for the pupils to manage a class of 60 pupils than to instruct three or four classes with a total number of 30 children at one and the same time. It is the number of classes — and not so much the number of pupils — that adversely affects efficient teaching. In single-teacher schools with many classes, what happens is this: The teacher cannot pay sufficient attention to each class. This leads to lack of interest among the students to whom the school becomes a place of drudgery. With the result, a large number of children either leave the school before the completion of their primary course to cause waste or fail in the examination to cause stagnation.

It is, however, not possible to completely eliminate single-teacher schools when we have small villages. But at the same time, certain improvements in the method of conducting them may be made with a view to reducing wastage and stagnation.

Firstly, the duration of the primary school course should be restricted to four years in those provinces where the existing course extends for a period longer than four years. Smaller the number of classes under one teacher, better is the quality of instruction and hence less wastage. In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that wastage is the least in the Central Provinces which has adopted a shorter course of primary instruction extending over four years and with four classes.

Secondly, the introduction of the shift system in all single-teacher primary schools will greatly help to reduce wastage and

stagnation. To illustrate the point, in a village with a population of 500, the number of children of school-going age will be nearly 60 on the basis of 12 per cent of the total population which represents the children between the ages of seven and eleven. With a four-year primary school course containing four classes, each class will consist of 15 pupils on an average. Two of these four classes should be called in the morning only and the other two in the afternoon only, the daily period of instruction being three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. Thus, the teacher will have to instruct only two classes of 15 children each at a time. This arrangement of the shift system will not only improve the quality of teaching, but also will reduce wastage and stagnation in single-teacher schools. It may be noted that the shift system has been successfully tried in many primary schools in the Central Provinces. It may be partly due to this reason that wastage is the least in the Central Provinces in the whole of British India.

II. ADMISSION OF UNDER-AGED CHILDREN

Admission of under-aged children to primary schools also leads to wastage and stagnation. The fact that not even half the number of those children who join class I reach class II at the end of the first year, clearly indicates that wastage is the highest in the infant class. This is made clear in the following table:

WASTAGE AMONG BOYS⁶

(Figures for British India).

| Class | Number of Boys. |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| I (1932-33) | 3,816,386 |
| II (1933-34) | 1,704,765 |
| III (1934-35) | 1,354,500 |
| IV (1935-36) | 1,038,332 |

6. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 39.

It will be seen from the above figures that out of 38 lakhs of boys who joined class I in the year 1932-33, only 17 lakhs or less than 50 per cent reached class II in 1933-34. Wastage is not so appalling in class II or III as in class I. This should be accounted for the fact that under-aged children are admitted to ordinary schools where no special arrangements to give them instruction according to kindergarten method exist. In fact, a considerably large proportion of these very young children lack that mental or physical equipment which is necessary to follow the ordinary primary school teacher. It may be safely said that the majority of these under-aged pupils come to schools not to learn but to use them as *erèches*. The observation made by the Government of Madras is quite illuminating on this point. They state: "Large number of under-aged pupils attend I standard occupying much needed places and using the school practically as a *erèche*. This greatly handicaps the work of the I standard....."⁷ The same view is expressed by the D. P. I., Bombay Presidency, who holds that one of the causes of wastage is "the artificial swelling of attendance by head-masters to retain their special allowances, the admission of children below 5 years of age into schools, etc."⁸.

It is needless to maintain that this sorry state of affairs is greatly responsible for the enormous wastage that we find to-day in class I. To reduce this waste, it is necessary that children under certain age should be excluded from all primary schools except the kindergarten, nursery or model schools specially maintained for infants. For the purpose of admission to the primary school, seven *plus* seems to be the proper age.

7. *Madras Government G. O., No. 1938, 26th June 1937, p. 3.*

8. *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1927-32, p. 104.*

III. IRREGULAR ADMISSIONS

Another reason for wastage and stagnation is found in admitting children to schools at any time of the academic year. In many provinces, there is no regulation restricting new admissions at the beginning of the school year. It is not ordinarily possible for a child, who has been newly admitted at the middle or during the latter half of the school year, to be able to reach the next higher class at the end of that academic year. He is, therefore, compelled to spend more than one year in class I and thus cause stagnation. That irregular admissions are responsible for stagnation has been admitted by the D. P. I., Bombay Presidency.⁹ The obvious remedy to stop this is to restrict admissions at the beginning of the academic year.

IV. INCOMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Fourthly, the existence of incomplete primary schools results in waste. An incomplete primary school is a school which breaks off before the class where literacy is attained. It may, therefore, be said that schools which do not contain the first four classes, are incomplete schools. Though the exact figure of such incomplete schools in British India is not known, it appears that they are considerable in number. It must, however, be noted that an overwhelming majority of the primary schools in the province of Bengal are incomplete schools. Thus in Bengal of the 64,000 schools, as many as 54,000 are incomplete schools with the first three lower classes.¹⁰ It is, therefore, no wonder that only 14 per cent of the boys and four per cent of the girls in the primary

9. *Annual Report on public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 43.

10. *Government of Bengal Resolution, No. 1037 Edn.*, 9th March 1937, p. 2

schools of Bengal reach class IV at the end of the third year. Again, in Madras out of a total of 42,574 lower primary schools, 6,147 have only three standards, 1,757 have only two standards and 369 have only one standard¹¹. Unfortunately, figures for other provinces are not known. Speaking of these incomplete schools, the Government of Bengal remarks: "The figures show that very few of the pupils attending a lower primary school do so for more than one year. The teaching in these schools is neither good nor sufficiently prolonged to ensure literacy.....Its (incomplete school) only value is to the four or five children who after leaving class II go up for further education to an upper primary or a secondary school."¹² The quotation is too clear to require any comment.

The wastage that results from the existence of incomplete schools can only be stopped or reduced by converting every incomplete school into a full-fledged primary school teaching up to the IV class. However, in those villages made up of a group of hamlets, where it may not be possible to have a full primary school for each hamlet for want of sufficient number of children of school age, incomplete primary schools may be maintained, provided that they should only serve as feeder-schools to a full primary school to be situated within a reasonable distance from every part of the village.

V. DEFECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum that is being followed in our primary schools today is also responsible for wastage and stagnation to a certain extent. In almost all the provinces the curriculum is over-burdened and complicated. The syllabus in some subjects is also heavy. In Bengal, for instance, the primary

11. *Govt. of Madras G. O. No. 1398, 26th June 1937. p. 3*

12. *Government of Bengal Resolution, No. 1037 Edn., 9th March 1937, p. 2.*

boys are expected to finish practically the whole of Indian History in the course of two years, viz. in classes III and IV. A heavy curriculum frustrates the main object of the primary school course, which is to enable pupils to carry on ordinary correspondence and to keep accounts. It also retards the expansion of primary instruction inasmuch as it makes the class-room dull and boring to the average village child who is not in a position to follow heavy curriculum, the natural consequence being that he either stagnates in the same class for two or more years or leaves the school before the completion of the full primary course. In this connection, the following remark made by the Government of Bengal is significant: "This revision is necessary, first because the existing course is generally regarded as too heavy and wide for the average village boy."¹³ Simplification of the present curriculum is, therefore, necessary in order to reduce the appalling wastage and stagnation and generally to improve the efficiency of our primary schools.

VI. COMPULSION

Sixthly, as long as compulsion is not enforced, there is bound to occur certain amount of waste in our primary schools. Relying too much on the good sense of the parents to voluntarily keep their children in schools till they complete their full primary course is to expect the impossible. This is particularly true in the case of Indian masses who are steeped in ignorance and conservatism. Left to themselves, the masses would not be anxious for education, for, as Lecky has aptly observed, "Education in its simplest form, which is one of the first and the highest human interests, is a matter in which Government initiation and direction are emphatically required, for uninstructed people will never demand it,

¹³ *Government of Bengal Resolution, No. 2517 Edn. 27th July 1935, p. 6.*

and to appreciate Education is itself a consequence of Education."¹⁴ The history of primary education throughout the world establishes the one important fact that there cannot be real progress in the spread of primary education without resorting to compulsion. It is obvious that effective compulsion in India will have to be introduced if wastage is to be materially reduced. Until the average villager is educated to the stage when he would realise the value of education, it is not likely that he will of his own accord be prepared to keep his children regularly in school for a period required to ensure the attainment of literacy.

In the absence of a system of compulsory universal education, under which all children of the nation between certain ages are required to attend school, there is another type of compulsion which is absolutely necessary in order to prevent wastage. This can be secured by compelling the child, who has been once sent to the school, to remain at school till he has finished the primary course. As a corollary to this, no child should be allowed to remain in the same class for more than two years. This compulsion to continue in school will give the teachers and the children a real opportunity to teach and to learn, and thus reduce waste. It is not an unreasonable assumption that a parent, who sends his boy or girl to school, wishes him or her to become educated, and he cannot very well complain if measures are taken to realise this end. It may be interesting to note that an ex-Minister of Education to the Government of Bengal had once declared his intention to introduce this type of compulsion in the primary schools of his province with a view to reducing wastage.¹⁵

14. J. C. Greenough, *op. cit.* p. 11.

15. *Government of Bengal Resolution, No. 2517 Edn., 27th July 1935, p. 6.*

VII. POVERTY

That wastage and stagnation to some extent are also due to the poverty of the masses is undeniable. It has been pointed out in official reports from time to time that one of the reasons why children in villages do not attend primary schools regularly is the economic necessity for many of them, particularly of the very poorer classes, to be occupied in domestic, agricultural or industrial work. This fact is admitted by the Government of Madras in their recent *Press Communique* issued in June 1937.¹⁶ The Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Presidency, also expresses a similar view.¹⁷ Economic reasons lead to irregular attendance and withdrawals from schools, which in their turn result in wastage and stagnation.

Secondly, it must also be stated that children of very poor parents, who attend schools without being properly fed, are not ordinarily capable of intelligently following the lessons in the class-room, as they lack that necessary mental and bodily vigour. Hence it is no wonder if such children either leave the school in the middle of their education or stagnate in the same class for more than one year. The following remark by Mr. Harold Laski is worth quoting on the point. "Children who come hungry to school cannot on an average, profit by education in like degree to those who are well fed."¹⁸

VIII. OTHER CAUSES

There can be no doubt that better qualified teachers, efficient and regular inspection and the adoption of attractive methods of teaching will also go a long way in combating stagnation and wastage.

16. *Government of Madras G. O., No. 1398*, 26th June 1937, p. 3.

17. *Annual Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, 1925-26*, p. 42.

18. Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, p. 154.

All these causes above referred to, with the exception of poverty, that lead to wastage and stagnation can be eliminated without further delay by carrying out the various suggestions made in that connection. It is often argued that further expansion of primary education in India would only result in wasting public funds as long as the appalling wastage and stagnation continue to exist. Some persons, especially officials working in the Education Department, even go to the extent of holding that the introduction of a scheme of compulsory mass education would be futile in the present circumstances. For instance, Mr. J. E. Parkinson, the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, says: "..... yet at the present time the passage of a law making primary education universal and compulsory would create more difficulties than it would solve."¹⁹

More or less the same view has been expressed, though differently, by the Hon'ble Mr. A. B. Latthe, the Finance Minister to the Government of Bombay. In presenting his Budget, the Minister said in August 1937: "Were we sure that we could obtain proper return for any additional moneys that we may immediately spend for education in our province, Government would have been ready to provide it even at a risk of accepting new burdens on the already heavily taxed people in our province. But our greatest difficulty has been that the system of mass education which we have inherited from the past has resulted in a most lamentable waste in all directions and from every point of view..... Unless the debris of this system of mass education is cleared and the foundations of a more efficient system are laid, further expenditure on the same lines on mass education is bound to be a waste."²⁰

19. *Education in India in 1925-36*, p.45.

20. *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, August 7, 1937, pp. 56-57.

WASTAGE—NOT PECULIAR TO INDIA

By all means remove the defects and lay the foundations of a more efficient system. But to withhold further expansion of primary education on the plea that the present system is full of defects is not to understand the real problem. It is of utmost importance to realise that many of the defects of the present system can never be eliminated without making primary instruction compulsory and universal. This is especially true of wastage and stagnation as we have shown above. We cannot and should not expect any scheme of mass education in force to be really very efficient in its earlier stages of adoption. Increased efficiency can only be attained after the whole country had enjoyed the fruits of universal instruction for a considerable period of time. The history of primary education in other countries establishes this fact quite clearly. Let us remember that wastage and stagnation in primary schools is not peculiar to India. It existed in every country in the earlier stages of its educational growth. For instance, before the introduction of compulsory education in England, "Even in the best schools only about one-quarter of the boys reached the highest class and were considered by the inspectors to be successfully educated,"²¹ whereas in India to-day 27 per cent of the boys reach the highest class, as already stated. It is further interesting to note that in 1883 (10 years after compulsion was allowed to be introduced in England) in the London Board Schools, only 11 per cent of the total number of pupils in primary schools were in class IV,²² whereas the corresponding percentage in India to-day is a little more than 12.²³

21. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, London, p. 9.

22. R. V. Parulekar, *Mass Education in India*, p. 8.

23. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 39.

This is not a discouraging state of things compared with the state of wastage and stagnation in London when primary education in England was almost universal. Though wastage in our schools to-day is serious and appalling, it is absolutely absurd to use it as an excuse either for not spreading primary education further or for not introducing compulsory universal instruction immediately. Let us realise that the most effective remedy for reducing wastage is the rigid enforcement of compulsion. To delay compulsory mass education until wastage and stagnation are eliminated is to place the cart before the horse. As the Burma Vernacular Re-organisation Committee truly maintained, "the ultimate remedy for illiteracy and wastage is efficient universal compulsory education."²⁴

24. *Ibid.*, 1935-36, quoted on page 44.

CHAPTER IV

THE DURATION OF PRIMARY COURSE

At present the length of primary school course in British India varies in different provinces and lacks uniformity. It extends over a period of five years in Bengal, Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Sind, and four years in the Punjab, the Central Provinces and Berar and the North-West Frontier Province.

It is generally recognised that a compulsory course of primary education covering a period of six or seven years would be an ideal one for any country to adopt. But longer the duration of compulsory school course, heavier the cost of educating a pupil. Our finances, meagre as they are at present, may not allow a primary course in a scheme of compulsory mass education, extending over six or seven years. Under the circumstances, we have one of the two alternatives to adopt. The first is to have a longer primary course extending over six or seven years and educate a smaller number of children. The second alternative is to adopt a shorter course and educate a greater number. At present our main objective being universal mass education, the second alternative of having a shorter primary school course and educating a greater number of children appears to be more desirable to be followed from the national point of view. In other words, a more economical and yet efficient system of mass education must be found out.

A four years' course would be adequate to begin with. It can be shown that a child can attain not only literacy but such general knowledge as is necessary in life within a period of four years. We have to-day a four years' course in the Punjab, Central Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province.

A study of primary education in these provinces would show that the results obtained in these provinces are in no way worse than those in other provinces where the duration of the primary course covers a period of five years. On the contrary, they indicate that a reduction in years helps the expansion of primary education. One of the reasons why wastage is the least in the Central Provinces can be attributed to the short duration of the primary school course. Speaking about the four years' primary course in the Punjab, Mr. Arthur Mayhew wrote that if children were to attend regularly and receive effective instruction, a course satisfying the present needs of India could be completed in four years.¹

THE OPINION OF EXPERTS

The suggestion for a four years' primary course has been regarded as being feasible by leading educationists, commissions and committees. That the late Mr. Gokhale favoured a four years' course is evident from the speech he made in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1910 in moving his resolution on elementary education, in the course of which he urged that the period of compulsion should be between the ages of six and ten. Mr Gokhale said: ".....considering that the burden of additional expenditure involved will in many cases be the principal determining factor in this matter, I am content to begin with a compulsory period of four years only."² The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India has expressed the opinion that a "period of four years schooling would be sufficient to give a child lasting literacy."³

1. Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India*, p. 235.

2. *Speeches of G. K. Gokhale*, p. 617.

3. *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*, p. 521.

The Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission observed that a child completing a primary course of four years would become permanently literate.⁴ A similar opinion was expressed by the Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and North America for the purposes of taking a survey of the educational needs of Indian villages and making recommendations.⁵ A reduction in the length of the course from six years to four years was suggested by the Committee appointed by the Government of Bihar and Orissa in 1921 to consider the subject of primary and secondary education.⁶ The Committee on Primary and Secondary Education appointed by the Government of Bombay considered this question in their report published in 1929 and expressed the opinion that the possibility of completing the primary course within four years should be kept in view and that schools should be permitted to experiment in that direction.⁷ The Government of India in their Resolution of May, 29, 1918 have pointed out that a minimum course of four years would be adequate for the production of literacy and other general knowledge in a child. The same opinion is repeated in the *Ninth Quinquennial Review of Education in India*.⁸ It may be of interest to note that the Bengal Government have recently decided to reduce the primary course from five to four years. The remarks of the Bengal Government in this connection are of special importance. They state: ".....if

4. *Report of the Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission*, p. 45.

5. *Village Education in India*, p. 29.

6. *Govt. of Bihar & Orissa Resolution*, 5th Dec. 1923, p. 7.

7. *Report of the Committee on Primary & Secondary Education in Bombay*, p. V.

8. *Ninth Quinquennial Review of Education in India*, Vol. I, p. 123.

there is an organised system of teaching, much more effective literacy would be achieved in four years than is possible in the present five years' course. The period of study in any stage for an average boy should not be prolonged, and if it is possible to do it in the course of four years, there is no reason why a genuine attempt should not be made on this basis." ⁹

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Apart from the testimony of commissions, committees and educationists in favour of a four years' primary course, there is ample precedent for it in a number of foreign countries, which began their drive against illiteracy by adopting a compulsory course of primary education covering a period of four years. Thus in Japan, the course of elementary education extended over four years, children entering it at the beginning of the first school year after they had completed their sixth year of age. ¹⁰ This was in the first decade of the twentieth century when the educational problem of Japan was similar to that of India at the present time. Japan adopted a four years' course because "the problem," as Baron Kikuchi the great educator of Japan pointed out, "has been almost always to secure the utmost educational efficiency with the least expenditure." ¹¹ This remark applies with equal force to the present-day conditions in India. Italy began her drive against illiteracy by adopting a three years' course. ¹² In Egypt, the course of study in the primary stage extends over four years. The syllabus embodies, in general, reading, writing, arithmetic, elements of geography and rudiments of science, learning by heart a portion of the Koran

9 *Bengal Government Resolution*, 9th March 1937, p. 5.

10 Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

12 *Speeches of G. K. Gokhale*, p. 592.

and religious instruction.¹³ In Austria, the new elementary school or the basic school as it is called comprises four years of study, from the sixth to the tenth year, instead of five as before.¹⁴ Similarly, Germany has adopted a uniform four years' elementary school, the *Grundschule*, as the basis of her educational system.¹⁵ In Roumania and Columbia, the primary school course is of four years' duration.¹⁶ In Siam, the compulsory primary course consists of four years. Speaking of the success of this experiment in Siam, Mr. J. Chaplin writes: "Virtually all that is required by law is that, before he or she leaves, the pupil should be able to read and write Siamese with reasonable fluency.....The standard is rising steadily nonetheless, and with the provision of better qualified teaching staff and adequate text-books, the young Siamese of the future should derive a considerably greater measure of benefit from their four years' course."¹⁷ It is evident from this quotation that Mr. Chaplin thinks that the standard would rise without extending the duration of the four years' course.

China has been making experiments in education in recent years. Both India and China being primarily agricultural countries, the problem of education is somewhat similar in both the countries. The idea of introducing universal instruction according to a defined plan and in a strictly determined number of years was first taken up in China in 1920. Under the scheme a four years' primary course was adopted. In 1930,

13. *Year-Book of Education*, 1937, p. 101.

14. Robert Dottrens, *The New Education in Austria*, p. 39.

15. J. A. Richey, *Progress of Education in India, 1917-1922*, I, p. 118.

16. *The Year-Book of Education*, 1937, p. 95, and 1936, p. 65.

17. *Ibid.*, 1937, p. 95, and 1936, p. 118.

a new project for universal instruction on a four year basis was again introduced. It was to apply to all China and 20 years were allowed for its realisation, the first five years to be devoted mainly to the establishment of normal schools, and 15 years being allowed for the development and spread of the four-year primary instruction scheme.¹⁸ Under the latest scheme drafted in 1932, China has reiterated its faith in a four-year course.¹⁹ Soviet Russia, which has made tremendous progress in education in recent years, began her system of compulsory mass education with a four years' primary course.²⁰

It is further interesting to note that some countries have adopted a shorter course of four or three years especially for the rural parts. Thus in the rural parts of Albania²¹ and Bolivia,²² the primary course is of four years, while in the rural areas of Honduras and Uruguay it is of only three years' duration.²³ In Korea, a scheme was drawn up in 1919 to encourage rural schools in a four year plan.²⁴ In Latin America, primary schools in rural parts seldom have more than four years' and often two years' course.²⁵ The introduction of a shorter course in rural areas, when compared to the longer one in the urban parts of these countries, is of special interest to India, a land of villages.

Again, it is worth while to know that a course of three years was prescribed in the Philippine Islands in 1901, when

18. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, p. 85.

19. *The Year-Book of Education*, 1932, p. 590.

20. Scott Nearing, *Education in Soviet Russia*, p. 33.

21. *The Year Book of Education*, 1937, p. 87.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 110 and 131.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 646.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 528.

a great experiment of spreading literacy among the masses of that Island was begun in right earnest. The reasons for the adoption of such a short course, as given in the Annual Report of the Department of Interior, U. S. A., are worth quoting. The Report states: "The main reason for making the primary course so brief is the need of a plan of study, *fairly complete* though very simple, which can be taught wholly by Philippine teachers and which, within a reasonable time can be given to all."²⁶ The course was extended to one of four years in 1907.

It is further interesting to point out that the Korean Government, in their recent plan to stamp out illiteracy, have established Short Course Primary Schools which provide a two-year course. Since the introduction of the scheme in April 1934, the demand for these schools has been so great, it is stated, that the number of schools established upto October, 1935 reached 660 with 54,000 students. The popularity of these schools must be partly attributed to the short duration of the course. What is to be specially noted is that the Korean Government expect that this two-year course would be sufficient to instil in the children "the national spirit and the love for labour as well as a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic."²⁷

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

It must be mentioned here that the Government of Bombay in the year 1935 took serious objection to the proposal of the Bombay Municipal Corporation to reduce the duration of the primary school course from five to four years. The view taken by the Bombay Government was that such a

26. *Annual Report, Department of Interior, U. S. A., 1905, p. 345*; referred to by R. V. Parulekar, *Mass Education in India, p. 35.*

27. *Thriving Chosen (Korea), 1935, pp. 14 and 92*

reduction would increase the chances of relapse into illiteracy and would therefore go against the interest of the Intermediate and Backward classes.²⁸ To this the Corporation gave a fitting reply, clearly indicating that the view expressed by the Government could not be maintained. The following extract from the Corporation's letter is worth quoting :

" Such statistical information as is available on this subject tends to show that the duration of the school period whether of four or five years, has little or no influence on the literate pupils relapsing into illiteracy. On the contrary, the literacy statistics of the province of Madras and the State of Mysore suggest that during the decade 1921-31, while in Madras with its five years' course, literacy increased by 10 per cent, in Mysore which had reduced its five years' course to four years' during the decade, it increased by 26 per cent. A similar comparison between Bombay and Madras with their five years' course and the Punjab and Central Provinces with their five years' course reduced to four years during the decade (1921-1931) is equally illuminating. It shows that while literacy in Bombay and Madras increased by 14 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, the increase was 37 per cent and 35 per cent in the Punjab and Central Provinces respectively."²⁹

Relapse into illiteracy ordinarily depends upon the environment in which the literate pupils spend their life after school education and not upon the duration of the school course. The view expressed by the Bombay Government cannot be substantiated.

28. See *Proceedings of the Bombay Municipal Corporation*, May 4, 1936, pp. 137-146.

29. *Ibid.*

REASONS FOR A SHORT COURSE

The fact that a four years' course has been successfully tried in a number of countries is a clear indication of its feasibility. As already pointed out, it is no doubt desirable to have a compulsory course of primary instruction extending over more than four years; but we cannot have it at present due to financial stringency. Today our first aim must be to bring every child to the school and make him literate. The reduction of the primary course to one of four years for purposes of compulsory education will theoretically result in a saving of about one-fifth of the present expenditure on primary education in Bombay, Bengal, Madras, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Sind, where the existing course covers a period of five years. The actual saving may be smaller; but that saving can be utilised with advantage for the expansion of primary education.

Another argument in support of a short course of primary education in India can be found in the fact that due to poverty parents are not in a position to keep their children in school for many years. This is especially so in villages where children are required by their parents to help them in their work either in the field or at home. It is perhaps for this reason that in countries like Albania and Bolivia a shorter course of four years has been prescribed in rural parts. That withdrawals of children from schools, before the completion of their primary education, are due to economic reasons in India has been repeatedly pointed out in official reports. Also considering this aspect of the question, it would be desirable to have as short a course as possible in our primary schools.

A reduction of classes from five to four has also another advantage, especially in single-teacher schools. Greater the

number of classes under one teacher, lesser the efficiency in teaching. A reduction of classes would, therefore, mean greater devotion of attention to each class by the teacher.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is suggested that a course of primary education extending over a period of four years will be adequate to begin with, in a scheme of compulsory mass education in India. The duration of the course may be extended, as was done in Japan and Russia, in due course of time when we get more money.

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOL AGE

Having determined the duration of the primary school course, it is proposed to fix the school age in this chapter.

EXISTING LOWER LIMIT

Under the various Primary Education Acts that were passed in different provinces between the period 1918-1926, compulsion is to be enforced as soon as a child is six years old whenever such compulsion is introduced. But in the Madras Act the school age has not been definitely fixed, but has been left to the discretion of the Governor in Council to prescribe in respect of children of either sex in any local area or of any particular community.

It is important to bear in mind that in some provinces there is no provision in the rules made under the Primary Education Acts refusing the admission of children under certain age. Even a child of three cannot be refused admission. This is one of the defects of our system of primary education as we shall presently see.

CONSIDERATION IN FIXING THE AGE

The fixation of primary school age should mainly depend on two considerations. They are (1) the mental and physical capacity of a child at a certain age and (2) the internal class organisation. It is generally admitted by educationists all over the world that both from the physiological and psychological point of view, the first seven years of life make one epoch. During this period children should be allowed to occupy themselves in a natural manner and enjoy life. Strictly speaking,

there should be no teaching to a child before the age of seven. In this connection, the opinion of a committee of educational experts recently appointed by the Government of Switzerland is worth quoting. With regard to the age of admission, the Committee arrived at the conclusion: "All those competent to judge emphasised the fact that in many cases children are not yet ripe for school at the age of six."¹ The Committee further observed:

"The development of the organs of the senses also is still incomplete in the six-year-old child. The eye of the child is by nature long-sighted. If then it has to adjust itself too early to close work, as is the case at school, this may give rise to derangement of the nervous system. The same remarks apply to the development of the kinesthetic feeling. The six-year-old child has often insufficient command over its voluntary muscles, to the extent required by school work. This often finds expression in derangements of speech and manual clumsiness."²

Swiss pedagogic circles subscribe to this view:

"The experience gained every year with six-year-old children confirms the fact that they are generally not yet fit for school. They tire quickly both physically and mentally and it frequently happens that a child who has started too young and has been described by its parents as very forward, fails after a short time and is overtaken by other children. Moreover, in many cases the harm done only becomes apparent later, i. e. on transfer to a middle grade school."... "An increasing number of far-sighted parents are preferring to give to the child one more year free from school, when admission to school

1. *Year-Book of Education*, 1937, p. 765.

2. *Ibid.*

is possible at the age of 6 or $6\frac{1}{2}$ year ; which allows the child another year to recruit its strength undisturbed."³

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

What has been quoted above goes to show that it is definitely harmful to admit children below seven to ordinary primary schools. A number of countries mostly agricultural have fixed the lower limit of compulsory school age at seven or above. Thus the period of compulsion begins at seven in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Brazil, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Iceland, Honduras, Guatamala, Finland, Cuba, Costa Rica and in some States of Canada, Australia and the United States of America. It begins at eight in Russia, in as many as 18 States of the U. S. A., and in two Provinces of Canada. "It is undesirable," says the Board of Education's *Hand-book of Suggestions For Teachers*, "that a child, whatever his ability, should be moved from the atmosphere of the Infant School before the age of seven *plus...*"⁴

It must also be noted that most of the countries which have fixed six or five years as the lower limit of compulsory school age have made special provisions for infant schools which are distinct from primary schools. Thus for instance, in England an infant school is a school that is designed for children between five and seven years old. It is no doubt desirable to have infant schools where children under seven can enjoy happy and homely surroundings. Such of the Provincial Governments who can find money to maintain infant schools in addition to primary schools for the whole school-going population should certainly do so. But at the same time, it would be wrong to open infant schools when

3. *Ibid.*, p. 766.

4. *See* pp. 69-70.

the greater need of the country in maintaining primary schools is not fully satisfied. Again, to admit infants below the age of seven to ordinary primary schools will only result in more harm than good. We, therefore, suggest that no child should be admitted to a primary school before he completes his seventh year and that the present lower limit of compulsion in various provinces should be raised to seven years.

OPINION OF THE WARDHA EDUCATION COMMITTEE

It is interesting that the same view has been expressed by the Zakir Husain Committee appointed by the Wardha Education Conference. The Committee opined: "We realise that by fixing seven *plus* as the age for introduction of compulsory education, we have left out a very important period of child's life to be shaped in the rather unfavourable surroundings of poor village homes under the care of uneducated and indifferent parents mostly struggling against unbearable circumstances. We feel very strongly the necessity for some organisation of pre-school education conducted or supported by the State, for children between the ages of three and seven. A painful consciousness of the realities of the situation, chiefly financial, prevents us from making this recommendation."⁵

Considering that a short course of four years is suggested in the previous chapter, it is essential that children should be admitted to school at an age when they would be able to follow the teacher intelligently in the class-room and thus make the best use of all the four years. Seven *plus* seems to be the proper age for this purpose.

UNDER-AGE LEADS TO WASTAGE

Also judging from the point of view of school organisation, it is very undesirable that children below seven are admitted

5. *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 36.

to ordinary primary schools. Classes are not homogeneous when they contain children of different stages of maturity. "Too great a range of age or intelligence has an adverse effect on the work in any class."⁶ The fact that there is too great a range of age among the pupils of primary schools in India is evidenced by the following figures. It is reported that in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1931-32 there were as many as 17,176 children below 5 years reading in class I of primary stage with 2,199 pupils between the ages of 12 and 13 in the same class.⁷ Still more interesting is the fact that there were 47 pupils over 20 in class I.⁸ Though these figures relate to the year 1931-32 and are confined to Bombay Presidency, they may be taken as sufficiently illustrative for the whole of India, as almost similar conditions prevail in all provinces.

One of the main reasons why there is so much of wastage in the primary schools in India can be traced to the fact of admitting under-aged pupils to schools. Official reports have repeatedly pointed out that the greatest tendency of wastage and stagnation exists amongst very young children in the lowest classes. The Educational Commissioner with the Government of India says in his *Education in India in 1935-36*: ".....the fact that more than 40 per cent of the boys are studying in the first class causes apprehension as it is in this class that most of the wastage and stagnation takes place." (p. 38). According to the latest available statistics, of 3,816,386 boys in class I in 1932-33 in British India, only 1,704,765 or about 44 per cent were promoted to class II.⁹ What

6. *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers*, p. 30.

7. *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1927-32*, p. 326.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 38-39

happens is this: Children are admitted to school at very tender ages. They soon find the class-room completely dry and uninteresting and fail to follow the teacher, the result being that they either remain in the same class for two or more years or leave the school never to return. It is a tremendous waste of public money to admit under-aged pupils to schools when their minds are not receptive to learning. In fact, admittance of under-aged children to our primary schools to-day means the improper use of school accommodation. No Provincial Government seems to have realised the serious consequences of this unhappy state of affairs. It is, however, encouraging that recently at least one of the Provincial Governments, namely, the Government of Madras has given some serious consideration to this matter. In their *Press Communique* of June 26, 1937, the Government of Madras opined:

“ Large numbers of under-aged pupils attend the I standard occupying much needed school places and using the school practically as a *erèche*. This greatly handicaps the work of the I standard and Government have decided to exclude all boys of under $5\frac{1}{2}$ and all girls of under 5 from school, except in the case of kindergarten, nursery or model schools.”

Though the decision of the Madras Government is in the proper direction, the age of admission should be further raised to seven years both for boys and girls.

IRRATIONAL USE OF SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

To what extent the much needed school place is improperly occupied by children below seven years can be seen from the following table :

Bombay Province¹⁰.

British Districts.

Scholars by Classes and Ages.

1936—37.

| Ages. | Class I. | Class II. | Class III. | Class IV. |
|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Below 5 ... | 2,462 | 212 | 18 | — |
| 5 to 6 ... | 70,424 | 5,256 | 430 | 59 |
| 6 to 7 ... | 102,702 | 26,717 | 4,703 | 576 |

Out of the total of 379,597 pupils in class I during that year, 175,588 or nearly 46 per cent of the total were of the age below seven. Though the figures taken are for the Bombay Presidency, they hold equally good in the case of other provinces. It is evident from the above table that only a small proportion of the under-aged children in class I reaches class II after one year. The only way to stop this tremendous waste of money and the serious harm done to our young pupils' brains is to exclude children below seven from our primary schools. Legislation to that effect should be enacted immediately.

TO PREVENT CHILD LABOUR

It would be also advisable to fix the compulsory age at the completion of the seventh year for another reason. Taking into consideration the conditions in our country-side, especially where there are extensive villages with scattered population

10. *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Province, 1932—37*, p. 280.

it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for young children below seven to travel a long distance to the school. Again, if compulsion is resorted to at the age of six, the pupils will finish their compulsory school education at the age of ten under a four years' course which is suggested. Only a small percentage of these children will go to secondary schools. The majority will go to work at home or away from home, and for this they will still be too young at an age of ten. Moreover, the cessation of instruction at so early an age may often mean a relapse into illiteracy. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the same view was held by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts who were asked to suggest a scheme of education in China.¹¹ For the reasons stated above they recommended that the age of admission to school should be seven *plus* in China.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is suggested that the period of compulsion should extend over four years, commencing from the age of seven *plus* and ending at the age of eleven *plus*, and that no child below seven years should be admitted to a primary school except in the case of kindergarten or nursery schools.

11. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, p. 87.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIZE OF CLASSES

THE PRESENT LIMIT

Under the Administrative Rules made under the Primary Education Acts in different provinces, the maximum number of pupils allowed to be taught by one teacher varies between 30 and 40.¹ But the actual number of pupils in a class falls far below. There were nearly 10,400,000 pupils (boys and girls) in primary schools in British India in 1935-36,² whereas the number of primary school teachers, both men and women, was 370,241 during the same year.³ This works out as 27 pupils for one teacher on an average. This proportion between the number of teachers and pupils has remained stationary since a very long time. A quarter of a century ago, that is, in 1912 the average number of pupils per teacher in British India was also 27.⁴

1. In 1936 the Government of Bombay informed the Local Authorities that the strict observance of the rule that the total number on rolls in a class under one teacher is not to exceed 40, would not be insisted upon and that the Local Authorities would be permitted to raise the figure to 50 with the permission of the Educational Inspector. The Director of Public Instruction, however, remarks that "this permission has not as yet been taken advantage of to any great extent..." (See *The Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Province, 1932-37*, p. 106.)

2. *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 114-117.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131

4. *Quinquennial Review on Education in India, 1912-1917*, p. 113.

NEED FOR EXTENDING THE LIMIT

There is no denying the fact that smaller the number of pupils to be taught by a teacher, greater the attention the teacher can pay to each pupil in the class. But at the same time, lesser the number of pupils allowed for a teacher, greater the cost of education. It is too well-known that our Provincial Governments are not in a position to spend liberally on the education of our children on account of financial stringency. By increasing the proportion of pupils to teachers we will be able to educate a greater number of children with the same amount of money. In other words, the increase in the number of pupils per teacher will greatly help the work of expansion of primary education which is the greatest need of the country.

The suggestion to increase the proportion of pupils to teachers, at first instance, may appear staggering. But its acceptance is essential for the speedy removal of illiteracy from the land.

It must be pointed out that the maximum number of 40 pupils per teacher, which is allowed at present, is rather small, especially in view of the fact that our wants are great and resources inadequate. That the number may be raised without impairing the efficiency of teaching has been admitted in official reports. For instance, in the *Seventh Quinquennial Review on Education* published by the Government of India, it is stated that "the proportion of teachers to pupils in the primary schools of India is particularly large." (P. 113).

THE SIZE OF CLASSES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

A study of how some of the advanced countries of the world began their schemes of universal instruction would also suggest that the number of pupils per teacher is too low in

India. The present figures for these countries would not be a proper guide as those of the past, as a nation advances in education and consequently in prosperity, it is but right that it should try to make its schools more and more efficient. Let us see, for instance, how England started with her system of mass education. We are told that in England, during the period between 1870-1895, a class of 70 to 120 children had to be controlled by a single teacher, or even sometimes a pupil-teacher.⁵ It is further stated that in 1895 exactly one certified teacher was employed for every 100 children on the roll.⁶ Even as late as 1922, when England had made a progress of more than half a century in compulsory education, there were 28,000 classes in England and Wales containing between 50 and 60 children and 5,000 with over 60.⁷ According to the annual report of the Board of Education for 1937, no fewer than 2646 classes are still to be found in England with fifty or more pupils on the rolls.⁸ What is still more interesting is that recently the Board of Education refused to ratify the proposals of the London County Council to reduce classes in the infant and junior schools to below forty.⁹

Coming to Japan, we find that the number of children allowed in a class was 70 in elementary schools. Under special circumstances, it was raised to 80.¹⁰ The number allowed in Germany, Hungary, Portugal and Czechoslovakia was

5. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, p. 17.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

8. See *The Times of India*, October 26, 1938, p. 4, Col. 1

9. *Ibid.*, p. 4, Cols., 1-2.

10. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

80," while in Switzerland and Servia it was 70.¹² Even to-day in Switzerland, "as a result of financial straits classes are still large, seventy pupils being not uncommon."¹³ If these countries, which have achieved the ideal of universal instruction, could successfully start their systems with big classes of 70 or 80 pupils, why should not India begin on the same lines and profit by the experience gained in other countries? There is enough testimony to show that those countries which encouraged large classes were able to impart efficient primary instruction to their masses. In spite of the largeness of classes in England, "the majority of the children left school, disciplined and well grounded in reading, writing and arithmetic," says Mr. Lowndes.¹⁴ In this connection, the remarks of the great Japanese educator Baron Kikuchi, stating the reasons why Japan was forced to have classes of large size, may be found very illuminating. He wrote in 1907:

"The chief reason is, that owing to the increase in the number of children attending schools, *shi*, *chō*, and *son* have had to meet so much increased expenditure in the way of establishing and maintaining new schools necessitated by this increase, that it would have been impossible for them to bear the further burden, which the diminution in the number of children in a class would impose upon them. There is another reason; that is, that the number of certified teachers being small, the number of provisional teachers would be still further increased, and prefectural normal schools would have to be still further enlarged. For those reasons, I am afraid, there will be a great difficulty in reducing the number for the present."¹⁵

11. R. V. Parulekar, *Mass Education in India*, pp. 19-20.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 20

13. A. G. Pressland, *Education and Social Welfare in Switzerland*, p. 48.

14. Lowndes, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

15. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

The educational problem of Japan in the first decade of this century was exactly similar to our educational problem at present. For the very reasons which prompted Japan to have schools of large classes, India should raise the number of children per teacher at least to 50, if the introduction of universal instruction in the near future be seriously undertaken. It may be further interesting to note that the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts, who were asked to suggest a scheme of reorganisation of education in China, recommended that the number of pupils to be taught by one primary school teacher should be raised to nearly 60 in China.¹⁶ The Commission remarked: "No less extravagant is the number of teachers in relation to the number of pupils. This is a matter of importance, as the salaries of teachers contribute the major part of the total expenditure on primary education. In China far fewer pupils fall to the share of one primary school teacher than is usual in countries where general education is more advanced. In China as a whole there are 20·3 pupils to one teacher, whereas in countries of a high standard of education there are two to three times as many. This would mean that in the same conditions and at the same expense between two and three times as are actually under instruction could be dealt with by the existing staffs of teachers."¹⁷

These remarks apply with equal force to present-day conditions in India, with an average of 27 pupils to one teacher. If the number is raised to at least 50, we will be able to teach nearly twice the number of children without any additional expenditure.

It is however gratifying to note that the Government of Central Provinces and Berar have recently realised the

16. *The Re-organisation of Education in China*, p. 81.

17. *Ibid.*

importance of increasing the number of pupils per teacher. Under the Vidya Mandir Scheme sought to be introduced by the Minister of Education, the maximum number of children allowed for one teacher is 50.¹⁸ It is hoped that other Governments will follow the example of the C. P. Government without any further delay.

18. *Vidya Mandir Scheme*, Government Printing, C. P. & Berar, p. 10.

CHAPTER VII

THE SHIFT SYSTEM

Considering the fact that the number of children to be educated in India is very big and the financial resources of the state comparatively small, the introduction of the shift system or part-time instruction will go a long way in solving the great problem of universal education.

Under the shift system, schools are divided into two sections, each section sitting for about half the ordinary school day. The pupils in the first section attend the school in the morning and the remainder in the afternoon.

It must, however, be observed at the very outset that the system of part-time instruction is in no way an ideal one or is ordinarily followed. But at the same time, the system is not only extremely useful, but also quite inevitable under certain special circumstances of a country. From this point of view, the system is worthy of being adopted in a country like India in the earlier stages of its educational development. The special reasons that should prompt us to resort to this system must, therefore, be explained.

I. EFFICIENCY IN SINGLE-TEACHER SCHOOLS

The introduction of the shift system will serve a useful purpose in our single-teacher schools in the matter of achieving greater efficiency in the quality of instruction. It is obvious that single-teacher schools with more than one class, though they do not deserve to exist in an ideal system of education, cannot be eliminated as long as there are small villages in India. When we cannot abolish them, we should

improve them. In these schools, one teacher has to look after four, five or sometimes six classes. The problem is how to distribute his work over all classes and to minimise the inevitable waste of time. By the shift system, the teacher will have to manage only half the number of classes at one time, which would enable him to pay greater attention to each class. In fact, shorter hours with continuous instruction are more valuable than longer hours with intermittent instruction. It is, therefore, necessary that half-time instruction is made a rule in all single-teacher primary schools.

II. INCREASED NUMBER OF PUPILS PER TEACHER

The introduction of the shift system will not only increase the efficiency of single-teacher schools as explained above, but also will be very helpful in instructing a larger number of pupils without employing additional teachers. To-day the average number of pupils on the roll of a single-teacher primary school is about 30. For instance, it is 32 in Bengal.¹ In Madras, as many as 11,819 single-teacher schools are working with less than 30 pupils on the rolls². Hard pressed as we are financially, we cannot afford to have such a low number of pupils per teacher. But at the same time, we cannot increase the number when we take into consideration that one teacher has to instruct as many as four or five classes at one time. Having faced with this situation, the only way out of the difficulty is to adopt the system of half-time instruction. For by doing so, it would be quite possible to increase the number of pupils per teacher to at least 50, without adversely affecting the

1. *Government of Bengal Resolution*, No. 1037 Edn, 9th March 1937, p. 2.

2. *Government of Madras, G. O.*, No. 1398, 26th June 1937, p. 3.

quality of instruction. We may note, in this connection, that under the *Vidya Mandir Scheme* proposed to be introduced by the Government of Central Provinces and Berar, it is intended to allow a maximum number of 80 pupils per teacher by adopting the shift system³. The introduction of this system will thus enable us to instruct almost double the number of pupils with the same supply of teachers as is now available in our primary schools. This is no small advantage from the point of view of economy.

III. INCREASED ACCOMMODATION

The third reason why the shift system should be followed in India is found in the fact that our financial resources are not adequate at present to have sufficient accommodation for all the children of school age. For some time to come, it may not be possible to have a school building in every village, which would be large enough to accommodate all the children in that area. Again, the State may not be able to erect spacious school-buildings in towns and cities, as it is more expensive to raise buildings in urban parts. It would, however, be wrong to postpone the introduction of a scheme of universal education on the plea of insufficient seating accommodation. No doubt the present number of school-buildings will not be enough if all the children of school age are required to attend them. Additional accommodation will have to be made. But the adoption of the system of part-time instruction will greatly minimise expenditure on school buildings, and exactly double the number of pupils will be enabled to find seating accommodation in the same number of buildings as is now available. Thus, if the school-room is in use from eight in the morning till five in the afternoon, two groups of children may each have three hours of learning, the teacher getting a mid-day rest of three hours from 11 A. M. to 2 P. M.

3. *Vidya Mandir Scheme*, p. 10.

It must, however, be borne in mind that this form of part-time instruction should be resorted to as being merely a temporary measure employed to relieve overcrowding that is bound to occur in the earlier stages of compulsory mass education.

In conclusion, it may be suggested that the shift system, as explained above, should be adopted in all those towns and villages where the existing accommodation is not sufficient for any further expansion of primary education and where new buildings could not be erected immediately. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the system has been adopted by the Karachi Municipality and is resorted to on account of shortage of suitable buildings.⁴ For the same reasons, the system is followed in the City of Bombay.

IV SECURING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Part-time instruction will also solve to a certain extent the difficult problem of securing regular attendance in our village schools. It is undeniable that children of very poor parents cannot afford to spend long hours in schools. For these children are expected to help their parents at times of sowing, weeding and reaping, to tend cattle, or to add to the family earnings in other ways. This fact has been admitted both by officials and non-official educationists. For instance, during the year 1920-21 inquiries were made in 49 villages of Bihar and Orissa containing 9,491 boys between the ages of five and sixteen. Of these boys 2,467 were at school and 7,024 were not. Of the boys not at school, 46.03 per cent were stated to be kept away by poverty.⁵ Mr. J. A. Richey, the Ex-Educational Commissioner with the Government of India,

4. *Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 50.

5. *Eighth Quinquennial Review on Education in India, 1917-22*, p. 120.

observes in the *Eighth Quinquennial Review*: "It is often stated that the agriculturist needs the help of his boys in farm work and cannot for this reason afford to send them to school."⁶ Again, the Commission of Inquiry into Village Education in India appointed by the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and North America stated: "So clearly has poverty been recognised as the main cause of non-attendance in some village schools that some missions have met the difficulty directly either by giving a grant to the child equal to his earning capacity, or by providing a substantial school meal."⁷ It may, however, not be possible at present to provide free meals for all the poor children in India with a view to securing their regular attendance. Wherever the Government or the Local Authorities can find means to provide free meals, they should certainly do so.

The most practical way out of the difficulty appears to be the holding of half-time schools, and the granting of holidays at harvest times. This arrangement will be very useful in not only inducing the poor parents to send their children to school but also in enabling the pupils to keep regular attendance. In fact, the hours of instruction should be so contrived as to enable children to help their parents in their domestic or field work. This can be arranged by adopting the shift system. Under the present economic conditions obtaining in villages, "When the boy becomes useful in the field, he is faced with the alternative of a whole day in school or a whole day in the field with the frequent result that he gives up school altogether."⁸ With the introduction of the shift system, the village boy will be able to divide his time equally at school and in the field or at home.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

7. *Village Schools in India*, p. 35.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE SHIFT SYSTEM

Having explained in detail the various reasons for adopting the system of part-time instruction in our primary schools, let us now examine whether the system, if followed, would be a success or not.

It must be observed at the very outset that the shift system has not been practised on a sufficiently large scale in any of the provinces in British India, though it has been introduced in a few schools here and there, particularly in the Central Provinces. It is, therefore, rather too early to pronounce any definite opinion whether the system, as adopted in India, has been a success or a failure. Nevertheless, opinion is divided on the point.

The Educational Inspector, Bombay Division, reported that the experiment of the shift system has not been successful.⁹ In the *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency* for the year 1927-28, it is stated that "the system has, generally speaking, not proved successful, being unpopular both with the parents and the teachers."¹⁰ Again, the Chairman of the District Board, Pilibhit, United Provinces, remarked that, "Parents expressed their opinion of the value of the half-time system by simply withdrawing their boys."¹¹ On the other hand, some have expressed the view that the system has met with considerable success. For instance, the Chairman, District School Board, Kolaba, observed that,

9. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 49.

10. *Ibid.*, Report for 1927-28, p. 60.

11. *General Report on Public Instruction in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, for the Quinquennium ending 31st March 1922*, p. 93.

“The results of the system are fairly satisfactory especially when the teacher has the tact and skill to deal with the child mind.”¹² The District Inspector, Bogra, Bengal, is of the opinion that the schools with the shift system are doing better than the ordinary primary schools in the district.¹³ However, the view that the shift system has failed predominates.

Almost all those who hold that the system has not worked well attribute its failure to (1) the unpopularity of the system both with parents and teachers and to (2) the rather heavy and complicated curriculum that is being followed in our primary schools.

WHY THE SYSTEM IS UNPOPULAR WITH PARENTS ?

With regard to the unpopularity of the system with parents, let us see why it is so. An overwhelming majority of children who attend our primary schools to-day come from the higher and middle classes. The shift system is bound to be unpopular with the parents of these children inasmuch as the children become a nuisance to their parents when at home out of school hours. This fact has been admitted in one of the official reports.¹⁴ But it will be wrong on our part to be guided by this opinion of higher and middle classes in this matter, when we bear in mind the fact that the greater need of the country lies in finding out measures for educating the masses who by far form the greatest bulk of the nation. The shift system may be a nuisance to higher and middle classes, but it is a great relief to the

12. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 49.

13. *Report on Public Instruction in Bengal, 1934-35*, p. 8.

14. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 49.

poor agriculturists. The educational interest of the country as a whole, therefore, demands that the shift system should be adopted despite the fact that it is unpopular with the well-to-do few. In fact, our educational system should be so planned as to suit the conveniences of the common people and not those of the privileged classes. This is particularly so in a scheme of universal mass education.

WHY IT IS UNPOPULAR WITH TEACHERS?

The reason why the system of half-time instruction is unpopular with teachers is that they are required to work for longer hours. Under the shift system, the teacher has to devote six hours a day at the school, whereas under the ordinary system he works for five hours. It is but natural that those teachers who are asked to work for longer hours should have a legitimate grievance, as they rightly feel that the Administration is following a policy of discrimination in asking them to work longer while other teachers are not so doing. This grievance can, however, be removed by extending the shift system to all single-teacher schools to avoid discrimination and by paying an extra monthly allowance to all those teachers working under the shift system in order to keep them satisfied. The adoption of these measures will go a long way in making the shift system quite popular with teachers. In this connection, the view expressed by Mr. P. Lory, the Ex-Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Presidency, is worth quoting. Speaking on the shift system, he wrote in 1930: "I consider that, if the better co-operation of the teachers were secured by the payment of adequate extra remuneration, considerable success might be attained."¹⁵

HEAVY CURRICULUM

The third reason why the shift system has not worked well is found in the fact that the existing curriculum is rather

15. *Ibid.*, 1927-28, p. 60.

too heavy and complicated. With the reduction of hours of instruction, simplification of the curriculum is quite essential. The Secretary, Schools Committee, Bombay Municipal Corporation, has rightly remarked that, "the curriculum at present laid down for the Infant Standard must be somewhat curtailed in order to enable the infants to finish it completely in one year in the curtailed hours of instruction."¹⁶ The same is true with regard to other standards also. Similar view has been expressed by an Ex-Director of Public Instruction, United Provinces.¹⁷

To sum up, by simplifying the curriculum and by paying extra remuneration to teachers, the introduction of the shift system is bound to be a success in India. The half-time school with a simple curriculum will greatly appeal to the masses of our country who expect and require the assistance of their children in their domestic and agricultural work.

It is gratifying to note that the Education Department of the Government of Bombay has very recently changed its attitude towards the shift system by recommending its adoption. The Director of Public Instruction in his latest Quinquennial Report published in 1938 says: "Its (the shift system) advantages are that, it prevents overcrowding and also allows teachers to deal with a small number of pupils at a time. The Department was, therefore, compelled by force of

16. *Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, 1933-34*, p. 53.

17. *General Report on Public Instruction in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, for the Quinquennium ending 31st March 1922*, p. 93.

circumstances to allow its introduction, when no other way of dealing with the lack of accommodation was found possible."¹⁸

THE SHIFT SYSTEM IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Let it not be understood that by advocating the system of part-time instruction in our village schools, we are pleading for a quite novel method in educational administration. The shift system has been successfully practised in a number of countries of the world, especially during the initial stages of their educational development.

Foremost among the countries of Europe to adopt this system on a large scale was Germany, where the following rule was followed: "In cases where the number of children exceeds 80, or where the school room is not large enough to accommodate a smaller number even and the conditions do not permit the appointment of a second teacher, and in places where other reasons make it necessary, a half-day school may be organised."¹⁹ In Italy, a class was taken in alternate sessions if the number of pupils exceeded sixty and no additional teacher was supplied.²⁰ In France about the year 1900, half-day schools were allowed by the school-organisation rules.²¹ The shift system was also practised in Portugal,²² the United States,²³ the Argentine Republic,²⁴ Denmark

18. *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Province, 1932-37*, p. 113.

19. *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Educational Department, England, Vol. I, 1896, pp. 470-81.

20. R. V. Parulekar, *Mass Education in India*, page 23.

21. *Special Reports on Educational subjects*, England, Vol. VII, p. 258.

22. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 448.

23. *Reports of the Commissioner of Education, U. S. A.*, Vol. I, 1912, p. XVIII.

24. *Year-Book of Education, 1925*, pp. 27-28.

and Japan.²⁵ Even to-day it is in vogue in Australia,²⁶ New Zealand,²⁷ Turkey,²⁸ Egypt,²⁹ and China³⁰.

It may be of special interest to note that the shift system was introduced in Porto Rico in nearly all rural schools. We are told that the system was adopted for the purpose of reducing illiteracy as fast as possible³¹.

The reasons why Japan resorted to the system of part-time instruction in the first decade of this century are specially appealing to India, as the educational problem of Japan in those days was almost similar to that of India at the present time. The reasons, as stated by Baron Kikuchi, are (1) that the system is to be preferred to "single-class school" system for remote and poor districts, (2) and that it would prove valuable in place of many schools, in which, "although there may be many classes some of them are not under very competent teachers."³² For these reasons the following regulation was introduced in 1903: "The whole or part of the children attending a school may be divided into two parts and taught at different times, as for instance, one part in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon, under circumstances cited below, namely: (1) when it is impossible to provide one regular teacher to each class; (2) when the school building is

25. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.* p. 132.

26. *Year-Book of Education*, 1924, p. 15.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

28. *Ibid.*, 1932, p. 974.

29. *Ibid.*, 1932., p. 986.

30. *Ibid.*, 1937, p. 591.

31. *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, U. S. A., Vol. I, p. 12.

32. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-32.

not large enough to accommodate all the children at the same time; (3) when there is special necessity in connection with school attendance or the teaching of children."³³

This Japanese Regulation is so well adaptable to present conditions in our country that it should be introduced in India without any further delay.

Speaking of this regulation, Baron Kikuchi wrote: "This system seems to be well adapted to the actual circumstances in our country, where the increase of school accommodation and the supply of trained teachers cannot keep pace with the annual increase of school children."³⁴

The very fact that the shift system has played an important part in the work of educational expansion in so many countries in the world is a clear indication of its feasibility and importance of being introduced in India, especially at a time when we are seriously thinking of initiating a scheme of compulsory mass education.

TRAVELLING TEACHERS

Apart from the shift system as described above, there is another type of part-time instruction which is worthy of being introduced in sparsely populated areas and remote villages. Under this system, in those remote villages, where the number of pupils of school age is very small, the school may be held in two or three days in a week, the teacher going to such other villages for the rest of the week. In this way, one teacher can be given his full compliment of pupils. It has been suggested in a previous chapter that the maximum number of pupils to be allowed per teacher should be at least 50. In order to have

33. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

a strength of 50 pupils, the population of a village should be about 400 on the basis of 12 per cent which represents the children between the ages of seven and eleven. But a considerably large number of villages in India are mere hamlets having a population less than 400. That the average population per village in British India is 484.4³⁵ is illustrative of the fact that there are many villages whose population falls below this average. In the case of Assam, the average is as low as 255.8.³⁶

Due to financial stringency it may not be possible for us, at the present time, to supply each of these small villages with a full-time teacher. It is, therefore, necessary that two or three villages should be grouped together under the charge of one travelling teacher. With a simplified curriculum, instruction for two or three full days in a week is sufficiently effective.

The system of travelling teachers is being successfully practised in Australia and New Zealand. In New South Wales (Australia), if a minimum attendance of ten pupils can be collected in two groups not more than ten miles apart, a half-time school is established, one teacher dividing his time between the two places. We are also told that travelling teachers visit even isolated families teaching each for a week at a time. The masters of these picturesque institutions are equipped with a vehicle and tent, the latter to be used as a school-house.³⁷ In New Zealand, where the population is usually sparse, an itinerant teacher may have charge of three or four very small schools.³⁸ It is stated that, "Fine results are secured."

35. See *The Census of India*, 1931.

36. See *Ibid.*

37. *Year-Book of Education*, 1924, pp. 15-16.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

The institution of travelling teachers was also in existence in Norway in the first decade of this century. It is commented that "this arrangement gave very good results."³⁹

It may also be noted that the system of travelling teachers has been recommended to be introduced in China by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts.⁴⁰

Thus the problem of educating the isolated villages has been solved in some countries both efficiently and economically by adopting the system of travelling teachers. It is for India to profit by these experiences carried on in other parts of the world in order to solve her own educational problem which is far more complicated.

39. *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, Vol. VIII (1902), p. 72.

40. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, p. 64.

CHAPTER VIII
THE SUPPLY OF TEACHERS

PROBLEM OF TRAINED TEACHERS

Any system of education cannot be carried on efficiently without an adequate supply of trained teachers. In the year 1936 there were 331,504 men teachers in the primary schools in British India, of whom 184,877 or 55·8 per cent were trained, as can be seen from the following table:

PERCENTAGE OF TRAINED TEACHERS¹

| Province. | Percentage of Trained Teachers to the total number of Teachers. |
|--|--|
| Punjab | 81·5 |
| North-West Frontier Province | 78·3 |
| United Provinces | 72·7 |
| Madras | 68·9 |
| Central Provinces | 62·4 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 55·9 |
| Bombay | 48·0 |
| Bengal | 32·1 |
| Assam | 28·8 |
| British India (Including Administered Areas.) | 55·8 |

With regard to the number of women teachers, it was 38,737 of whom 21,769 or 56·2 per cent were trained.²

1. *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 34-35.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59

The above table, giving the percentage of trained men teachers in different provinces, clearly shows that in all provinces, except in Bombay, Bengal and Assam, more than half the number of primary school teachers are trained. It may also be noted that Bombay, with 48 per cent trained teachers, is nearing the required proportion of 50 per cent according to the rules under the Bombay Primary Education Act. The only provinces where the proportion of trained teachers is very low are Bengal and Assam.

Since the time Mr. G. K. Gokhale introduced his Elementary Education Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1912, it is often argued by many responsible persons that unless we have trained teachers further expansion of primary education should not be undertaken. They say: "First have trained teachers and then propose that education should be made compulsory."³ Even to-day the same view is being urged by some provincial Governments. For instance, the Finance Minister to the Government of Bombay, explaining the reasons why the Government could not introduce universal primary education in the near future, said that "untrained teachers are absolutely incompetent for the work entrusted to them."⁴ This view is not confined to Governments only, as the following quotation from the *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates* would clearly show. "Member after member got up and said in the matter of teachers 'do not entrust the future of the child to people who are not skilled, who are not trained.'"⁵

All those who argue in this strain forget the essential truth that a country cannot have trained teachers first and

3. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, p. 674.

4. *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, August 17, 1937, p. 57.

5. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1937, p. 1214.

then compulsory education. Both the training of teachers and the expansion of education must go hand in hand. We cannot create trained teachers to instruct every child of the nation within a short time. This is especially true in the case of India, whose financial resources are meagre. Neither can we wait till the time when we can have only trained teachers in our schools. No doubt it is true that a trained teacher is an important factor towards the improvement of teaching. But to insist that we should not inaugurate a scheme of mass education for want of a sufficient supply of trained teachers is not to understand the real problem. A peep into the development of primary education in other countries would clearly show that, with 56 per cent of her trained teachers, India need not wait any longer for the introduction of universal primary education.

PROPORTION OF TRAINED TEACHERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Let us see what was the proportion of trained teachers to untrained teachers in England in the earlier stages of her educational growth. England, as we all know, introduced compulsory education in 1870, when the percentage of trained teachers to the total number of primary school teachers was only 45^o, whereas it is 55·8 to-day in British India. It is further interesting to note that the same percentage continued in England till 1900, a period of thirty years. The whole number of teachers of elementary schools reported for England and Wales in 1900 was 139,818. Of these 30,783 were pupil teachers, 30,233 assistants, and 16,717 additional assistants, giving a total of 77,733 uncertified teachers.⁷ It was only in

6. R. V. Parulekar, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

7. J. C. Greenough, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

1911 that the proportion of trained or certified teachers was 65 per cent in England.⁸ Thus England took nearly half a century, after the introduction of universal education, to reach this proportion of trained teachers in her primary schools. We have already exceeded this figure in the case of the Punjab with 81·5 per cent trained teachers, North-West Frontier Province with 78·3 per cent, the United Provinces with 72·7 per cent, and Madras with 68·9 per cent. Even to-day the percentage of trained teachers is only 77·0 in England and Wales,⁹ whereas it is 81·5 per cent in the Punjab and 78·3 in the North-West Frontier Province.

It may also be interesting to observe that the percentage of trained teachers to the total number of teachers in the primary schools of Irish Free State is 57·7 even to-day, when that country has achieved the ideal of universal instruction.¹⁰

Coming to Japan, we find that the Japanese had always been in want of a sufficient number of competent teachers since they started the system of mass education. As pointed out by Baron Kikuchi, ".....it has been found necessary to allow the employment of provisional teachers without certificates to take the place of assistant teachers with certificates." Thus in 1906 of the total of 116,070 teachers in elementary schools, 20,076 were provisional teachers who had no certificates.¹¹ The number of certified teachers being small, Baron Kikuchi held the view that uncertified teachers should be still further

8. E. B. R. Prideaux, *A Survey of Elementary English Education*, pp. 92-93.

9. *Year-book of Education*, 1937, p. 83.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 133

increased.¹² This is how Japan solved the problem of trained teachers and consequently of mass education.

If England, Ireland and Japan could successfully inaugurate schemes of universal primary education without waiting for a time when they would be able to have only trained teachers, why should not India, with more than half the number of her primary teachers trained at present, do the same and profit by the experience in other parts of the world? In this connection the advice given by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts to the Chinese educationists is full of significance. They wrote in 1932: "China is not now able to supply the schools with a sufficient number of qualified teachers; but, on the other hand, it cannot slow down the development of schools and wait on the preparation of normally qualified teachers. Under these conditions it is necessary to accept a very large number of insufficiently qualified teachers at present."¹³ This remark applies with equal force, if not greater, to present conditions in India.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote the words of Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, which he uttered in 1912. Mr. Gokhale said, ".....you must be satisfied with untrained teachers for a time. After all, too much has been made of trained teachers; not that I depreciate the value of trained teachers, but for the purpose of giving the most elementary type of education, for imparting a knowledge of the 3 R's, I think even untrained teachers are not as useless as they are depicted." Mr. Gokhale continued: "First establish at once these lower primary schools, then go on, as you have funds, improving the standards, bringing in trained teachers, and having better school houses. And for God's sake do not wait

12. *Ibid.* p. 130.

13. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, pp. 56-57.

for your trained teachers, for your decent school houses, till you take up the question of removing illiteracy from the land. This is really the whole of my contention." ¹⁴

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Though it will be wrong to postpone the introduction of compulsory primary education on the plea of insufficient number of trained teachers, the importance of having a well qualified staff in all our primary schools should not be under-estimated. It is, therefore, necessary that every effort should be made to train as many teachers as possible without any delay, especially in Bengal and Assam where the proportion of trained teachers to untrained teachers is very low.

As the number of teachers to be trained will be very large and our financial resources meagre, we will have to find out ways and means by adopting which the training of primary school teachers is made as cheap as possible. Under the existing methods, the training of teachers has become rather expensive in India.

Among the proposals that may be made for the training of primary school teachers efficiently but economically are the following:

1. The existing course of training should be restricted to a period of two years in all those provinces where it exceeds this duration. That a period of two years is sufficient is evident from the fact that in some normal schools in the United Provinces, which have a two-year course, instruction in physical training, games and scouting is given and the teaching of handwork and playway methods are taught in addition to the instruction in ordinary subjects.¹⁵ We are told

14. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, pp. 674-675

15. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 54

that a two-year training course was established in Japan in 1907 and was "encouraged by the Government as a means of getting efficient teachers economically."¹⁶ For the same reason a two-year training course should be instituted in India. We may also note that a course extending over two years, which is complete in itself, is in existence in England even to this day.¹⁷

2. Besides this regular two-year course, a shorter course of one year should also be opened, as was done in Japan,¹⁸ in order to qualify pupils to act as assistant teachers. The Committee on Primary and Secondary Education appointed by the Government of Bombay in 1927 held that a one-year course would be sufficient for a pupil to be trained as a village school teacher.¹⁹

3. In view of the heavy expenditure to be incurred and the difficulty in training a large number of teachers within a short period, vacation courses for untrained teachers should be organised. Each district should have at least one centre where teachers should receive training during their vacation. The system of arranging vacation courses is in force in many countries, including England.²⁰ We may also note that vacation courses have been recommended to be introduced in China by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational

16. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

17. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, London, p. 108

18. Baron Kikuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

19. *Report of the Committee on Primary and Secondary Education in Bombay*, pp. 37-38.

20. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, London, p. 111.

Experts.²¹ Again, the Committee on Primary and Secondary Education in Bombay put forward the same proposal.²²

4. Another type of vacation course should also be instituted with a view to benefit the trained teachers. The after-care of a trained teacher is as important as his earlier training. Such a course will be very valuable in rousing fresh interest in the teacher, in affording him an opportunity to be acquainted with up-to-date methods of teaching and in getting that intimate personal touch with the outside educational world, which is so important. In addition to this course, regional educational conferences, excursions, debating clubs and educational magazines should also be undertaken in order to infuse new enthusiasm among teachers both trained and untrained.

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS

In order to secure maximum efficiency in teaching with the available number of trained teachers, the following method of distribution may be suggested:

1. In view of the fact that one teacher has to instruct as many as four classes in a single-teacher school, all such schools should be placed in charge of trained teachers as far as possible.

2. In schools with two or more teachers the head-master should be a two-year trained teacher, while his assistant or assistants may be either one-year trained or untrained, the proportion between the number of one-year trained and untrained assistants being equal, as far as possible.

21. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, pp. 57.

22. *Report of the Committee on Primary and Secondary Education in Bombay*, p. 36.

3. However, in the case of a school with only two teachers the head-master may be a one-year trained teacher, if a two-year trained head-master cannot be procured.

PAY OF TEACHERS

Merely the supply of trained teachers without paying them adequately for their work will not ensure efficiency in any system of education. We are fully conscious of the fact that due to financial stringency, it may not be possible for us, at least for a time to come, to offer very attractive salaries to our primary school teachers. But at the same time, the payment of a miserable pittance is bad economy inasmuch as teachers will have neither the enthusiasm nor the energy to be efficient in their task.

Unfortunately, we are not in possession of the latest figures showing the average monthly pay of primary school teachers in the different provinces. However, the following figures from the *Hartog Committee's Report*, though they relate to a period ten years back, will be of interest:

PAY OF TEACHERS²³

| Province | Average Monthly Pay | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----|--|
| | Rs. | as. | |
| Bombay | 47 | 0 | |
| Punjab | 25 | 8 | |
| Central Provinces | 24 | 8 | |
| United Provinces | 18 | 8 | |
| Madras | 15 | 4 | |
| Assam | 14 | 4 | |
| Bihar and Orissa | 11 | 5 | |
| Bengal | 8 | 6 | |

23. See *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency*, for the years 1927-32, p. 101.

It appears that since the Hartog Committee reported, there has been a general reduction in the scales of pay in almost all the provinces. For instance, in Bengal where the average pay was Rs. 8-6-0, the prevailing figure is Rs. 6-8-0²⁴.

The above figures in the table show that in the United Provinces, Madras, Assam, Bihar, and Orissa, and Bengal, the average monthly pay falls below the low figure of Rs. 20. The figure for Bengal is simply shocking. That even this figure is deceptive can be seen from the following quotation taken from the Bengal Government Resolution issued in March 1937 : "The average grant received by a primary school teacher in rural areas from public funds works out at only about Rs. 3-8 per month, or an average of Rs. 41 per annum per teacher. It is said that he receives in addition a sum of Rs. 3 per month from fees and other sources, but whether this is actually received or not is doubted by all who are familiar with the state of affairs in village schools²⁵."

With this deplorable position of teachers in the matter of pay, it is no wonder that wastage in the primary schools of Bengal is the highest in India, being 86 in the case of boys and 96 in the case of girls.

In conclusion, it may be stated that no real progress can be made in bringing education effectively to the masses unless teachers as a body are reasonably paid and contented.

24. *Government of Bengal Resolution, No. 1037 Edn., 9th March 1937, p. 3.*

25. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER IX

THE CURRICULUM THE WARDHA SCHEME EXAMINED

Before suggesting a broad outline of the curriculum that should be followed in our primary schools, an examination of the Wardha Education Scheme¹ advocated by the Zakir Husain Committee would be profitable in view of the fact that the Scheme primarily deals with the subject of curriculum and that the sanction behind the Scheme is very influential, at any rate with the Congress Governments.

THE WARDHA SCHEME DESCRIBED

The subjects included in the curriculum in the Wardha Education Scheme, which contemplates a seven-year course commencing from the age of seven *plus*, are:

- (1) The Basic Craft
- (2) Mathematics
- (3) The Mother Tongue
- (4) Hindustani
- (5) Drawing
- (6) Music
- (7) Social Studies which includes History and Geography
- (8) General Science including Nature Study, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene, Physical Culture, Chemistry, A Knowledge of the Stars, Stories.

1. For the Full Text of the Scheme, See *Educational Reconstruction*, pp. 1-63.

The key-note of the Scheme is education through a basic craft particularly through spinning. "Education, if sound in its principles, should be imparted through some craft or productive work, which should provide the nucleus of all other instruction provided in a school," says the Report of the Committee.

The basic crafts recommended by the Committee are:

- (a) Spinning and Weaving
- (b) Carpentry
- (c) Agriculture
- (d) Fruit and Vegetable Gardening
- (e) Leather Work
- (f) Any other craft for which local and geographical conditions are favourable.

The Committee further says that even where an industry other than spinning and weaving or agriculture is the basic craft, the pupils are expected to attain a minimum knowledge of carding and spinning with the *takli*, and a practical acquaintance of easy agricultural work in the local area.

The predominance given to the basic craft in the curriculum is quite apparent. As the Committee observes, the craft "should extend into the whole content of the school curriculum." It should be specially noted that out of five hours and twenty minutes that are allotted to all the subjects in a day, as many as three hours and twenty minutes are set apart for the teaching of the basic craft.

Such is, in brief, the curriculum suggested by the Wardha Education Committee.

CRITICISM OF THE SCHEME¹

It is the idea of educating the child through a basic craft that really distinguishes the Wardha Scheme from any other educational scheme so far known to the world. No apology is, therefore, needed to examine this aspect of the Scheme critically from the educational point of view.

In the first place, it should be made quite clear that the teaching of a craft in the primary school is practised in many countries including England. The importance of craft-teaching along with Art is universally recognised. The teaching of a craft helps to make "the curriculum of the primary school to be thought of in terms of activity and experience, rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored."³ It makes the class-room interesting and lively and more useful from the point of view of educational merit. As observed in the *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers*, "Imagination and the strengthening of the creative impulse may be fostered just as fully through craftwork as by drawing and picture-making: indeed some children will find greater satisfaction and more profit through handling other tools and material than pencil, brush and paper."⁴

However, the inclusion of craft teaching in the curriculum should be clearly distinguished from education through a basic craft as enunciated in the Wardha Scheme. It is one thing to teach handicraft as one of the subjects and quite another thing to teach all subjects through a basic craft. Moreover, the teaching of the basic craft is given such a predominant place in the Wardha Scheme that it loses its real educational value.

3. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, England, p. 139.

4. *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers*, p. 224.

The predominance is so pronounced that craft teaching is sure to degenerate into a worst form of child labour. To say that a child of seven should devote three hours and twenty minutes a day to spinning for 24 days in a month in order to receive education through a craft is not to impart any education as such but to call child labour education and the factory a school.

Handicraft in the primary stage should only have a limited scope and should form only a minor part of the curriculum. This fact has been sufficiently recognised by the Hadow Committee when they recommend that only three or four hours a week should be given to handicraft with drawing in the primary school.⁵ The words *with drawing* may be specially noted. It may not be wrong to hold that under the Wardha Scheme, which expects that the child should attain sufficient manual skill in the basic craft in order that its products may have a marketable value so as to cover at least a major portion of the teacher's salary, education through craft in the primary school has taken the form of vocational education.

All educationists agree that vocational education should commence only in the secondary stage. As Robert Dottrens, a great educationist, says: "The elementary school does not concern itself with vocational guidance, properly so called."⁶ The same view is expressed in another way by the Committee on Vocational Education in India when they maintain that, "nothing is more certain than that a satisfactory vocational education must be based on an adequate general education; we regard this as axiomatic."⁷ It is thus clear that primary

5. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, London p. 197.

6. Robert Dottrens, *The New Education in Austria*, p. 91.

7. *Report on Vocational Education in India*, p. 55.

education under the Wardha Scheme becomes a bad type of vocational education, because it is not based on an adequate general education. That is the reason why we may aptly call it child labour.

Another serious defect in the Wardha Scheme is that carding, spinning on *takli* and agricultural work are made compulsory subjects. Educationally it is quite unsound to compel a child to learn a particular craft leading to his profession in life, especially when the child is too young to decide his own mind. As the Hadow Committee would put it, "The elaboration of craft practice is more particularly the concern of the secondary teacher, because, after the age of eleven, the special aptitudes of children can be discerned more clearly than in their earlier years."⁸ This view is also shared by the Committee on Vocational Education in India. They state that "it is most undesirable to commit a child to a particular career until he is old enough for his inclinations and his aptitudes to have been ascertained."⁹ Under the Wardha Scheme the child's aptitudes and inclinations have no place at all. For the child is too young during the primary stage to show his inclinations, and secondly he is under an obligation to learn spinning and agricultural work, however much he may dislike them.

The third drawback in the Wardha Scheme is that its authors have completely forgotten the educational value of craftsmanship. The practising of a craft gives pleasure to a child only when it produces a complete object. To put it in the words of the Hadow Committee, "the jobs which

8. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, Board of Education, England, p. 196.

9. *Report of the Committee on Vocational Education in India*, p. 55.

they undertake should be complete jobs."¹⁰ For instance, the craft of modelling in paper and cardboard should ultimately lead to complete objects like calendars, writing pads, blotters, cases, bound books, etc. Under the Wardha Scheme, such a process is unconceivable because the child, during the first five years, is expected to produce only yarn which is not the final object in the process, the "complete job" being the production of cloth.

On the whole, it appears that the authors of the Wardha Scheme are only concerned with the object of exacting labour from children and not with the object of educating them.

When once it can be shown that the Wardha Education Scheme is educationally unsound, it is needless to dwell on its economic aspect. Hence we do not wish to discuss this question in these pages.

OUTLINES OF THE CURRICULUM

Having explained the unsoundness of the curriculum as proposed in the Wardha Scheme, let us proceed to enunciate the broad outlines of the curriculum which we should adopt in our primary schools and also the principles on which it should be based.

Taking into consideration that a four-year primary course is suggested elsewhere, the curriculum may include a number of activities and subjects which may conveniently be grouped under the following heads :

- (1) Language (Reading and Writing)
- (2) Arithmetic
- (3) History and Geography
- (4) Nature Study

10. *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, p. 196.

- (5) Health and Physical Training
- (6) Art and Craft
- (7) Music

It is, however, not possible neither desirable to lay down any strict rule as to the exact number of the subjects which should be taken in a particular school, in addition to the essential subjects like Language and Arithmetic. The curriculum must vary to some extent with the qualification of teachers. This principle is specially applicable to small schools, taught by only one or two teachers. In such schools there may be no teacher on the staff capable of dealing adequately with some particular subject or subjects. When this is the case, it may be wise to omit the subject altogether rather than to teach it badly or half-heartedly.

With regard to the syllabus in each subject, the following general principles should be kept in mind when prescribing the exact details in the syllabus :

(1) The scheme of studies should be related to the life and surroundings of both parents and pupils. This is particularly so in the case of rural schools.

(2) The syllabus should be as simple as possible in each subject. Over-burdening of the syllabus will do more harm than good. A heavy syllabus will make pupils dull instead of intelligent.

(3) The aim of the primary school should not be to impart definite agricultural or industrial training, but to give the children a preliminary general training which will make them intelligent citizens, and particularly will protect them in their daily transactions with land-lords, merchants, bankers and such other persons. The children should be able to express themselves fully in their own language both orally and in writing, and to do ordinary accounting.

The following suggestions on the teaching of the various branches of the curriculum may be noted:

Language: The pupil should learn to read, write and understand his mother tongue containing words in *ordinary use*, should gain fluency in expressing his own thoughts and should attain the ability to summarise his acquired knowledge.

History: History should be taught in the form of simple stories. Stories from the *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata*, mediaeval romances, and great personalities furnish obvious instances. History may not be confined to Indian stories. At the end of the course the child should be able to read a simple history book with some real understanding. Storing of facts should be discouraged.

Geography: Children should not begin geography by learning definitions nor by memorising names of places, mountains and rivers. Formal geography should be deferred to a later stage. As children love folk tales and stories of the people of other lands, they should be told to them. Geography can be taught easily by means of pictures and magic lantern slides. Local Geography is also fundamental.

Arithmetic: Examples should be brief and numerous rather than long and complex. Sums containing long figures should be avoided.

Nature Study: It is not the minor details associated with one or two plants, birds or animals which should matter, so much as the general recognition by the children of the wealth of life around and its various forms and manifestations.

Health and Physical Training: Physical Training should include outdoor games suited to the school play-ground, dancing, swimming and other forms of recreative capacity. Children should be graded for physical training according to

sex and age; and individual children of very poor physique should be dealt with separately. With regard to health education, the study and practice of health should form part of the every day life in the school by keeping clean the class-room, equipment, etc.

Art and Craft: The child should be encouraged to draw things which have an attraction for him, such as human figures and animals. It does not matter if he draws these figures crudely.

The craft should be simple, which requires only soft tools. The following crafts among others may be suggested:

- (1) Modelling in paper and card-board
- (2) Needle-work including knitting
- (3) Basketry (of grass)
- (4) Clay-modelling
- (5) Weaving in coloured thread and wool
- (6) Gardening
- (7) Any other simple craft

Music: Children should be made to learn a considerable number of songs of a simple character. This would develop in them the musical sense. Songs should be chosen carefully. As the Hadow Committee says, "Good dear melody and good poetry are the essentials." Folk songs may be strongly recommended. The aim should be to learn many songs, rather than to practise a few with a view to finished performance. Best results can be obtained if children accompany music with movement.

CHAPTER X

OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

I. SCHOOL-BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

What has been said in the matter of trained teachers elsewhere holds equally good in the matter of decent school buildings and equipment. To insist, as is often being done,¹ that decent school houses are a pre-requisite to the introduction of universal mass education would be wrong. It is undeniable that a majority of our existing school buildings are ill-ventilated and ill-equipped. Every effort to improve them must be made at the earliest opportunity. But mere improvement in buildings without further expansion of education would lead us nowhere. Both expansion and improvement must go hand in hand. The fact must be recognised that, if education has to spread rapidly so as to liquidate illiteracy from the land within a reasonable period of time, it is impossible for a programme of building "decent" school houses to keep pace with the increase in the number of schools. We shall therefore have to be satisfied with poorly ventilated buildings for a time.

Almost every nation on earth began her drive against illiteracy with ill-ventilated and badly equipped buildings. Many of us may be surprised to know that schools were held even under railway arches in England.² Writing about the school houses of England in 1923-24, we are told that many of

1. See *The Speeches of G. K. Gokhale*, pp. 674-75; and See *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, September 18, 1937, p. 1158.

2. G. A. N. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, p. 7.

them were "buildings in every stage of dirt and disrepair" "with faulty ventilation, bad lighting."³ The primary schools of Germany were "poorly lighted and ill-ventilated" even as late as 1903.⁴ In Canada, "In many places the old log building with its primitive equipment" still survived in 1914.⁵ In France, "the walls of the class room were bare: and other accommodation was very inadequate."⁶ The elementary schools of Russia, as discribed in 1926, were "typical village schools, with old, inadequate equipment."⁷ It is important to remember that all these countries wanted to spread literacy first, and having spread it, to take steps so equip the schools properly and raise the level of education generally.

Our financial resources being meagre, the ideal that every primary school should have its own specially constructed decent building is impossible of its early realisation. It is, therefore, necessary that the following steps among others should be taken in order to solve the question of school buildings economically and quickly.

1. *Rented Buildings*: Wherever the school authorities find it difficult to construct their own buildings classes should be held in rented houses. Even the present advance in primary education in India would have been impossible without rented buildings which form a large proportion among the existing buildings. For instance, of the total number of

3. *Report of the Education Advisory Committee of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, England*, pp. 60-61.

4. J. C. Greenough, *The Evolution of the Elementary Schools of Great Britain*, p. 148.

5. Peter Sandiford, *Comparative Education*, p. 368.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

7. Scott Nearing, *Education in Soviet Russia*, p. 36.

schools in the Bombay Presidency, 21 per cent are housed in rented buildings.⁶ It may be interesting to note in this connection that the Interim Ministry of Bombay, which proposed to open 1,966 new primary schools during the year 1937-38, had decided to launch their programme of expansion with only rented buildings.⁷

2. *Public Places* : Public temples, mosques, *chāvdis* and *dharamshālās* should be utilised as school buildings wherever it is convenient to do so. As pointed out by the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, it may be that some difficulty is experienced in admitting children of the untouchable classes to schools held in temples.¹⁰ But this difficulty can be got over by enacting necessary legislation compelling the trustees of public temples to allow the school authorities to hold classes in temples. There is nothing wrong in taking such a bold step, especially in view of the fact that most of the Hindu temples were originally built both for religious and educational purposes. In fact, schools were held in temples as a rule in ancient India. It may be pointed out that in China schools are located in temples, they being numerous, especially in towns.¹¹

3. *Open-air-schools* : In those areas where rainfall is scanty such as in Sind and the Punjab, the holding of schools under the shade of trees should be encouraged as a temporary measure in all cases wherein buildings cannot be procured.

8. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 46.

9. *White Paper of the Programme of the Council of Ministers, Bombay*, p. 9.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

11. *The Reorganisation of Education in China*, p. 80.

True, an open-air school has its obvious limitations, but such a school is any day better than no school at all. It is stated that "In Ireland only up to the other day, teachers used to teach their pupils under a bush."¹² It may also be pointed out that some schools were actually held under trees in the United Provinces during the last decade.¹³

II. EDUCATION OF GIRLS

During the year 1936, there were 32,618 separate primary schools for girls in British India,¹⁴ with 1,391,060 girls reading in them.¹⁵ This, however, does not mean that girls do not attend mixed schools in those places where schools for girls do not exist. The number of girls reading in mixed primary schools was 1,114, 017 during the same year.¹⁶

The opening of separate schools for girls in those places where the number of girls attending them is not sufficiently large, is not in the best economic interest of the country. Small uneconomic girls' schools should therefore be abolished and common schools be organised. Separate schools for girls may, however, be allowed only in towns and cities where the teacher can get his full compliment of pupils. As the Hadow Committee reported, "In rural schools it was impracticable to separate the sexes, but in many urban areas the division into boys' and girls' schools worked very well and was an administrative convenience."¹⁷

12 See *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, September, 18, 1937, p. 1158.

13. *General Report on Public Instruction in United Provinces*, for the quinquennium ending 31st March, 1922, p. 88.

14. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 58.

15. *Ibid*, p. 55.

16. *Ibid*.

17. *The Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School*, London, p. 54

It is a general complaint in India that "Local bodies are lukewarm enthusiasts where girls' education is concerned."¹⁸ We are officially told that sometimes old and inefficient men teachers, who have been found unfit in boys' schools, are transferred to girls' schools.¹⁹ This brings us to the question of teachers in girls' schools. In this respect, the following suggestion made by an Inspectress of Girls' Schools in Bombay is worthy of being carried into effect. She writes: "Apart from the fact that more women teachers should be recruited for girls' schools, it is also necessary that a certain number of female teachers should be appointed in the boys' schools in which girls are studying in the absence of any separate girls' school in the village, for the wastage so far as girls are concerned, is particularly large in such schools. The mere fact that there were responsible women teachers on the premises would induce parents to keep their daughters longer in the school."²⁰ Even in boys' schools, women teachers should be appointed as far as possible, as women make better teachers than men in the primary stage.

Again, in India the education of girls should receive greater attention than the education of boys, particularly in view of the wide divergence that exists between the literacy figures for women and the literacy figures for men. Also from a much wider point of view the education of girls is more important than the education of boys since it has been acknowledged that if the mother in the home is educated, there is far more likelihood of the rapid spread of education among the children of both sexes.

18. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 55.

19. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 93.

20. *Ibid.*

III. EDUCATION OF UNTOUCHABLE CLASSES

Separate schools for the pupils of the untouchable and other backward classes should be discouraged from educational, social and economic point of view. These schools do not usually provide efficient teaching. They are also uneconomical for want of sufficient number of students of school age in many localities. Lastly these separate schools are to be condemned socially, as they tend to increase the feeling of segregation. The State should take the bold step of compelling school authorities to admit children of the untouchable classes to ordinary elementary schools. It is encouraging that the Government of Madras is taking the drastic step of imposing on the managements of schools as a condition of recognition, the duty of enrolling pupils belonging to these classes.²¹ However, in spite of the fact that School Boards in the Bombay Presidency are turning the special schools into ordinary schools, there are still 431 such schools in the Presidency with 16,589 pupils.²² What is worse is that the number of special schools is increasing instead of decreasing in some provinces. For instance, in Bihar and Orissa the number of such schools rose from 373 with 10,609 pupils to 388 with 11,531 pupils during the year 1935-36.²³ It is, therefore, necessary that special efforts should be made to abolish these schools by bringing the children to common schools.

21. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 83.

22. *Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 133.

23. *Report on progress of Education in Bihar and Orissa, for the year 1935-36*, p. 41.

IV. THE MAINTENANCE OF LITERACY

It is officially stated that 39 per cent of the children educated in India relapse into illiteracy within five years of their leaving schools.²⁴ Even under a system of compulsory mass education in force, there will be a considerable relapse into illiteracy unless proper remedies are taken to stop this waste. For those who have barely become literate, the provision for the maintenance of literacy is as important as the provision of elementary schools. The capacity of a child to read should be developed into a habit of reading after he leaves school. This can be secured by adopting the following measures among others :

Travelling Libraries: Simple and cheap literature in Indian languages should be produced under State encouragement and patronage as is being done in Russia, and it should be made available to every citizen through the village teacher who should act as the librarian.

A system of free travelling libraries should also be established. In this respect, the example of Baroda State is inspiring and worthy of emulation. This State has a population of 24 lakhs, of whom 82.09 per cent were served by the Government Libraries and Reading Rooms during the year 1937. Of 2,920 villages in the State 1,100 were provided with free libraries. In the case of towns, as many as 46 out of 50 towns possess libraries. Again, the Travelling Section of the Library Department circulated 22,688 books among 10,097 readers by sending out 511 boxes to 223 centres in 1937.²⁵ By adopting these measures Baroda has achieved very satisfactory results in the matter of maintenance of literacy.

24. *Progress of Education in India, 1912-17*, p. 122

25. *Baroda Administration Report, 1936-37*, pp. 161-63.

Night Classes : In many countries night schools have proved a very effective means of preventing the loss of literacy, or of recovering those who have relapsed. Though a few adult education night classes are being organised in India, the holding of classes for the benefit of grown-up children, who have left elementary schools, is practically unknown.

It may happen that the children, after a hard day's toil, will have no enthusiasm to attend night classes. It is, therefore, essential that the classes should be made not only instructive but also quite interesting and entertaining with a view to attracting students. Such means as the cinema and magic lantern slides will serve the purpose wonderfully. As Riappo, the Russian Educator, said: "The Cinema works in the villages. It is far more effective than in the cities." ²⁶

CHAPTER XI

ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL

During the years 1918 to 1920 the Government of India were busy formulating schemes for the successful working of the new Government of India Act, passed in 1918. During those years the provincial Governments in India felt the need for universal education and passed measures giving powers to the local authorities to introduce a compulsory system of primary education in their respective areas. Though these Acts differed in different provinces with regard to the power and control given to the local authorities, it can be generally said that the control over primary education was transferred to the local bodies, the Governments retaining the right of supervision and inspection. Thus for instance, it was clearly stated in section 4 of the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1923, that the School Board shall exercise and perform such powers and duties as may be enacted "subject to the general control of the local authority." From this it becomes evident that the general control lay with the local authority and not with the Government. The only important power which the Government have retained were those of approving the appointment of the School Board administrative officer, regulating the scales of pay of teachers, fixing the proportion of untrained teachers, prescribing the curricula and sanctioning schemes of expansion and of compulsion.

INEFFICIENCY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Let us now see how far this devolution of authority and control was properly exercised by the local bodies with a view to developing an efficient system of primary education. In

regard to the efficiency of the School Boards, as they were constituted under the Acts, serious doubts have been cast in many quarters.

A large volume of both official and non-official opinion is almost unanimous in declaring that the way, in which the Boards discharged their functions all these years, was unsatisfactory. It is said that the quality of instruction has greatly suffered on account of the inefficiency of management.

Let Provincial Reports themselves speak on this point :

Bombay : "The working of the Primary Education Act continues to be as unsatisfactory as ever.....Every item of administration is looked at from the party point of view and the educational aspect is conspicuous by its absence."¹

The Punjab : "The interest of most boards in education extends almost entirely to the teachers only and not to the kind of education imparted."²

The Central Provinces : "A listless and incoherent atmosphere generally surrounds the educational administration of local bodies and the Inspectorate in its advisory capacity has to harp on the same thing again and again with no prospect of things ever being set right."³

Finally the Finance Minister to the Government of Bombay, said : "The agency through which we are at present bound to spread primary education has betrayed many grave evils and has in this sense proved a complete failure."⁴

1. *Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, 1935-36*, p. 56.

2. *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab, 1934-35*, p. 31.

3. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 19.

4. *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, August 17, 1937, p. 57.

It is certainly an exaggeration to maintain that the agency has proved a complete failure. But at the same time, it is true that the transfer of control of primary instruction to local bodies has not given satisfactory results, and the hopes with which the measure was enacted have not all been realised. In some respects, it has resulted in grievous disappointment.

TRANSFER OF EXCESSIVE CONTROL

This failure should be attributed to a number of causes, the most important of them being the transference of the control without the retention by Governments sufficient powers that were necessary for ensuring the efficiency of the system. As early as 1904, the Government of India in their Resolution emphasised this important aspect of school administration. The Government of India stated in unmistakable terms: "In withdrawing from direct management, it is further essential that Government should retain a general control, by means of efficient inspection, over all public educational institutions."

Unfortunately, this sound advice of the Central Government was neglected by Provincial Governments at the time of enacting the Primary Education Acts. The mistake was not realised then. But after the measure was put into operation and was worked out for a considerable length of time, it became increasingly clear that it was wrong on the part of Governments in not retaining adequate power of control. Commenting on this, the Hartog Committee remarked in 1929: "We think it is to be regretted that a system of Primary Education which has been framed on sound lines should have been handed over to the control of local bodies, without the insertion in the statutes or rules of sufficient safeguards to ensure that Govern-

ment, working through its Ministers and the Education Department, would be able at least to guide future developments".⁶

A strong body of public opinion, which is dissatisfied with the working of the Acts, urges that all control should be transferred back to Governments. They even doubt whether education should remain any longer the training ground for local administrators. Further, they contend that now the Provincial Governments have become responsible to popular will and directly control the policy of their departments, the time has come to revise our ideas of public administration and decentralisation. They would, therefore, prefer that primary education is completely controlled departmentally and not through the local bodies.

On the other hand, there is an equally strong body of opinion which holds that "with all its faults a democratic control of education is to be infinitely preferred to a bureaucratic control".⁷ They maintain, as pointed out by Calvin Coolidge, that "No method of procedure has ever been devised by which liberty could be divorced from local self-government. No plan of centralisation has ever been adopted which did not result in bureaucracy, tyranny, inflexibility, reaction and decline".⁸

The correct attitude that we all should take in this matter of control of education appears to lie somewhere midway between the above two extreme views. It would

6 Quoted in *The Reviews of Administration in the Bombay Presidency*, No. XIV, Education, June 1933, p. 21.

7. Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta in *The Report of the Select Committee on a Bill to Amend the Bombay Primary Education Act, 1923*, published in *The Bombay Government Gazette*, 15th April, 1938, p. 393.

8. *Ibid.*

be wrong to deprive the local bodies of all their authority, powers and control over primary education, in view of the fact that it is always desirable that the public should be brought into intimate touch with the national system of education. Secondly, as time advances public opinion will begin to exercise a sufficient check on the evils which are usually attendant on the devolution of authority in an earlier stage. We are told that even in England School Boards were unpopular and inefficient in their initial stages. It is clearly stated: "Well might Mr. Sidney Webb remark that the smaller School Boards had made themselves hated and even the sober Mr. Asquith admit that the School Board system has not been a success."⁹

It is also equally true that the country will not be benefitted if the local bodies run the system of public education in an inefficient manner. The real remedy, therefore, lies in curtailing the powers of the local boards in such a way as to retain in them only the authority to manage the primary schools, the Government possessing sufficient rights of effective control and supervision. In this connection, the following remarks made by the Indian Statutory Commission are full of significance: ".....it is now evident that the action of some provincial Governments was both precipitate and excessive. It has tied the hands of ministerial departments and, however much they may now realise the necessity of wise reforms and true economy, they find themselves deprived of that effective power of supervision, direction and ultimate control which, even in countries where self-government by local bodies is most highly developed, is regarded as essential. In England, where the principle of decentralisation is honoured and local self-government is strong and highly developed, much more power is reserved to

9. G. A. N. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution*, p. 68.

and exercised by the Department, acting through its permanent educational advisers, than in India."¹⁰

INADEQUATE GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION

Another reason why the Primary Education Acts did not work well is found in the fact that even that little control which Governments retained was not sufficiently exercised. Governments were negligent of their duty of supervision in not providing an adequate central inspecting staff. No doubt Governments could exercise some control by refusing or withholding grants to local bodies in case of misuse of powers or misapplication of funds. But it was not possible for them to make effective use of this instrument of control for want of an adequate inspecting staff to investigate matters on the spot and see where things were wrong. Moreover, the course of reducing or withholding grants is open to grave objection, since it means the interruption of the education of children without removing the cause of trouble. That the Government inspectorate was quite inadequate in all provinces excepting Madras, can be gathered from provincial reports and official statements made from time to time. For instance, "The skeleton staff retained by Government for the inspection of primary schools," says *The Reviews of Administration in the Bombay Presidency*, "is wholly insufficient to carry out a thorough and efficient inspection."¹¹

It was a grave mistake on the part of Governments in not realising the importance of effective supervision. As the Indian Statutory Commission remarked: "In the early days of a public system of education, and also in periods of rapid

10. *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, Vol I, p 397.

11. *Reviews of Administration in the Bombay Presidency*, No. XIV, Education, June 1933, p. 10

expansion— particularly when administrative responsibility is being extensively confined to inexperienced local bodies—the protective function of independent inspection is specially important. It is only through such inspection that Governments and Ministers can guard against large waste of money, which, if permitted, will quickly exhaust resources and cripple all endeavours to build up a good system.”¹²

THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNALISM

The factor which contributed to the failure of the Primary Education Acts most was the spirit of communalism, which had already run riot in the administration. It is simply depressing to read reports after reports complaining that a number of School Boards have succumbed to this evil. Many a time educational merits were sacrificed at the altar of communal considerations. This is particularly true in the case of Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The failure to prescribe any educational qualifications for the membership of the School Board has often resulted in entrusting the control and management of schools to inexperienced and uneducated persons quite unfit for the job. The result was that “The amateur in education ran amuck and the professional looked on helpless— his advice not asked for or required,” as rightly pointed out in one of the official reports.¹³ Such a state of affairs increased the inefficiency of our School Boards and consequently of the schools.

It is, however, gratifying that this mistake has now been realised, though not quite sufficiently. The Government of

12. *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Volume I, p. 399.*

13. *Education in India in 1934-35, p. 19.*

Bombay, in amending the Primary Education Act quite recently have prescribed some educational qualifications for the membership of School Boards, though the qualifications are not sufficiently high enough inasmuch as the passing of the Anglo-Vernacular 3rd Standard would enable a person to stand for the election on the School Board.

DEPENDENCE OF SCHOOL INSPECTORS

Another reason why the efficiency of our primary schools has suffered after the transfer of control to Local Bodies is the unhappy position in which the inspecting staff was placed. Under the Acts, the local authorities are entitled to appoint their own inspecting staff. Such an arrangement is wrong in principle in so far as it deprives the inspectors of their independence. It is officially stated that the School Board inspecting officers are completely under the Boards and have really no voice even in educational matters. "Their suggestions and reports are either not free and voluntary or they are ignored."¹⁴

Secondly, in certain provinces as in the United Provinces, the Secretary of the District Educational Committee is one of the Government inspectors for the schools in that area. It is obvious that an inspector who is placed under such a position cannot work with the maximum of efficiency as he is called upon to serve two masters. What is still more unfortunate is that the Government, we are told, is under a statutory obligation to transfer the inspector from the District, if the Education Committee of which he is the Secretary passes a resolution of no confidence in him. "This is an intolerable position in which to place an inspector," as rightly

14. *Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, 1935-36, pp. 56-57.*

pointed out by Mr. Wood, the Director of Intelligence, Board of Education, England.¹⁵

It is therefore, necessary that amendments in the Act should be made so as to get rid of this undesirable situation in the interest of independent inspection. Similarly, the power vested in local authorities to appoint their own inspection officers should be taken away, as has been done in Bombay under the Primary Education (Amendment) Act, 1938.

INADEQUACY OF INSPECTING STAFF

The mere independence of the inspecting staff will not ensure proper inspection unless the number of inspectors is adequate enough to cope with their work efficiently. One of the weakest points in our system of primary education from the very beginning has been the inadequacy of inspecting officers. It is officially stated that in most provinces schools, particularly those in rural areas, are not visited more than once in a year owing to inadequate supervising staff.¹⁶ This must necessarily result in schools being irregular in their working, especially if they are not under well-organised management. Much of the public money spent on primary schools will be wasted if schools are not properly supervised with a view to ensure their efficiency.

In spite of the fact that the number of inspecting officers is comparatively the largest in Madras in the whole of British India, the Government of Madras in their Resolution of June 1937 state that "sound educational policy dictates that a further strengthening of the inspectorate should be undertaken immediately."¹⁷ This clearly shows the extent to which other

15. *Report of Vocational Education in India*, p. 29.

16. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 17

17. *Government of Madras Resolution*, G. O. No. 1398, 26th June, 1937, p. 5.

provinces lack in providing an adequate number of inspecting officers. It is, therefore, essential that other provincial Governments should take immediate steps in this direction.

PROVINCIAL BOARD OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Lastly, it may be stated that the setting up of a Provincial Board of Primary Education, as has been provided for in the Bombay Primary Education (Amendment) Act, 1938, should commend itself to other Provincial Governments. The powers and duties of the Bombay Board are to examine and recommend schemes for the organisation, co-ordination and expansion of primary education and for the correlation of primary education with the system of education as a whole in the province. The Board has also power to advise the Provincial Government generally on all matters connected with primary education.

CHAPTER XII

THE PROBLEM OF FINANCE

The purpose of this chapter is to estimate roughly the cost of financing a scheme of compulsory and free primary education for the whole of British India and to suggest ways and means for finding out the required sum to meet this cost. It must be mentioned here that Education is a provincial subject under the new Government of India Act, and hence any scheme of financing primary education will have to be worked out separately for each province. However, a rough estimate for the whole of British India may prove useful in many respects.

ESTIMATED COST

Various estimates with regard to the annual cost of educating a child during the primary stage have been made by different persons from time to time. As early as in the first decade of this century, Mr. Orange, the then Director-General of Education in India, estimated that the average cost of educating a child would be Rs. 5 a year, an estimate which was accepted as fairly correct by the late Mr. Gokhale.¹ The same figure of Rs. 5 was also worked out as the proper estimate by some Christian Missionary educationists in the second decade.² Very recently, the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay, in calculating the annual cost of providing primary education to an additional number of 2,15,000 children, estimated that a sum of Rs. 15,50,000 would be required for the purpose.³ This works out as Rs. 7 per pupil.

1. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, pp. 675-76.

2. See *Village Education in India*, p. 180.

3. *White Paper on the Programme of the Council of Ministers*, Bombay, p. 9.

According to the latest available official figures, the average annual cost per pupil in the primary school is Rs. 7-12-0 in the case of boys and Rs. 9-6-2 in the case of girls for the whole of British India. There is however wide disparity in the cost in the different provinces, as can be seen from the following table:

AVERAGE ANNUAL COST PER PUPIL ⁴

(Figures for 1935)

| Province | Cost | | |
|---|------|-----|-----|
| | Rs. | as. | ps. |
| Bombay | 16 | 8 | 3 |
| North-West Frontier Province ... | 12 | 13 | 2 |
| Punjab | 10 | 13 | 5 |
| Central Provinces and Berar ... | 10 | 5 | 2 |
| Madras | 8 | 6 | 5 |
| United Provinces | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| Bihar and Orissa | 6 | 0 | 5 |
| Assam | 4 | 9 | 7 |
| Bengal | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| British India (Including other Areas) | 7 | 15 | 8 |

The main reason for this disparity is to be found in the difference of pay of teachers. In the case of Bengal, the cost is the lowest because the average monthly salary of a teacher there is only Rs. 6-8-0, which is the lowest figure in India. Considering the fact that the pay of teachers in Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa, which is very low, will have to be greatly raised, the figures showing the average cost in these provinces cannot serve us as a proper guide for the future. So also the high cost for Bombay cannot be taken as a proper index.

4. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 12.

The cost in the remaining provinces varies between Rs. 12-13-2 and Rs. 7-7-2. The average figure for British India, which is Rs. 7-15-8, may therefore be taken as sufficiently representative.

This figure of Rs. 7-15-8 is bound to come down since the present system of education is expensive in many respects. As Sir George Anderson in his Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab for 1925-26 said, compulsion is an economy.⁵ Further, by carrying into effect all the suggestions that are made in the preceding chapters the average annual cost can still further be reduced. By limiting the duration of primary course to four years, by increasing the number of pupils per teacher, by adopting the system of part-time instruction and travelling teachers, and by abolishing the small separate schools meant for girls and for special communities, the cost of educating a child in India can be made lower than the present cost. We may, therefore, safely presume that the average annual cost per pupil would come to about Rs. 6 instead of Rs. 7-15-8 as at present.

It must, however, be remembered that the above figure is only an estimate. The exact cost may slightly vary in the different provinces owing to the different local circumstances. Again, the non-recurring expenditure that would be required mainly on buildings and equipment is not included in this estimate.

Now considering 12 per cent of the population as of school age in British India, the number of children of both sexes to be educated under a compulsory scheme would be 326 lakhs, the total population of British India being 27 crores according to the Census Report of 1931. Taking Rs. 6 as the average annual cost per pupil, the recurring

5. *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab, 1925-26*, p. 13.

cost of educating 326 lakhs of boys and girls will be about 1956 lakhs (19 crores and 56 lakhs) of rupees.

Of this estimated sum of 1956 lakhs of rupees, 820 lakhs (682 lakhs on boys' schools and 138 lakhs on girls' schools) are at present being spent on primary education in British India according to the latest available official figures.⁶ After deducting this amount of 820 lakhs of rupees from the estimated sum of 1956 lakhs, the balance left amounts to 1136 lakhs of rupees. We are required to find out this sum annually in order to finance a scheme of universal mass education. The position may briefly be put as follows :

| | In Lakhs of Rupees | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----|-------|
| Estimated sum required | ... | ... | 1956 |
| Sum spent to-day... | ... | ... | 820 |
| | | | <hr/> |
| Amount to be newly found out | ... | ... | 1136 |

HOW TO MEET THE COST

Proposal I

In view of the fact that the proportion of expenditure on education to the total Government expenditure in many provinces is comparatively small and in others lamentably low, our first proposal is that this proportion should be raised. If we are really serious about undertaking any scheme of compulsory education, each provincial Government should spend at least 16 per cent of its total expenditure on education. That in some provinces this proportion falls below 16 per cent is evident from the following table showing the budgeted

6. *Education in India in 1935-36*, pp. 122 and 125.

percentage of expenditure on education to the total Government expenditure for 1938-39:

EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION ⁷

(From Provincial Budgets for 1938-39)

| Province | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Madras | 16.42 |
| Assam | 16.37 |
| United Provinces | 15.99 |
| Bombay | 15.30 |
| Punjab | 14.36 |
| Bihar | 14.05 |
| Orissa | 13.62 |
| N. W. F. Province | 12.37 |
| C. P. and Berar | 12.02 |
| Bengal | 10.77 |
| Sind | 8.53 |

If the percentage is raised to 16 wherever it falls below that figure, the expenditure on education will increase considerably in the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa. It will increase by nearly one-fourth in the N. W. F. Province, and C. P. and Berar, by nearly one-half in Bengal, and will be twice in the case of Sind. This increase, however, will not help the expansion of primary education unless the money is spent only for that purpose instead of on secondary or university education.

By accepting this proposal, an additional sum of Rs. 190 lakhs will be secured for primary education in British India,

7. Taken from *The Servant of India*, April 14, 1938, p.196.

the different provinces contributing their quota^a as shown below :

(In Round Figures)

| Province | | | In Lakhs of Rs. |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----------------|
| Bengal | ... | ... | 78 |
| C. P. and Berar | ... | ... | 32 |
| Sind | ... | ... | 29 |
| Punjab | ... | ... | 26 |
| Bihar | ... | ... | 12 |
| N. W. F. Province | ... | ... | 8 |
| Orissa | ... | ... | 5 |
| | | | — |
| Total | | | 190 |

PROPOSAL II

Our second proposal is that out of the total Government expenditure on education, at least 60 per cent, if not more, should be spent on primary education, as is being done in other countries. It is to be regretted that there exists a very marked disproportion between the sums given for primary education in India and those given in other countries. The usual allocation for primary education is about two-thirds to three-quarters of the total expenditure on education in most of the countries. This can be made evident from the following figures for a few countries :

PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE ON PRIMARY EDUCATION^b

| Country | | | Percentage on Primary Education |
|------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------------|
| England | ... | ... | 68·2 |
| North Ireland | ... | ... | 67·4 |
| Irish Free State | ... | ... | 73·9 |

8. This table has been prepared from the figures given in the *Year-Book of Education*, 1937.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| New Zealand | ... | ... | ... | 62.1 |
| AUSTRALIA : | | | | |
| New South Wales | ... | ... | ... | 70.8 |
| Victoria | ... | ... | ... | 67.3 |
| Queensland | ... | ... | ... | 78.4 |
| South Australia | ... | ... | ... | 59.8 |
| Western Australia | ... | ... | ... | 79.4 |
| Tasmania | ... | ... | ... | 72.4 |

The corresponding percentage for British India was only 33.9 during the year 1935.⁹

The following figures for 1935, showing the percentage of expenditure on primary education to the total Government expenditure on education in the different provinces, should also be noted :

EXPENDITURE ON PRIMARY EDUCATION¹⁰

| Province | | | | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Bombay | ... | ... | ... | 62.7 |
| Madras | ... | ... | ... | 53.7 |
| Assam | ... | ... | ... | 30.1 |
| United Provinces | ... | ... | ... | 29.9 |
| Central Provinces and Berar | ... | ... | ... | 29.1 |
| Bengal | ... | ... | ... | 19.2 |
| Punjab | ... | ... | ... | 19.1 |
| North-West Frontier Province | ... | ... | ... | 18.3 |
| Bihar and Orissa | ... | ... | ... | 1.6 |

It is only in Bombay that more than 60 per cent of the expenditure is spent on primary education. Madras comes

9. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 12.

10. *Ibid.*, 1934-35, p. 13.

next with 53 per cent. The percentage in the remaining provinces is quite unsatisfactory, being scandalously low in Bihar and Orissa, where only 1·6 per cent is spent on primary education.

If the proportion is raised to 60 per cent, as it ought to be, there will be considerable increase in expenditure on primary education in Madras. The provinces of Assam, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces will get double the amount from the Government to be spent on primary education, while Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province will receive thrice the present expenditure. The position of Bihar and Orissa will improve beyond all calculations. It may be noted here that the Government of Bihar and Orissa have spent 18·2 per cent of their expenditure on education on Direction and Inspection, thus starving primary schools completely.¹¹

Let us now proceed to see what amount our primary schools would receive, if 60 per cent of the Government expenditure on education is spent on primary instruction. The total Government expenditure on education in British India being Rs. 1184 lakhs,¹² our primary schools would be entitled to get a sum of Rs. 710 lakhs on the 60 per cent basis. The actual sum which is now being spent by Government on primary education is about Rs. 400 lakhs (Rs. 343 lakhs on schools for boys and Rs. 57 lakhs on schools for girls).¹³ Thus, an additional sum of Rs. 310 lakhs could be found out by raising the percentage of Government expenditure to 60.

It may be pointed out that in spite of all the talk about the expansion of primary education, Governments are spending more and more on higher education at the expense of our

11. *Education in India in 1934-35*, p. 13.

12. *Ibid.*, 1935-36, p. 9.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 122 and 125.

primary schools. For instance, 25.6 per cent of the increase from Government expenditure during the year 1935-36 went to University education, 29.8 per cent to secondary schools and only 13.3 per cent to primary schools.¹⁴ This is about annual recurring expenditure. The same can be said with regard to non-recurring expenditure such as on buildings and equipment. As Sir George Anderson, the ex-Director of Public Instruction for the Punjab rightly remarked: "Government seemed willing to spend many lakhs of rupees on college buildings, on the provision of hostels in Lahore for the convenience of the rich.....but no effort was made to provide for the necessities of the poor in the shape of school buildings."¹⁵ What is true of the Punjab is also true of other provinces more or less.

It is to be greatly regretted that when only about 10 per cent of the population is literate, the need for an increased provision for primary education is not realised either by provincial Governments or our educationists. In this connection, we are tempted to quote the words of His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, which he uttered only the other day. "Government", he declared, "is chiefly concerned with primary education, and to a less degree with secondary education. When it comes to providing University education people who require it will clearly have to pay for it themselves or receive it through the beneficence of private donors or from private donors through the agency of educational societies, which themselves depend on private subscriptions or benevolent trust funds."¹⁶

14. *Education in India in 1935-36*, p. 12.

15. *Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab*, during the Quinquennium ending 1921-22, p. 92.

16. *The Times of India*, December 4, 1937.

PROPOSAL III

Our third proposal is that wherever there are competent educational societies, Government colleges and high-schools should be handed over to them instead of being conducted directly by Government. This will save a considerable amount of money to Governments, as private educational institutions are much cheaper. The saving thus effected should be utilized for financing primary education. The extent to which public money is spent by educating students in Government colleges and high-schools can be gathered from the following figures. During the year 1936-37, the average annual cost to the Government of Bombay of educating a student in a Government Arts college was Rs. 104, whereas it was only Rs. 21 in the case of a student in an aided Arts college.¹⁷ The respective cost in the case of a high-school student was Rs. 86 and Rs. 8.¹⁸

PROPOSAL IV

Our fourth proposal is that Government should find out additional sums of money for financing primary education by means of new taxation. But when they consider this problem of new taxation, they must keep in mind one principle which is very vital. Under the existing scheme of taxation comparatively a heavy burden falls on the poor. As the late Mr. Gokhale repeated year after year in the old Imperial Legislative Council, "The upper and the middle classes of the country contribute really much less to the Exchequer than our poor classes relatively to their resources."¹⁹ There has been no change in the position since Mr. Gokhale uttered these words. It is

17. *Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Province, 1932-37*, p. 43.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

19. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, pp. 462-63.

therefore, necessary that in any scheme of new taxation the poor should be left out and the new burden should be imposed on those who are capable of bearing it.

That there is a rich class in India who can easily bear the weight of additional taxation is recognised even by our ministers. Only the other day the Minister for Law and Order to the Government of Bombay said: "There are many wealthy people who would be very willing to take up their own village, taluka or district and assist the Government in organising primary schools."²⁰ Again, the Premier of Bombay said: "There are a number of men who are charitably disposed. You have only to touch their hearts and request them to direct their charities to this noble object" of primary education.²¹ Both the Ministers admit that there are enough rich people in the country who are in a position to help the expansion of primary education. And they think that sufficient money could be obtained by merely touching their hearts! But human nature being what it is, they should realise that *enough* money cannot *always* be secured by such means. Moreover, it would be risky and unsound to launch a country-wide scheme of mass education in the hope of getting the necessary financial help in the form of charities, however big that hope may be. Any national system of education cannot be run without the strength of continued Government resources to finance it. It is useless to depend on private charities only.

When once it is admitted that there is enough money in the land, it is the duty of the State to utilize it for the common good of its citizens. Legislative measures should be taken to realise this end.

20. *Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates*, September 18, 1937, p. 1158.

21. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1937., p. 1218.

With the above considerations in mind, the Government should impose new taxes so as to provide enough funds for financing primary education. It is left to each Provincial Government to impose any new tax they like, provided that it does not pass on to the poor masses. However, the following taxes may be suggested :

1. Death-duties
2. Turn-over tax
3. Tax on cross-word puzzles and similar competitions
4. Tax on entertainments
5. A special educational cess, if necessary.

PROPOSAL V

Our fifth proposal is that the share of the Income-tax revenue, which the Provinces would receive from the Central Government under Section 138 of the Government of India Act, should be utilized for the purpose of spreading primary education.

PROPOSAL VI

Our sixth proposal is in regard to non-recurring expenditure. In addition to the annual recurring expenditure, the State will have to spend vast sums of money on the provision of new school buildings and equipment. Though it may not be possible to find out all the money that is required for this purpose within a short time, it is quite possible to accommodate all the children of school age, if a carefully chalked out plan spreading over a limited number of years is undertaken in right earnest. Such a plan should be financed by borrowing the required sums of money, if it could not be financed in other ways.

Under Section 163 of the Government of India Act, the Provincial Governments possess the right of borrowing. It is true that this right is restricted in the sense that those provinces which owe any debt to the Government of India are not free to borrow without the latter's permission which can be only obtained for the purposes and on conditions approved by the Government of India. But it may be safely assumed that the Government of India will not withhold their consent, if a Provincial Government proposes to borrow for the purpose of constructing school buildings. Moreover, it is made clear in the Act that the consent required "shall not be unreasonably withheld."

It may be interesting to note in this connection that even England, which enjoys the fruits of universal mass education, is seriously thinking of raising a national loan for the improvement of her primary school buildings, as the following quotation would amply show: "There are in fact many competent judges who believe that nothing short of a national loan will succeed in bringing school plant up-to-date within a reasonable term of years."²²

Money spent on primary school buildings will not be a waste. The buildings themselves will be an asset. What is more, the children who will receive education in those buildings will form our greatest national asset. Money spent on education is more than a business proposition. It is the only national investment which is sure of a large and ever increasing return.

22. G. A. N. Lowndes, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

Financing a Scheme of Compulsory Primary Education IN BRITISH INDIA

116

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIA

| ESTIMATED COST OF THE SCHEME | | | HOW TO MEET THE COST | Rs. in Lakhs |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Children of School age: | Cost per head per annum: | Total cost (Rs. in Lakhs): | (1) Money which is being spent to-day | 820 |
| | | | (2) By raising the educational expenditure to 16 per cent (as in proposal I)... | 190 |
| 326 (Lakhs) | Rs. 6 | 1,956 | (3) By raising the proportion of expenditure on Primary Education to the total Government expenditure on Education to 60 per cent (as estimated in Proposal No. II). | 310 |
| | | • | (4) The remaining sum of Rs. 636 lakhs can be raised by (i) handing over Government Colleges and High Schools to Private Societies (as in Proposal III); by (ii) raising new taxes (as in Proposal No. IV); and by (iii) utilizing the Income-tax Revenue for Primary Education (as in Proposal No. V) | 636 |
| | | 1,956 | Total | ... 1,956 |

CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS

The following is a summary of the main suggestions made in the preceding chapters :

1. Primary education should be made free and compulsory throughout British India without any further delay.

2. Children of very poor parents should be supplied with slates, pencils and books. If funds permit, they should also be provided with necessary clothing.

3. School terms and holidays should be so arranged as to enable the boys in villages to render help to their parents during harvest times.

4. With a view to reducing wastage and stagnation, the following remedies should be undertaken :

- (a) The shift system should be introduced in all single-teacher schools, and the number of classes in such schools should not be more than four.
- (b) Admission of children below seven years should be stopped to ordinary primary schools. They may, however, be admitted to kindergarten, nursery or model schools specially meant for infants.
- (c) Admission to schools should be restricted at the beginning of the academic year.
- (d) All incomplete schools not imparting instruction upto the class IV should be converted into full-fledged schools teaching upto class IV. An

incomplete school may, however, be maintained only to serve as a feeder-school which is to be situated within a reasonable distance from every part of the village.

- (e) The present curriculum which is over-burdened should be simplified
- (f) Compulsion should be strictly enforced.
- (g) Regular inspection should be undertaken.
- (h) Attractive methods of teaching should be adopted.

5. The duration of the compulsory school course should be limited to a period of four years to start with. It may be extended over a longer period in due course of time when more money is available.

6. Compulsion should commence at the age of seven *plus* and end at the age of eleven *plus*. However, if a child could not complete the fourth class at the age of eleven, he should be further required to remain at school for a year more.

7. The maximum number of pupils to be taught by one teacher should be raised to 50, and in special cases to 60.

8. The shift system should be introduced in (a) all single-teacher schools; (b) in those schools where seating accommodation is not adequate; (c) in rural parts where children of poor agriculturists cannot conveniently attend school for the whole day.

9. With a view to solving the problem of educating isolated villages efficiently and economically, the system of travelling teachers should be established.

10. The course of training teachers should be restricted to two years' duration in all those provinces where it exceeds this limit.

11. A shorter course of training extending over twelve months should also be opened in order to qualify pupils to act as assistant teachers.

12. Vacation courses for untrained teachers and refresher courses for all teachers should be instituted.

13. In view of the fact that one teacher has to instruct as many as four classes in a single-teacher school, all such schools as far as possible should be placed in charge of trained teachers.

14. In schools with two or more teachers, the head-master should be a two-year trained teacher, while his assistant or assistants may be either one-year trained or untrained, the proportion between the number of one-year trained and untrained assistants being equal, as far as possible.

15. However, in the case of a school with only two teachers, the head-master may be a one-year trained teacher, if a two-year trained head-master cannot be procured.

16. Teachers should be reasonably paid.

17. The scheme of studies in the primary school should relate to the life and surroundings of both parents and pupils. The syllabus should be simple.

18. The aim of the primary school should not be to impart definite agricultural or industrial training, but to give the children a preliminary general training which will make them intelligent citizens.

19. Whenever the school authorities find it difficult to construct their own buildings, classes should be held in rented houses.

20. Public temples, mosques, *Chāvdīs* and *Dharma-shālās* should be utilised as school buildings whenever it is convenient to do so. Necessary legislation compelling the trustees of public temples to allow the school authorities to hold classes in temples, should be enacted.

21. In those areas where rainfall is scanty, the holding of schools under the shade of trees should be encouraged as a temporary measure in all cases wherein buildings cannot be procured.

22. Small uneconomic girls' schools should be abolished and common schools be organised in their places.

23. As far as possible, women teachers should be appointed in all schools, and particularly in those schools that are meant both for boys and girls and in those meant only for girls.

24. For some time to come education of girls should receive more attention than the education of boys.

25. Special efforts should be made to abolish special schools for the untouchable classes by bringing the children into common schools.

26. With a view to maintaining literacy, free travelling libraries should be organised and night-classes should be opened.

27. The powers of local bodies, which were transferred to them under the Primary Education Acts, should be so curtailed as to retain in them only the authority to manage the primary schools, the Government possessing sufficient powers of control and supervision.

28. Government should keep an effective supervision over the affairs of School Boards by strengthening the Government inspecting staff.

29. Adequate educational qualifications should be prescribed for membership on School Boards.

30. With a view to establishing independence of the school inspectorate, the power vested in the local authorities to appoint their own inspecting staff should be taken away.

31. A general strengthening of the school inspectorate should be immediately undertaken, as the existing staff is quite inadequate for the purpose.

32. Provincial Boards of Primary Education should be established to advise Governments on all matters connected with primary education, as is done in Bombay.

33. In order to meet the cost of a scheme of compulsory and universal primary education in British India, the following steps should be taken :

- (a) The proportion of Government expenditure on education to the total Government expenditure should be raised at least to 16 per cent.
- (b) The proportion of Government expenditure on primary education to the total expenditure on education should be raised at least to 60 per cent, as is the case in other countries.
- (c) Wherever there are competent educational societies, Government colleges and high schools should be handed over to them, and the saving thus effected should be spent on primary education.

- (d) Additional taxation should be imposed to raise money for financing primary education, provided that the new taxes do not fall on the masses. The following taxes may be levied :
1. Death duties.
 2. Turn-over tax.
 3. Tax on cross-word puzzles and similar competitions.
 4. Tax on entertainments.
 5. A special educational cess, if necessary.
- (e) The share of the Income-tax revenue, which the provinces would receive from the Central Government, should be utilised for primary education.
- (f) Provincial Governments should raise loans in order to provide school buidings and equipment.

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