

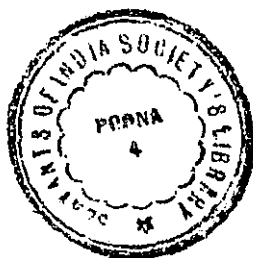
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R E P O R T
ON
LITERACY AMONG
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS



COMMITTEE ON PLAN PROJECTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
November 1964

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Dr. M. S. Mehta,
Chairman & Vice-Chancellor,
Rajasthan University.



D.O. No. ESE/II(17)/64.

**Panel for Literacy among
Industrial Workers, Com-
mittee on Plan Projects,
Planning Commission,
New Delhi-1.**

November 27, 1964.

My dear Shri Gulzarilalji,

I have pleasure in forwarding the Report of the Panel for Literacy among Industrial Workers, which was set up with your blessings in January 1964, in order to study the extent of illiteracy among industrial workers and to formulate proposals for its eradication. The Panel made a sample study of five industrial sectors viz., cotton textiles, jute textiles, coal mining, tea plantations and iron & steel. Field studies were conducted in Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Calcutta and tea plantations in Coonoor (Madras). Besides, we have had very fruitful discussions with the State Labour Commissioners and their staff, representatives of employer's organisations, various trade unions and voluntary social and educational organisations.

2. You will observe that the study reveals a very wide range of illiteracy among the workers of different industrial sectors which is much more pronounced in tea plantations and coal mining, where the illiterate population is estimated to be 6 lakhs and 4 lakhs respectively. The cotton textiles account for another 6.5 lakhs of illiterate workers. The Panel has recommended that intensive efforts may be concentrated on illiterates in the age group 16-45, whose numbers are estimated to be about 5 lakhs in tea plantations, 3.5 lakhs in coal mines and 4.5 lakhs in cotton textiles.

3. In the several recommendations made by the Panel, it is proposed that a period of 10 years, coinciding with the 4th and 5th Plans be accepted as the target for wiping

out illiteracy in such workers at the rate of two lakhs a year. So far as the coal mines are concerned, the Panel is of the view that the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Organisation, which has a separate Department of Adult Education, should be activated and definite targets laid down by them for removing illiteracy among their workers during the next 10 years. A similar set-up has been suggested for plantation workers. In respect of the 4.5 lakhs of illiterate workers in the age group 16-45 employed in cotton textile industry, the Panel has suggested that the Indian Textiles Association should assume responsibility for this programme. The Panel is further of the view that the public sector undertakings should also accept the responsibility in this matter for their own illiterate workers.

4. You will be glad to note that during the course of our discussions with the representatives of employers and trade unions in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Kanpur, Bangalore, Coimbatore and Calcutta, we found a good deal of enthusiasm in this respect. The Panel is, therefore, of the view that the launching of a few Pilot Projects in selected industrial towns would be an excellent idea. I have already addressed a letter to Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao on the subject and our proposal is under examination in the Planning Commission.

5. In view of your abiding interest and long association with the cause of labour welfare, the Panel desired me to request you to initiate action on the recommendations made in our Report so that they receive a high priority for implementation in the Fourth Plan.

6. There was considerable discussion in the Panel as to which Ministry should be responsible for initiating measures for implementing these recommendations. For obvious reasons the choice lay between the Ministries of Labour and Education. Ultimately it was thought that the best thing would be for us to leave the decision to the Government of India. We are anxious that the decision in this respect is taken with the least possible delay.

7. I desire to inform you that all the members of the Panel approached their duties with a sense of devotion and in a spirit of genuine cooperation. I was touched by their large-hearted attitude and their enthusiasm for the common objective. To be the Chairman of such a body,

which was so varied in its composition and yet so united in its purpose, was a privilege for me which I shall cherish for a long time.

8. I should like to commend the services of Shri Jagdish Singh, Member and Secretary of the Panel. His sense of duty was indeed commendable. I found him full of understanding in the different facets of the problem. He worked hard and applied himself to the work of the Panel with enthusiasm which is so rarely found. The technical staff who were attached to the Panel were all sincere, hardworking and conscientious. Never did we have any complaint about any single one of them.

9. The Panel received a full measure of cooperation from the State Governments and the Officers of the Labour Departments of the different States. With a sense of deep appreciation I like to bring this fact to your notice.

10. I think it my duty to express my sense of profound gratitude to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Shri Asoka Mehta and the Members of the Planning Commission, in particular Shri Tarlok Singh and Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao, for the deep interest that they took throughout the investigations and the discussions of the Panel. We are deeply beholden to them because their liberal attitude was always a source of encouragement to us.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

M. S. Mehta.

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda,
Chairman,
Committee on Plan Projects,
Planning Commission,
New Delhi.

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