EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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TRANSACTIONS

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TRANSACTION NO 59

Professor B. Kuppuswamy who taught psychology at the Universities of Mysore and Madras was a prominent thinker. His areas of interest were wide and covered his main concern of the Human Being and His role in the social, educational and intellectual environment.

Professor Kuppuswamy was invited to deliver the late Shri G. R. Bhatkal Memorial Lecture on November 12,1981 .The meeting was presided over by Dr V. K. R. V- Rao, former Union Minister of Education.

The topic Professor Kuppuswamy chose was important and vital, namely Education for Social Change. His talk, now printed here, brings about the concerns and needs of education in bringing about a change in the Indian context. It is a matter of regret that soon after delivering this lecture Prof. Kuppuswamy passed away.

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Education for Social Change

By Professor **B. KUPPUSWAMY**

I am grateful *to* the authorities of the G. R. Bhatkal Foundation and the Indian Institute of World Culture for having, invited me to deliver the G. R. Bhatkal Memorial Lecture for 1981. The Bhatkal family is well known, in India and abroad for the high quality of books they have been publishing over several decades, particularly in the field of Indian Sociology.

I have chosen "Education for Social Change" as the theme of my lecture.

I. *Introduction*

This month has seen the inauguration of Television in Bangalore. This is a symbol of the great technological change that has been sweeping over the world, particularly since the middle of the 20th century with the end of the Second World War. Bangalore has been an important City in India which has participated in and has been responsible for technical change in India and in the world. Indian Telephone Industries, Hindustan Machine Tools Industry, Bharat Electronics and other industries have contributed greatly to the development of technology. It is well-known that each industry has its own R and D section. Research and Development Section, so that high grade scientists and Technologists are appointed whose sole duty is to produce changes in technology. Technological development in the 20th century is quite unlike the development which took place in the 19th century. It is no more a matter of chance and individual effort. Technological change today is a product of organized intellectual, military and commercial effort.

As a result of this, the technological changes in the last few decades are so rapid and far-reaching that many thinkers look upon this as a new era in human history. Man has now intervened in the evolutionary process. One good result of this, of course, is the phenomenal increase in food production in India, though the productivity in the agricultural field is nowhere near, the; average in other countries. However, the fear is there, whether this unprecedented development in technology will lead to human welfare the world over or to the destruction of many cities through atom bombs and hydrogen bombs. While the industrial age 'started in the last quarter of 18th century by using mechanical energy in the place of animal and human energy, the last quarter of the 20th century is using nuclear energy and the computer to drive the machines. Hence a real qualitative change.[1]

Every country in the world, whether underdeveloped, or developing is seized with the great problem of raising the standard of living of the citizens through industrialization. Planning has now become a familiar means to increase wealth, so that the standard of living of the hundreds of millions in utter poverty could be improved.

The Indian five-year Plans were initiated in 1950, in pursuance of Article 38 of the Indian Constitution. Article 38 has laid down. "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting, as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice,

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[1] Lecture delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore on 12th November 1981.

social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life". The government of India, in its Resolution of March 1950 said that planning was undertaken, "to Promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country including production and offering opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community". The Second Plan (1956-1961') declared that the broad objective of economic policy is to achieve a "socialist pattern of society", in which the benefits of economic development would accrue more to the relatively less privileged sections of the society. The Fourth Plan (1969-74). further specified the goal of planning. It aimed at raising the standard of living of the people through programmes designed to promote equality and social justice. It also specified the weaker sections of the society — the landless labour, the migratory herdsmen, the scheduled tribes and castes. Thus, while the primary aim of the successive plans is economic development, the ultimate aim was recognized to be a drastic change in social structure.

What are the social goals envisaged by the Indian Constitution?

The very preamble to the Constitution asserts that the aim is to secure to all citizens Justice — social, economic and political and equality of status and of opportunity. This is specified in the Chapter on Fundamental Rights. Article 14 specifies that all citizens are equal before law and Article 15 specifies that no discrimination can be made on the grounds of sex and caste. This is further specified by Article 17 which abolishes the practice of untouchability and that such a practice shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. Article 24 lays down that no child below the age of fourteen shall be employed to work in any factory or mine. Thus, the four broad social goals guaranteed by the fundamental rights Part are, equality of sexes, social equality as against caste hierarchy based on birth, abolition of the practice of untouchability and prevention of employment of children below the age of fourteen.

In Part IV, laying down the Directive Principles, Article 45 declares that all children below the age of fourteen shall have free and compulsory education. By Article 46, it is declared that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

This is specified further by Article 33:5 which lays down that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration in the making of appointments to posts in Government.

Thus, the Indian Constitution has specified the directions in which social changes should take place. They are; 1) equality of sexes, 2) equality of castes. 3) abolition of untouchability, 4) abolition of child labor, 5) free primary education for all children upto the age of fourteen, 6) special steps to improve the educational, social and economic condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and 7) increased opportunities for the appointment of these groups of people in the government services.

We have to view these constitutional guarantees and provisions in the light of the traditional norms of the Indian society. These provisions are made because those facilities and opportunities did not exist in the Indian society from times immemorial.

The Indian Constitution, thus, laid down the goals of social change in 1950 when the Constitution was adopted. It specifies social justice and social equality because, social justice and social equality are not the features of the Indian society. On the other hand, social injustice and social inequality have been the outstanding features of Indian society.

The Sixth Plan (1980-85) document is very objective and analytical. It has shown that in the three decades from 1950 to 1979, the over-all growth rate of national income was 3.5 percent, of agricultural production 2.7 percent, and of industrial production 6.1 percent. Per capita income has increased, however, at the rate of 1.3 percent. This is because of the vast increase of population from 361 million in 1951 to 684 million in 1981. While the population has been increasing at the annual rate of 2.3 percent since 1961, the per capita income has been increasing only at 1.3 percent. This is the reason for the terrible social situation facing the country, viz., unimagined increase in wealth of the top ten percent of the population and the utter stagnation of the bottom 50 percent of the population.

The Plan document has shown this fact by giving the figures in Table 1.4 (P. 7).

Table 1

The share of the Poorest 30 percent in
' Consumer expenditure'

	1958-59	1977-78
Rural	13.1	15.0
Urban	13.2	13.4

The document has also shown that there has been no substantial reduction in the percentage of population below the poverty line. According to the figures available:

Table 2

The percentage of Population below
poverty line

	Rural	Urban
1972-73	54	41
1977-78	51	38

The table 1.5 has given the distribution of assets in Rural areas (P. 8).

Table 3

Distribution of Assets in Rural areas

	1961	*1971*
Lowest 10 percent	0.1	0.1
Lower 30 percent	2.5	2.0
Top 30 percent	79.0	82.0
Top 10 percent	51.0	51.0

Thus over the decade from 1961 to 1971 for which figures are available, there has been utter stagnation In the distribution of rural assets, inspite of the impressive annual increase of 8.5

percent in national income and 2.7 percent in agricultural production. /the bottom 30 percent have, If anything, become poorer while the top 30 percent have become somewhat richer. This is the shocking paradox of increased national wealth. One wonders whether the position will show a change for the better in the decade 1971 to 1981.

The next table (1.6 p. 8) gives the dismal picture of distribution of land holdings.

Table 4

Distribution of land

Holdings	Percentage	
	Number	Area
Less than 2 hectares	72.6	23,5
2-10 hectares	24.4	50.2
Over 10 hectares	3.0	26.3

That is, the small and marginal farmers who constitute nearly three quarters of the total have hardly one quarter of the area, while three percent of the well-to-do farmers have more than one quarter of the acreage. The document concludes, "The very substantial improvement in agricultural production has not solved the problem of poverty" (p; 8). According to the Rural Labour Enquiry Committee (1965-1975), about 8 percent of the rural workers, that is, about 21 million, seek everyday employment which they are unable to get (p. 9). This explains why there is a continuous increase in migration from rural areas to the big cities in India. According to the figures given, the percentage of population below poverty line varies from 15 percent in Punjab to 66 percent in Orissa. This is the state to which three decades of planning has landed the people. The successes are very impressive. There is no doubt about that. But the failures are most disheartening. The silver line is that the Planning Commission gives us the truth in each document. So long as we are in firm grip of reality, there is, hope to rally. It is deluded thinking that leads to individual and social disaster.

How is poverty line defined? It is defined as the midpoint of monthly per capita expenditure having a daily intake of 2400 calories per person in rural areas and 2100 calories in the urban areas. According to 1979-80 prices, this works out at Rs. 76/- per person in rural areas and Rs. 88 in urban areas. On the basis of studies of household consumer expenditure, it is estimated that nearly 50 percent of the population has been living below the poverty line continuously over a long period (p. 51).

Table 5

Percent of population living below
poverty line

	1072-73	1977-79
Rural	54,09	50.82
Urban	41.22	38.19
Total	51.49	48.13

The document also attempts to give a picture of the poor in the rural areas. They belong to the following four categories:

a) landless labour (generally scheduled castes)

b) small and marginal farmers (backward classes)

c) rural artisans (backward classes)

d) the tribal people.

So long as the economic and social conditions of these three groups, viz., the backward classes, the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, do not improve, all the spectacular changes which have taken place in the rural areas and in urban areas mean nothing to the submerged half of the people and to the nation as a whole. The conscience of the people, who are better-off and who are having unprecedented prosperity, thanks to inflation, should become sensitive to the stark realities of the economic and social situation in the country.

What are the social consequences of this poverty among the rural and urban masses? One outstanding feature of Indian society, particularly in the rural areas is segregated housing based on birth. The various caste groups based on birth live in separate quarters in each village. The segregation is based on two sets of considerations, namely, a) real and b) notional. The realistic considerations are associated with lack of cleanliness, lack of education, utter poverty. The notional considerations are associated with purity and pollution. The lower the caste, the greater the pollution by birth and the higher the caste, the higher the purity by birth. The two sets of considerations, by and large, neatly fit into each other. When the realistic considerations do not fit, that is-, when the persons belonging to the lower castes are clean, tidy, well-educated, fairly well-off economically, the pollution notions will continue to prevail as they are associated with birth. In other words, whatever be the achievement of the members of the families belonging to the lower castes, the upper castes continue to judge them on the basis of ascriptive characteristics.

This situation is reinforced by the continued poverty of these groups who constitute one half of the population. That is, the notion of pollution is reinforced.

A second factor in the social situation is that there is hardly any difference in realistic terms between the lower touchable castes and the lowest untouchable castes. As noted above, the lowest fifty percent of the people who live below the poverty line are identified as belonging to the three groups, namely, the backward classes, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. If this is so, what is the basis for discrimination in social behaviour? The basis is the notional criterion, namely, pollution.

In urban areas, by and large, the upper castes have been able to abandon the concept of pollution. When you are sitting in a bus or a train or in a restaurant or when you are moving about in the market, you cannot afford to find out whether the person sitting next to you is touchable or untouchable Your preoccupation is with the task on hand. The factor of anonymity in urban areas is also an impediment to identification. But these factors do not operate m the rural areas where the social relations are primary and face-to-face. The moment you sec another person of your village or even of the neighbouring village, you know and give full value to his parentage, his occupation, the location of his house and so on. Realistic and notional values are in full operation. Nothing which a scheduled caste man, or his family, has achieved can ever alter the social situation. *T*here is utter contempt for the person and his family because they are untouchables by birth.

Hostility is added to cod tempt because of the various programs instituted by the governments to improve the conditions of the Scheduled Castes.

Hostility is further increased by the fact that the scheduled caste man who is well-educated and economically better-off asserts his right to be treated as an equal, asserts his right as am Indian citizen and as a human being.

These various factors have been building up social tensions in various parts of the country between the lower touchable and the untouchable castes.

The culmination point, as it were, was reached in February 1981 when over a thousand Harijans embraced Islam in Meenakshipuram, a small village in the southern part of Tamil Nad.

Why has this incident been blown up as some newspapers assert? The educated and enterprising members of the Scheduled Castes have been reaching the last point in endurance. They find that the provision of the Constitution have not altered the social norms of the uppercaste people, Customs prevail over the constitution and the law of the land. The law enforcers themselves are guided more by the customs than by the laws. As a result the so-called upper caste groups and the law enforcers join together to enforce customs.

The Ambedkar remedy of conversion to Buddhism has been found to be no remedy to the social evil.

The Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra and Karnataka have become very aggressive during the Seventies. A whole Dalit literacy movement is afoot. This has found an expression in the extreme way by conversion to Islam. With the carnage of partition still fresh in memory, it is little wonder that the political party} leaders as well as religious leaders have awakened themselves to social realities. The Mathadhipatis are now coming out with the truth, namely that the Vedic Samhitas, the Upanishads and the Gita do not sanction the practice of untouchability. The Purusha Sukta of Rig Veda (X.90.12) speaks only of four groups. Similarly, the Bhagavad-Gita Gita speaks only of four vamas created on the basis of guna and karma (IV. 13). Even the great Manu has declared unequivocally that there are only four varnas and there is no fifth varna (X.4). And according to Manu's definition, the Chandala is the illegitimate offspring of a Sudra male and a Brahmana female (X.I2). It is preposterous to hold that one sixth of the Hindu population consists the descendents of the such illegitimate offspring.

Thus, the contemporary social situation is totally a new situation without any precedence. All these thousands of years customs were reinforced by the political ordinances. According to Manu it is the duty of the King to enforce the customs prevailing (VII.203). The King who is dharmavk should settle disputes according to the Jati and Janapada dharma (VIII.41). But laws have changed. The Indian Constitution has abolished untouchability and enjoins social justice, equality before law and equality of opportunity as the supreme social values. Still custom reigns supreme, violating the Indian Constitution, the democratic social values and the prevailing laws.

It is the duty of every citizen, every parent and every teacher to understand the new social situation and to promote social harmony and social development.

There cannot be permanent and unchangeable social superiorities and inferiorities m a democratic society which recognizes social mobility.

III. *The Current Educational Situation*

According to 1901 Census figures, the literacy for the total population was about 5 percent. The rural population was 89 percent. The following table shows the progress of literacy from 1931 to 1981 and how the increase in population is far in excess of increase in rate of literacy.

Table 6

Increase in Literacy in relation to increase in population

	Percent Males	Literacy in Females	Total	Increase m	Increase in Population
1941	22.6	6.0	12.2	5.2*	13.51
1951	25.0	8.0	16.6	4.4	14.02
1961	34.5	13.0	24.0	7.4	21.63
1971	39.5	18.7	29.3	5.3	24.57
1981	46.7	24.9	36.2	7.0	24.75

Sourc Census figures.

*   The literacy rate in 1931 was 7 percent.
     It increased to 12.2 percent in 1941.

It is clear from the above table that the average rate of increase in literacy rate for the half a century from 1931 to 1981 is around 6 percent. But the increase m population was about 15 percent, that is, 2.5 limes more upto 1951 and 25 percent between 1961 to 19.81, that is, more than 4 times. In other words, the population is increasing four times faster than the rate of increase in literacy. The annual rate of increase in population is 2.4 percent, while annual rate of increase in literacy is only 0.6 percent.

As a result there is a steep increase in the number of illiterate persons from 301 million in 1951 to 436 million in 1981. Of the 684 million population in 1981, only 248 million (36 percent) are literate. This is the formidable problem facing the nation.

What are the reasons for this disastrous situation, inspite of the great efforts taken by the state and society?

In a broadway there are the following factors. The vast rural population. According to 1981 Census, the urban population has increased from 20 percent in 1971 to 21.8 percent though the rural population is less, namely, 78.2 percent, it is 534 million, a little less than the total population of 547 million in 1971!

Over and above the steep increase in total population and the huge rural population, there is the economic problem referred to in the previous section.

More influential than these three problems, and actually at the basis of all these problems, is the fundamental social psychological problem of conservatism, that is, resistance to change. Sending the child to school implies having a new social image of the feature of the child. Similarly, attending an adult education class is entertaining a new self-concept and a new outlook towards future. Further it involves deviating from the social norms existing in the local group. This has been the greatest obstacle for the spread of primary education in the rural areas and among the slum dwellers in the cities, who are after all mostly migrants from the rural areas.

The social norm in the sub-culture of the group is not in favour of education of children, particularly the girls in the family. This was a pervasive social norm in the whole Indian

culture sometime back. This is clear from the literacy figures published in the 1901 census report. The total literacy rate was five percent, eight percent among males and 0.7 percent among females. That is, only a very small minority of families in the population had accepted the social norms of sending their boys to primary school, and a microscopic minority had accepted sending their girls. This was the state of Indian society eighty years ago. We should bear this social fact clearly in mind when we are considering the inertia of the masses with respect to primary education today. Classes as well as masses had no faith in education, excepting a very small minority through the ages. To change the social norm, particularly in the sub-group, and to change the attitude towards education, is no small matter. The fact to be kept in mind is that deviance from the social norm has been considered in the culture as *adharma,* sin. In other words, this is a cultural problem, involving a change in the cultural norms. So the elite groups must look upon this problem as a consequence of perpetuating through cultural transmission values which are not only irrelevant but positively harmful in the changed social situation.

The validity of these observations will become clear by a consideration of the two problems plaguing primary education over many decades, namely, wastage and stagnation.

The Hartog Committee. 1929, defined the term stagnation as the retention in the lower class for more than a *year* by the school authorities, and wastage as the premature withdrawal of the child before he completes the full course. The 1966 Education Commission reports that stagnation is the highest in the class I itself.

Table 7
Enrolment in Classes 1-VlI from
1911-12 to 1965-66

Year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1911—12	100	39	28	20	12	6	4
1921—22	100	47	28	19	11	7	5
1931—32	100	40	28	19	12	7	6
1941—42	100	49	37	29	20	11	8
1951—52	100	63	48	38	27	18	15
1961—62	100	56	44	34	27	20	17
1965—66	100	58	47	37	29	24	20

(Source: Education Commission, 1966, p. 155)

namely 40 percent for boys and 47 percent for girls. Thus, the teachers detain nearly half the numbers in the very first year itself because the children have not mastered the tasks prescribed. As regards, wastage, the Commission points out that 56 percent of the boys and 62 percent of the girls are withdrawn from the school by the parents (p. 157). Thus, between the teachers and the parents, we find that hardly 20 out of one hundred children enrolled in class one continue their education upto class seven. Studies have shown that stagnation as well as wastage are the highest among the children of the backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This is. the crucial point. The parents of these groups are too poor and

illiterate to have the normal aspiration that their children should have education so that they can have better status in society than themselves. But this aspiration can operate only in an 'open society, in which people can move up or down on the status scale depending on their level of achievement. But the caste society and the tribal society are closed status systems, in

which a person is born into a particular stratum and must remain in that till death, regardless of his ability and achievement.

Thus, provision of universal primary education is a social intervention, the aim of which is to make the Indian society into an open status system.

But the members of the backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are unable to look upon the future of their children as something which could be superior to what has been their lot. When the sweeper and the barber have been brought up in a tradition which makes them feel that to serve the society in the same occupation is *dharma,* and to break away from it is *adharma,* it is not possible to expect any other kind of response.

Because the educational administration becomes very active at the beginning of the school year, there is a response to the enrolment drive. So children are admitted in large numbers. The teacher finds no improvement in learning the three R's in most of the children, so he detains them. Or the parents find that the child is more useful helping the parents at home and so they withdraw the child. A rigid intellectual evaluation adopted by the teachers and a rigid economic evaluation adopted by the parents, combine harmoniously to result in enormous wastage.

It is true that economic considerations constitute an obstacle for progress in education. But probably social norms and lack of higher aspirations are as important, if not more important.

According to Sixth Plan document, for every three children enrolled in primary school one other eligible child is left behind. It is stated that 38 percent of Scheduled Caste children — 20 percent boys and 56 percent girls, and 56 percent of Scheduled Tribe children, — 49 percent boys and 70 percent girls are yet to receive primary education (p. 353). To make people aspire to educate their children, though for thousands of years it was not in their tradition, is the tremendous problem facing the state and society.

Non-availability of school in the area is no more the problem, thanks to the various Surveys made and action taken thereon. The aim was to provide a primary school with classes I to V within a walking distance of one mile and middle section with classes V to VII within a walking distance of three miles. This target has been reached now. So non-availability of a school within reach is no more an obstacle to send the children to school.

Schools are available. What is not available is parents with the aspiration that their children should have at least a four year primary education, children with that aspiration, and teachers who do not measure educational achievement of the children from disadvantaged homes with a rigid intellectual yardstick.

So the main problems are to motivate or to provide the necessary incentives to parents and the children and to make the teachers to have a sympathetic outlook towards the children who come from the disadvantaged homes and help them to acquire new habits of work and a new outlook on life.

IV   *Aims of Education*

What are the aims of education which would be relevant to the prevailing social and educational situation? A clear conception in this regard is necessary to formulate and to implement a programme which will meet the needs of the situation.

According to the traditional view, the aim of education is to enable the ruling elite to

occupy positions of power and govern the people so that there is harmony in society. This was the aim of Indian education in the middle of the 19th century. But down the ages, the aim of education in India has been to transmit the knowledge inherited from the past. This is also an elitist aim. But there was a change in aim when industrial revolution became widespread arid well-established in the West. There was the need for literacy among the multitudes who tended the machines. This led to the universalisation of primary education in the Western countries. The Gaekwar of Baroda introduced compulsory education in 1906. Later, Gokhale moved his famous resolution for making elementary education free and compulsory in 1913. Though he failed in getting the resolution passed, With the establishment of dyarchy, the acts were passed in a number of provincial legislatures during 1919 and 1920. The chief aim was to make the three R's as widespread as possible.

By and large, assimilation of tradition and enabling the individual to perform an economic function in society were the primary aims of education.

As it is well-known, it was John Dewey (1859-1952), the American Philosopher, who started a new trend in educational thought and practice. The question he asked was, what can be done to bring the school into closer relation with the home, the neigh bourhood and society, instead of having the school merely a place where the child comes solely to learn certain lessons? Is it possible to make the formal and symbolic mastering of the ability to read, write and use numbers, meaningful and purposeful to the child? He emphasized that in the course of human development, knowledge did not precede action, rather action always preceded experience, and experience is the source of knowledge. Learning arises as a result of action in life. This is how the infant learns and enlarges his dealings with things, human beings and animate. Knowledge, unrelated to action is sterile. The other great American philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) warned against what he called "inert ideas", ideas which are merely received into the mind without being utilized or tested or thrown into fresh combinations. Dewey draws a distinction between information, knowledge and understanding. Information, he said, is knowledge about things. But neither information nor knowledge leads to intelligent action, which is based on understanding. It is true, understanding requires knowledge. But mere knowledge does not imply understanding in terms of how things work and how to do things. One of Dewey's well-known maxims of education is "Do to learn, learn to do".

As it is well-known, Gandhiji had independently arrived at similar ideas, which he expressed even in his book *Hind Swaraj* published in 1908. He pointed out that the ordinary meaning of education is to teach children reading, writing and arithmetic. While the peasant does not know these three arts, he understands the world and the society in which he lives and works. He asserted that neither elementary education, nor higher education, makes "men of us". He further pointed out, in that early work, that while the learned men in the West were continually making changes in their education system, Indians were ignorantly adhering to their cast-off systems. He came to very profound conclusions about education. One is that memorizing is not the way to learn, that it is by doing that one can learn. This is why he promoted the idea of literacy training through vocational training. He was totally against intellectual training which is altogether unrelated to manual or physical work. He said, knowledge should be firmly rooted in experience and tested from day to day by experience. His emphasis was on knowledge which is based on experience and understanding rather than on mere information and verbal memorization.

The Indian Constitution has enfranchised all adults. If democracy should have any meaning and content, knowledge of the society is as essential as knowledge of things.

Development in technological knowledge without a corresponding knowledge of society and social processes will lead only to disharmony. The task of the schools is to take steps to see that the students become free individuals who can participate in a free society. Technology as well as democracy make the society a changing society. Education should enable the students to become members of a changing, not a static society. Change in technology has altered the occupations in many ways. While this is based on knowledge, the changes in the functioning of democracy is based on the operation of several social forces. Just as the waves in the sea keep changing, the several social forces operating in the society bring events which are not only puzzling, but apparently disastrous. Social forces are largely emotional. This is why they are puzzling. The important task of education and the mass media is to see that the emotional content of social forces are lowered and the rational con rent is increased. This is the full import of democracy. To study the social issues carefully, to analyze them intellectually, to understand the opponent's viewpoints with sympathy and then arrive at a group decision, on the basis of group discussion, which will be most acceptable for the time being. This is the democratic process.

Now to go back to the aims of education, one thing must be clearly borne in mind. There is nothing like one or one set of aims which are universal and eternal. Educational aims change from country to country and from time to time depending on the social forces which are operating. Much confusion could be minimized if this essential point is in focus of attention when we are dealing with the problem of identifying educational aims.

Certain aims like transmission of culture to the next generation, helping to build up the character of the citizens, promotion of personal and social discipline, building up of the physique, rational outlook and aesthetic appreciation, are enduring and fairly universal educational aims, there will always be the need to study and adopt some other aims depending on the intellectual, social and technological features of the prevailing situation,

What should be the aims of education in the current context of Indian social situation?

The Indian Constitution has set forth a clear aim, namely equalization of opportunity and social justice. Educational policy makers, administrators and above all, the teachers in the primary schools, particularly the teachers in the rural schools and the schools in urban slums, have to bear this aim clearly in view, to look upon all children as growing up to be equal citizens of the land, and that each child has the opportunity to become the President or Prime Minister of the land.

Secondly, the most urgent task in Indian society is national integration. India society is probably the most pluralistic society in the world. From what we know of Indian history, it has always been a pluralistic society. This is why the two ideals of society cherished in India has been "unity in diversity", and tolerance. To look upon all children as Indian citizens, in short, Indianisation of all children should be the educational aim. Obsessed by parochial considerations on occasions, we miss the Indianness of Indian personality and the Indian way of life and outlook. This becomes clear to one when one goes out of the country and meets Indians at international conferences or when one meets Indian living in other countries. Just as there is something unique in Indian cooking and eating habits, just as there is something unique in the aesthetic taste of the Indian, his attitude towards rivers and mountains, there is also something unique in the Indian cultural outlook and personality structure, irrespective of caste, creed, language, *etc.* It is the task of teachers, particularly, as I have pointed out, among the teachers in the primary schools, to understand the full implication of this aim and see that their teaching work is informed by this outlook. This is an outlook which must prevail when

the teacher is dealing with children from the minority groups, the backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. He should bear in mind that as a teacher, his primary task is to "uplift" the downtrodden so that they can take their rightful place as citizens of India.

Thirdly, the aim of education in the current situation should be the development among children a favorable and receptive attitude toward social change. Every teacher should be an agent of social change. One will not be wrong if one puts the blame for the tardy growth of literacy in India over the last sixty years since 1919 when the compulsory education Acts were passed, at the door of the teachers. With education, a man develops a middle class outlook, irrespective of the class from which he comes. This is a social fact. However, there is nothing inexorable in a social fact. Social behaviour is learnt behaviour. What we have learnt can be and must be unlearnt if it is harmful either to us personally or to our fellow human beings or to the ecology. So, the primary school teacher should not only be an agent of social change, but also promote the attitudes favourable to social change in the children. Ultimately, it means the recognition of the worth of each child and his right to grow up as a human being irrespective of the family in which he happens to be born. This implies a frank recognition of the fact that the social norms, as they arc prevailing today, are hierarchial and anti-egalitarian and that his task is to change these social norms so that they become democratic and socialistic.

The Sixth Plan document has asserted that one of the aims of human resource development through education is to sensitize the student (and the teachers) to the ethical, social and cultural values which go to make up an enlightened nation (p. 352).

V   *The Concept of Social Change*

It is a familiar fact that many changes take place in society continuously. For nearly two centuries, India was ruled by British, Indian society underwent many changes with the change of rulers, from Muslim rule to British rule, from the rule of Maharajas to the time when the Maharajas became a Rajapramukhas and responsible democratic government was established. Just as changes take place within the family by the change in generations, changes also take place in society with changes in rulers, whether the rulers are monarchs or leaders of elected parties in a democracy.

Similarly changes take place in society with changes in technology. When organized industries were established in the middle of 19th century, a new labour class and a new middle class came into being, which were not there earlier.

Changes in the educational system also bring about changes in society. The modern system of education with English as the medium of instruction and with English literature, science, history and so on as the contents, changes- took place. Persons who took degrees in the new Universities, became subordinate officers with high income and good status.

There are so many changes in house-building styles, clothes, food, watches, cycles, transistors, cars and so on.

But all these do not constitute social change as the term is technically used in social sciences.

What is social change? To understand this we must ask another question — What do we mean by society? Society is a web of social relationships. It is a system of usages and procedures. It is a group with a number of sub-groups. Each group has its own social

organization, with a relatively stable pattern of interaction among the members of the group. Each member is related to others through the social norms prevailing in the group, takes on the social role assigned to him or for which he is qualified and is subject to control procedures.

The term social change refers to changes or alterations in the social organization, that is, changes in social structure. In a static society, like the caste society the roles and statuses are ascribed rather than achieved. A man's role as well as his status is fixed by birth. The social structure is fixed. Each sub-group has to start at the same point as the previous generation did. It is closed society. The individual is ascribed to a particular stratum at birth and his status cannot be changed by his own actions and achievements. By contrast in an open society, the structure is not rigid. There is social mobility. There is individual liberty. The individual can improve his qualifications. He can compete with others. There is equality of opportunity. Individual ability and initiative are the requirements for achieving a fair share of wealth, prestige and power.

As noted above, the Indian Constitution has assured equality of status and equality of opportunity to every child and citizen. Articles 15 and 16 have made equality and equality of opportunity as fundamental rights.

This is the paradox of Indian society today. As a matter of fact, any citizen of India above 21 years of age has the same right to vote as any other citizen. Similarly any Indian citizen above thirty years of age can stand for parliamentary election. Many members of the State legislatures and the parliament have come from the various social status groups. Similarly, by and large, in the urban areas there is full scope for social mobility. But the problem is the plight of those hundreds of millions who are trapped at the bottom level of society, the urban and the rural poor.

As noted above, the famous Meenakshipuram incident in February 1981 is an illustration of the effort of the: Scheduled Caste people in a village to gain equality of status on the basis of their achievement. According to the newspaper reports more than 40 percent of the Meenakshipuram Harijans are educated. There are two doctors, an agricultural Scientist and five graduate teachers (Himmat, Sept. 15, 1981). But they are all treated, not on the basis of their achievement, but on the basis of their birth in Harijan families. This social discrimination led to social tension and finally, it is reported that the group became Muslims to gain physical protection from the Muslims and to gain equality of status.

This is the social problem. Education is open to every child. In fact it is a compulsory requirement. Every individual has the constitutional right to choose any occupation. But the local custom is following the inert tradition which ascribes status by birth that is unalterable by the individual's initiative and achievement.

The very fact that the Indian Constitution gives full scope for upward mobility but the rural customs prevent social mobility is causing bitterness and frustration of those who are cut off from social prestige even when they are educationally, culturally and economically fully qualified.

To secure for each individual in the rural areas and the urban slums, the lights guaranteed by the Constitution and Law, but denied by custom and tradition is the great social problem.

It must be borne in mind that in the coming years, a larger number of lowercaste people will be qualifying themselves and so the social tensions will increase to a terrible magnitude if the structural change in rural society does not take place.

It is to prevent this present and future possibility that the promotion of favourable attitude towards social change should be an important aim of education.

VI *The Task of the Parents, Teachers and Mass Media*

As I have stated, education by itself does not bring about social change. Education is an instrument which does the functions entrusted to it. This is why my aim in this lecture is to suggest that education should be designed to bring about social change. It must, however, be realized that education is only one means. The other two important means are the family upbringing and the mass media.

Innovations in the education system, suggested above, may lead to structural changes in society. Structural changes in society are the most difficult to bring about as we know. Buddha attempted it 2500 years back and could not succeed. To bring about changes in education is equally difficult as the Gandhian experiment of basic education failed. However, it is true that modern English medium education has succeeded very well, though only with respect to a small minority. It is because of jobs in government service which procured both income and prestige.

While it is very difficult to bring about structural change in society, the most difficult task is to sustain it. Gandhiji was able to bring about a very revolutionary change in Indian society during three decades from 1920. Hundreds of thousands gave up wealth and luxury and lived austere life and went to jails. Programs for the removal of caste disabilities, sex discrimination and the abandonment of the practice of untouchability were all accepted fully. That is why they were all incorporated as fundamental rights in the Constitution. But three decades after the adoption of the Constitution we are struggling with the same problems. Ideals arc accepted without abandoning customs. That is an unique feature of Indian culture.

So what is necessary is to bring about a change in customs. What are customs and how are they implanted in the minds of human beings? Customs are the socially accepted ways of acting. They are strongly imbedded in group life. In fact they are accepted as the only right ways of doing and behaving. They are the regulators of social behaviour. The child is rewarded if he conforms to custom and is punished if he behaves in a different way. And this happens during the second and third years of life, long before the child can understand the why of these rules of behaviour. Customs are, what the members of the group are required to do and taboos are, what they are forbidden from doing. Customs are to the social group, what habits are to the individual. Once the habit is formed, it is very difficult to give it up. The smoker, the alcoholic and the drug addict, know how difficult it is to give up the habit. Similar is the case with the customs of the group. Habits are what the individuals acquire consciously. Customs are what the individual acquires during early childhood.

Social norms and social values are imbedded in the personality structure. That is why it is very difficult to change social norms and social values. The value of equality is accepted but the social norm of hierarchy is counter to that. So there is resistance to change. Changes are resisted because they conflict with traditional values and beliefs. The value of equality is learnt in the school. But the value of hierarchy is learnt at home during early childhood. The latter is more strongly implemented, hence there is resistance to abandon hierarchy in favour of equality.

This takes us to the problem of child-rearing practices at home, The 'dos' and the 'donts' of the parents are internalized by the child when he is around four years of age. The child tells himself what he has to do and what he should not do. The external codes and values become a

part of the personality of the child.

That is, social change to be enduring, must become a part and parcel of the child's personality. This can be done only by the parents at home before the child goes to school. In other words, the new value of equality should be accepted by the parent consciously and deliberately so that it becomes part of his personality and this should be transmitted to the child during his upbringing. Thus ultimately any social change to be enduring must be acquired during childhood years at home and reinforced by the teachers in the primary school.

For thousands of years hierarchic social order was accepted by the dominant elite groups and the dependent subordinate groups. So there was no social conflict. But the new ideas in 19th and 20th centuries, particularly, since dyarchy was established after the first World War and with Independence after the Second World War, big changes are taking place. Social tensions have increased. Probably they will intensify further if the elite groups in the urban and rural areas do not abandon their rigid customs.

The lower class groups are resenting the dominance of the upper class groups. So their child-upbringing practices are changing. They bring up their children in such a way that they are made to become conscious of their rights.

So the primary task of the parent, the school and the mass media is to smoothen the process of social change and avoid the possibility of social tensions by reinforcing the values of social equality, equality of opportunity, social justice, enrichment of the homes and the environment of the disadvantaged groups, etc.

VII, Three Hopeful Programs

During the seventies, three programs have been launched by the State and society which appear to be quite significant. The steep increase of population in 1971 emphasized the need for population education. The secondary school system has now accepted this and students learn the facts of population growth and its social implications. The need for small family norm is being emphasized so that it gets implanted in the teenagers. In this, the school is brought closer to the society. Secondly, the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) was formulated and launched in 1976, The aim is to improve the quality of life of the children from birth to six years of age. It also includes service to the pregnant and lactating mothers. Thirdly, it includes the *anganwadi* service by which the children from three to six years of age are given preschool education. These services, particularly in the rural areas and the urban slums are of profound significance. They seek to provide to the mother and children of the disadvantaged groups what has been accepted by the middle classes already. Finally, a new concept of non-formal education has been evolved in the seventies. The third All India Educational Survey section on education outside the school, published in 1979 is a very comprehensive program. The publication points out the three defects in present day education namely, the gap between a) the contents of formal education and the living experience of pupils, b) between the system of values it preaches and the goals set up by the society and c) between outmoded curricula and the modernizing of society. As a result the concept of adult education to supplement the formal education has been suggested. Its focus is on the improvement of the social and personal living. It involves not only teachers, but also health educators, agricultural supervisors, craft teachers, etc. it also involves communication media. Its aim goes beyond mere literacy. Also it includes the school drop-outs, from early age.

These three programs are indeed of great value, particularly for the children and mothers in the rural areas and urban slums. But the mere launching of programmes, however

spectacular, is of little value. What is important is the implementation of the programs. This involves continuous vigilance, in-service training, evaluation and modification.

Let us hope that this decade will see a real breakthrough in educational programs as well as in social behaviour and living conditions of the hundreds of millions now sunk in poverty, ignorance and illiteracy .
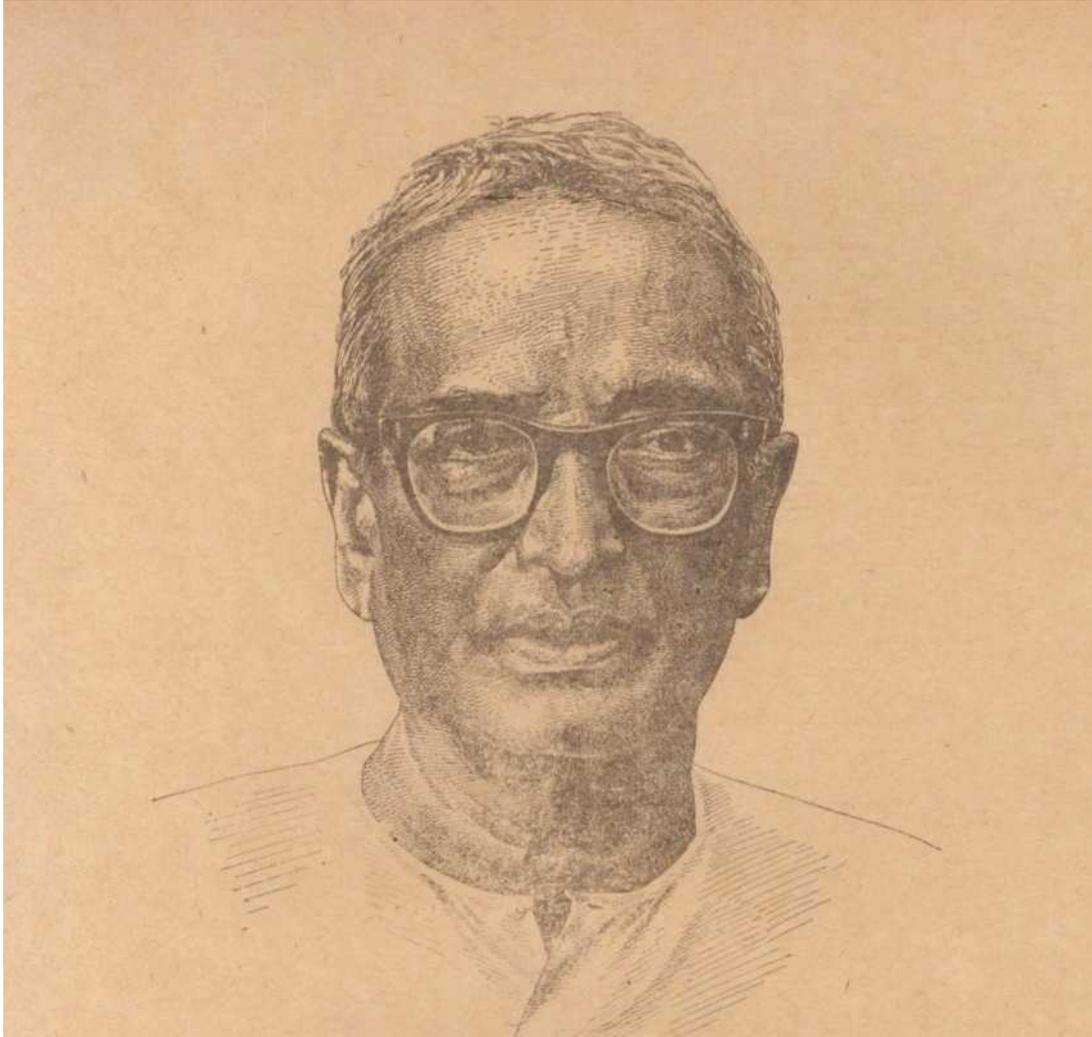
GANESH RAMRAO BHATKAL (1896-1972) devoted sixty plus years to promotion of knowledge and in serving several philanthropic causes.

He organized and guided many social and cooperative institutions working for the alleviation of the distressed—specially the needy students,' the helpless old and the unfortunate infirm. His help was available to many a willing youth wanting better education and several persons venturing to set up new enterprises.

- His dedication to duty, simplicity, humility, honesty, generosity and love of fellow-men endeared him to colleagues in the book industry which he led during the entire second quarter of the century. Founder of Popular Rook Depot he built the Institution as a public service devoted to advancement of learning.

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