

# PRACTICAL EDUCATION

A Monograph on Education in India

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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# **PRACTICAL EDUCATION**

## FOREWORD

BY DR. GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

I have much pleasure in introducing to the public this second edition of Principal Gokhale's well-known book on "Practical Education." This new edition is not only revised, but is considerably enlarged by a number of valuable appendices dealing with physical education, art and music, agriculture in rural schools, industries in urban schools, and including a note on a plan of education to be developed within a period of ten years.

Principal Gokhale's object however, in writing his book is less to establish educational principles and practices, for he recognises that there can be no hard and fast rules as regards either, but rather to stimulate thought about education, so that the Indian public in particular may grow increasingly education-conscious.

India, from having had in ancient times a system of education of extraordinary interest and practical value, now finds herself in the grips of a system which, however good it may be for the people for whom it was originally designed, is actually foreign to her spirit, and must, with the very best will in the world be a misfit.

Principal Gokhale would probably welcome radical educational changes throughout the country, as would many others interested in an education for India, specially competent to awaken in India's younger citizens the capacity to live in every detail of their lives as Indians first and foremost. But he knows that time alone can substitute one form of education for another; and his object, therefore, is to suggest ways and means whereby present methods and practice may become more harmonious with India's essential needs so that there may be at least edu-

cational reform, even if educational revolution be as yet out of sight.

As might be expected from a Principal of an Engineering College every chapter bears the imprint of a scientific approach to educational problems; but being an Indian, Principal Gokhale recognises to the full the place of religion in all true education—not a religion of form but a religion of life, as he himself says. He also perceives the value of right Patriotism, art and music, and the Classics; and he demands that at every stage education shall be practical, so that Being may be achieved largely through Doing.

I have read "Practical Education" with both interest and profit, and I do not hesitate to say that every teacher will find that a study of many chapters, with the invigorating life that runs through them, is widening his or her educational outlook, to a fuller membership of one of the noblest of life's vocations. Books on education are legion, but there are very few which delve into eternal foundations for the better building of a modern and practical superstructure. "Practical Education" frees us from conventions and places realities before our eyes. And if a teacher be not concerned with the Real, with what, in the name of life, is he concerned? Yet our educational systems reek of forms and conventions and superstitions, and the result is the world as we see it to-day. Principal Gokhale's book cries halt to all these, and bids us educate, bids us summon the Real in every child and youth, to make effective contact with the actual.

Adyar, Madras,  
17th Feb. 1936.

GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

## PREFACE

*(To the second edition)*

In the first edition I tried to present the Educational problem in India, as I saw it eight years ago. Since then I have had the good fortune of continuing as the head of the Nadirshaw Eduljee Dinshaw Civil Engineering College, Karachi, and of working on a Government Committee for the reorganisation of education. In the light of the experience thus gained I have revised my opinions to some extent, and have added some additional information at the end. The problem is now presented in a more complete form.

Presenting a problem or even offering a solution is one thing and putting it into practice is another. Looking backwards twelve years, I cannot help being struck by the number of things "not done" as compared to what little we have been able to do. The responsibility no doubt rests on the heads of those of us who are entrusted with this work; but while "Democracy" is so much in the air, and the proportion of Hindus and Moslems and now the Harijans seems to occupy the whole mental horizon of the Nation, even the Educationists find it impossible to keep out of it. And then, the time they can give for educational reform is naturally limited.

We seem moreover to have come to a point in India, when nothing can be done without compulsion. Temporally I would like to claim the freedom to go to the

very devil, if I want to: but as a Nation where all the other innocents will have to come with me, that prospect is not very pleasing. That is why I have come to the conclusion that some sort of Military discipline alone will make men of us. That is where the wedge must be driven. Military training is no "education"; but is the only means of inculcating "Discipline" without which real education has become impossible, in India at any rate. That is why I have given it a very important place in the Ten-year Plan. Here again it is a question of belling the cat; but if we are all convinced that that is the only way, even WE can do it.

G. N. GOKHALE

Benares,  
14th Aug. 1936.

## INTRODUCTION

*(To the first edition)*

I am not an educationalist, but it fell to my lot to work as the Secretary of the Sir Visvesvarayya Committee on Technical education in 1921, and during the last four years I have had to look after an Engineering College. Beyond this I claim no familiarity with educational problems.

The ideas set forth in these pages are neither new nor original, but I have collected them from sources, too numerous to acknowledge. I am grateful to them all. I have only set down on paper the ideas as they came to me, hoping that they may prove useful in the form in which I have put them. Many of these have been given a trial in our College, and found successful, as far as they can go.

The general arrangement of the subject is this. The need for reform in small points as well as in larger problems is first stated. Then the underlying principles as I understand them, are explained. Then I point out how these are either lost sight of, or distorted in present day practice, and suggest remedies. I have dealt with all the principal aspects of education, and have tried to show how they are all inseparable from one another. Education, like life itself, cannot be divided up into water-tight compartments, and Educational Reform must take account of them all. A little tinkering here and there, or

patching up, will do no good. Our whole outlook towards education must be changed before we can expect results.

The need for such a change in India was never greater than it is to-day. All talk of our raising ourselves in the scale of nations is futile without it. That is why I have ventured to place these few thoughts before educationists in India, to be taken for what they are worth. I do not of course expect everyone to agree with all I have said, and if this little book sets wiser heads thinking, I shall feel amply rewarded.

**G. N. GOKHALE**

Karachi,  
20th Feb. 1927.



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