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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Horse Racing

I have heard it argued that horse racing is necessary for breeding good horses. There may be truth in this. Is it not possible to have horse racing without gambling, or is gambling also an aid to the breeding of good horses?

Harijan, 4-9-37

M. K. G.

The Prime Minister Regarding English

The following piece of news is from *The Hindustan Times* of February 17, 1953:

"Speaking on the occasion of the Founder's Day of Modern School, New Delhi, Mr. Nehru on Sunday scoffed at those who in their false vanity and exhibitionism prided themselves on knowing English and on talking in English and putting emphasis on English and considered themselves superior to those who did not know English.

"The Prime Minister, who was visiting the school after 22 years, said he had the impression that there seemed to be an overemphasis on English at this school. English was a good language and its knowledge, as of other foreign languages, like French and Persian, was good. He had nothing to say against the English language, but it was bad to divide the people into English-knowing and non-English knowing. 'Our language is our language and we must be proud of it,' he added.

"He favoured introduction of basic education into colleges besides schools. He regretted that rapid progress had not been made in basic education."

It is really very welcome to hear from the Prime Minister regarding the place of English in our national life and education, specially when various persons of note and importance are, in and out of season, speaking with misplaced zeal and overemphasis on a subject about which they should lead and not confuse the common man, which unhappily is the result of their half-conscious pronouncements.

26-2-53

M. P.

Prohibition in Bihar

It appears from a report in the *National Herald* of Lucknow, dated 20-2-53 that during the question hour, in the Bihar State Assembly, in an answer to a query raised by some member, the Revenue and Excise Minister said that considering the present financial position it was not possible to introduce prohibition in the State. He added that there were many people in the State who considered use of drink a part of their

culture and civilization. A member of the Assembly protested against this observation. He said that allegation that there were men who regarded drink as a part of culture was wrong. But the Minister did not yield and stuck to his opinion. For fear of losing the revenue — was it not? Comment is not necessary.

But let the people of Bihar think it over and find out their own answer. Is there a drink culture in Bihar? May we however point out to the Minister that refusal to introduce prohibition on account of financial considerations is a violation of our Constitution and a betrayal of the trust of the people and, if he is a Congressman, a non-fulfilment of his solemn pledge? We hope he will reconsider his decision.

27-2-53

M. P.

(From Hindi)

Drink and Culture

A friend drew my attention to the following that appeared hundred years ago in *The Times of India* of January 11, 1853 and was reproduced in the issue of the same date in 1953. It will be interesting to read it along with the note above regarding 'Prohibition in Bihar'. It may also be noted that through prohibition we are now determined as a nation to remove the exotic culture of drink that beset our happy land during the foreign rule and influence of the British.

Hundred Years Ago

In the present state of India the example of the Europeans scattered throughout all its borders exerts a powerful influence on the native population. They are the depositories of power and influence. They are the representatives of the learning, the civilization and the Christianity of England. Their conduct is watched with the deepest interest: the sentiments which they express are carefully weighed. Like a city on a hill, they are exposed to general observation:—they are the subjects of close and general study. To introduce new evils and new vices among a partially enlightened, degenerate people is an easy work,—far easier than to eradicate those evils which have long prevailed. Hence if any pernicious customs, any evil habits prevail among the present rulers of India, these, in all probability, will be the first thing to be adopted by the native population. Thus the natives see that Europeans generally,—men of education, influence and worth habitually, both in public and private, indulge in the

use of intoxicating drinks :— that regardless of expense and difficulties they carry these drinks to the most distant and inaccessible stations, as if indispensable to health and happiness. Now in the course of years, what must be the effect of this constant example, operating as it does throughout the length and breadth of India? Will it not be, gradually, but certainly, to introduce these same drinking habits with all their attendant evils among this people? Thus individuals and families are involved in ruin; poverty and wretchedness spread through the land; grog-shops are multiplied; crime increases; such are the sure, the inevitable, results of the general use of intoxicating drinks.

27-2-'53

M. P.

Print for the Blind

The Village Industries Research Laboratory at Kora Gramodyog Kendra, Borivli, near Bombay, is working on a method of making readable to the blind text printed on standard printing presses.

The way of printing under research is based on the principle of incorporating in the printer's ink various substances which would swell out under the action of the other ingredients of the ink itself, or on wetting, heating, or exposure to the action of chemical substances.

The expanding substance may form a part of the ink's composition, or it may be added after printing by adhering to the wet surface of the ink.

For instance, shellac powdered on the surface of the freshly printed text and then baked in an oven will melt, mix with the ink, and expand, forming a raised outline which the tips of the fingers can easily follow.

Naturally, the method is not limited to any particular alphabet, nor does it require any special construction of press.

The purpose of this note is to make public the principle that printing can be made readable to the blind by raising the printed surface through incorporation of suitable substances in the ink before or after printing.

MAURICE FRYDMAN

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A NEW CHAPTER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KHADI

(By Shrikrishnadas Jaju)

1. With the constitution of the Khadi and Village Industries Board by the India Government, Khadi and Village Industries enter a new phase of their development. In the present article I shall be writing only about Khadi. Speaking generally, most of the State Governments have always been giving some financial help to Khadi, though looking to the magnitude of the work to be done, it was only nominal. But now by levying a cess on the mill-cloth, the India Government seems to have decided to render substantial help to Khadi industry.

2. Inaugurating the first meeting of the Board the Prime Minister said in the beginning that the first thing which occurred to him on the occasion was why they did not take this step four or five years ago. He did not provide an answer to this query though he realized the mistake. When substantial political power first came into our hands, Gandhiji was still with us. Proposals and schemes for the promotion of Khadi were then placed before the Governments and the authorities. We had then the advantage of a favourable atmosphere and the popular feeling of a strong regard for Khadi. If those in authority had seen their way to encourage Khadi at that time, Khadi could have made tremendous progress. Now all those favourable circumstances are lacking and special efforts will have to be made to secure them. To think that the cause of Khadi can prosper merely on the strength of money will only prove itself a delusion.

3. Khadi being costlier than mill-cloth, its marketing presents difficulties. If on the other hand its prices are brought down to the level of mill-cloth, huge losses will have to be incurred. That will necessitate excessive cess on the mill-cloth which the Governments will not like. Besides, it will not conduce to the right attitude in regard to Khadi. Therefore for the present it is proposed to make it available to the consumers without adding administrative overhead charges. Our experience shows that these overhead charges come to about two or three annas per rupee. Hence it is proposed to allow a discount of As. 3 per rupee. Even then it will cost more than mill-cloth. Under the circumstances it cannot be sold unless there is a sentiment in its favour. Inasmuch as it is intended to provide employment to the unemployed through hand-spinning, it will not be proper to curtail its production in the event of a reduction in the consumption of cloth. On the contrary, we have to try for its maximum expansion.

4. After Independence, there were many who thought that Khadi had now exhausted its utility and there was no more use for it. They argued Mahatmaji had linked Khadi to our fight for freedom and so it prospered. These friends seem to have forgotten that Mahatmaji had asked for a permanent place for Khadi in our economy. He considered it to be the symbol and the foundation of the Sarvodaya social order. But this will hardly appeal to those who have no faith in Sarvodaya itself. The lovers of Khadi however

still cherish that aim. Their approach to Khadi and village industries is different and they are carrying on Khadi work in their own way, especially from the point of view of self-sufficiency in cloth. The Government did not pay proper attention to Khadi so long. Now under the pressure of the situation they seem to have come to the conclusion that hand-spinning is necessary for solving the widespread unemployment and underemployment. The interest of the Governments is limited to that only. Even so, sentiment for Khadi will be necessary in order to ensure its consumption. The Charkha Sangh has made some suggestions to the Government to this end. It remains to be seen how far the Government will accept them. One thing is clear: It is the duty of all of us and the Government to create a favourable atmosphere for Khadi. We need sacrifice and industry in order that the nation may go ahead and Khadi can act as a potent means of inculcating these virtues.

5. Owing to the exigencies of the situation some of the main Khadi workers have accepted to become the members of the Board. Some friends have raised an objection that since Khadi really aims at something which is different from the limited aim of the Government, the presence of the front-rank Khadi workers in this Board will cause needless misunderstanding, and may lead to the alienation of the lovers of Khadi from its real aim. The fear is not unfounded. The Charkha Sangh decided to change over from commercial to self-sufficiency Khadi in 1945 when Gandhiji was still with us. And though in view of its usefulness as relief measure, it was not considered advisable to stop commercial production all at once, it was clearly understood that the Charkha Sangh would progressively withdraw from this side of its activity. Work in respect of the commercial Khadi then came to be entrusted to other institutions in the field, if such were available, and in their absence to the new ones which were created for the purpose. The present position is that except in Tamilnad, in all other provinces, the Charkha Sangh has curtailed its commercial Khadi work to a very great extent. It is being carried on now by certified institutions. In case of Tamilnad too, efforts were made to build up a new institution to take over the work, but there was no success. The newly formed Board will work for an expansion of Khadi on a big scale and since those who have been in Khadi work so long, are specially conversant with its working, it is quite proper to enlist their help. On the other hand, it is also true that with workers occupying themselves with this side of Khadi work, there may come about a slackening of the hold on the real aim of this work. But Khadi had both these aspects from the outset, first rendering relief to the unemployed poor and next propagating the ideal of self-sufficiency, which is essential for the Sarvodaya economic order. For solving the widespread unemployment in the country there does not appear to be, for the present at least, anything more efficacious than hand-spinning. Any measure which promises relief to the unemployed should be welcomed by all. Under the circumstances, when the Government shows its readiness to introduce Khadi on a big scale, how can the Khadi-workers refuse to help them? Of course we should take care to

keep our hold on the true aim of Khadi, despite our association with this venture. And in case of a conflict between the two, we should be prepared to shed our attraction for mere expansion and concentrate on our goal. As it is, one cannot, at this stage, foretell how things will develop. Only time will show that.

6. With the formation of the Board, the Khadi workers will have to shoulder new responsibilities. Khadi will be produced on a big scale. Efforts should therefore be made to meet all other difficulties, except the high prices which are unavoidable and which hinder its sale. Up to 1935 every attempt was made to strengthen the position of Khadi: Designs and varieties were developed and it was made artistically attractive so as to satisfy the taste of the various classes of buyers. Then for several reasons, the progress stopped. In the last few years, even the texture has deteriorated. We will have to introduce all those improvements again, so that the customers may buy willingly. The Governments are expected to purchase a lot of Khadi for some of their departments. It is necessary that the Khadi supplied to them keeps to the mark consistent with their needs. All these improvements are to be effected without any corresponding rise in the cost; everything has to be done economically. One more warning would seem to be necessary. Government is going to provide financial aid in various forms. Care should be taken to accept it and expend it in complete conformity with the rules evolved for the purpose.

7. We will have to be careful about one thing more. Because of the fall in the sale of Khadi, new production has very much gone down. Now if the Board succeeds in pushing up the consumption, the production will again go up before long to four or five times its present quantity. At the centres where there is large-scale hand-spinning, it will not take long to step up the production. But after it has reached the limit, further expansion can be achieved slowly because it takes time to train new spinners, to secure tools to them, and to let them improve the quality of yarn. These limitations will also apply to new centres. Therefore great caution has to be observed in a speedy stepping up of the production. The yarn will be crude which in its turn will adversely affect the quality of the cloth produced. Not only that, it may lead to far more dangerous result: there might be fear of resorting to mixed Khadi, i.e. admixture of mill-yarn. Therefore as soon as production outstrips the capacity of the centre, the management will have to be alert and so plan things as to preclude such a fear. The Charkha Sangh has devised, from its long experience, certain measures which may be adopted with advantage in fighting this evil. Even apart from all this, it is essential to be careful about the purity of Khadi at a time when production is on the increase. Production of Khadi is a far-flung affair spread over a number of villages and the admixture of mill-yarn will spell its complete failure.

Sevagram, 17-2-53
(From Hindi)

HARIJAN

March 7

1953

THE ALL-INDIA KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES BOARD

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

In a previous issue the reader must have seen the address of the Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlalji, which he gave while inaugurating the A. I. Khadi and Village Industries Board (briefly A. I. K. V. I. B.). There are one or two very important things in it, deserving our attention. Firstly, the Prime Minister admitted that a Board of the kind being instituted now ought to have been formed four years ago. If the Governments at the Centre and of the States had begun to attend to this work of Khadi and village industries immediately as we were free and with one policy and single-mindedness, — if this had been done, it would have meant a vast and desirable difference in the confusion of thought and conflicting policies and slow progress that are to be found at present. Moreover, we would have been less dazzled by the glamour of big industries and would have better realized what we should do by way of putting due limitations and control over them. At least, we would have realized earlier that the master-key to solve the problems of our economic regeneration is to be found in villages and through resuscitation of Khadi and small-scale village industries, and we would have been on our way to finding out ways and means for it. But it is no use crying over spilt milk. And it was in that spirit that the Prime Minister inaugurated the Board and said that, "in my own mind an idea is growing daily that the yardstick by which one can measure the economic progress of a country is the extent of employment.... Khadi and village industries have a great role to play in this sphere of solving unemployment. The issue, therefore, is not merely the advancement of the cause of Khadi and village industries. In it is involved the advancement of the cause of the nation and the wellbeing of the people. This should therefore be dovetailed into the general planning for the people as a whole."

The reader will probably say that this is nothing new. Gandhiji had said these things to us so often. This is true. And did he not tell us almost all that we were immediately required to do in this country for our wellbeing? There was no sphere of our national and social life, in which he did not enlighten us with his sage advice and suggesting effective programme. The question is, what we accepted and what we did about it all. Now the time has come when we should bestir ourselves with the added strength and resources of our own Government to implement that programme. What is significant therefore is that,

even though late, we still remember it and that the Prime Minister of India places it before the country, which means that the progress and advancement of Khadi and Village Industries now become the concern of the State and a Board is being formed to look after them. We may well hope that the delay in the formation of the Board will be made good by brisk work and closer attention to it.

The question before us is, how to energize village industries so that they regain their self-reliant place in the village economy. There was a time when it was so. Foreign rule destroyed them in its own interest as also in that of the big industries that came to ply in our country. It was treason against the good of our common people. Our chief problem is to undo that.

The Five Year Plan has thought of this question (Chap. 24) and has asked the A. I. K. V. I. Board to take up the following ten village industries first:

The village oil industry, soap-making with neem oil, paddy husking, palm gur industry, gur and *khandsari*, leather, manufacture of woolen blankets, manufacture of hand-made paper, bee-keeping, and cottage match industry.

Over and above these there is of course Khadi mentioned as a separate and special item. This is because Khadi is the sun round which the planetary system of the village industries rotates. Once Khadi is in its own, it will surely lend its strength to all others.

It is necessary that this work of regenerating Khadi and village industries should be done in the interest of the villages. I am sorry that the Five Year Planners did not recognize the urgency and importance of this to the extent which it deserves. Otherwise they would have concentrated their plan on this chief problem of removing unemployment and poverty among our people. However they have accepted one thing, that it will be necessary to regulate and control production and expansion of large-scale industries, consistently with the needs of the village industries prospering in due manner, and to impose a cess on the former. And on the other hand it is felt necessary that village industries are assured of the supply of raw materials at economic rates and of their research and training. This is obvious, but there are difficulties in the way, which should surely be removed.

There are two difficulties; Firstly, owners of large-scale industries and factories will object to any regulation and control and to the imposition of cess; and they are doing so already. Their industries are today a part of the economic and financial machinery of the Government as well as the people. Any factor that may require it to change will obviously create disturbance during the transition and hence might be a cause of their worry and irritation. However, inevitable as it is and in the wider interest of our people, these vested interests must learn to accommodate such an inevitability. If we think that in

our national economy there is a place for large-scale as well as small-scale industries, it means that they cannot be competing in themselves, but should be complementary to one another and be dovetailed into a common pattern for the good of our people as a whole; and if at all there was competition to be found between them, it would be upto our large-scale industries and factories to appreciate and eliminate it of their own accord. But we know that this principle, obvious and true as it is, is not equally easy to execute. This is the first difficulty that our Governments and factory-owners have to surmount.

The second is the difficult task of finding out how to dovetail these two types of industries. What will be its plan and programme? Which are the industries that should be taken up? All this must be gone into in detail and a comprehensive plan for it must be presented before the country. This is the work of the A. I. K. V. I. Board, and the people have to help it in this its great duty.

But has the Board adequate powers for it? — It may well be asked here. We may well rest assured in this matter that Government will surely give necessary and sufficient powers to do the work entrusted by it to the Board; the work of the Board will demand it as it goes further and Government will surely do the needful in its own interest. The chief thing is that the Board does its work well and keeps in view the larger issues which it is called upon to solve. It must not forget that its work is of ushering in our land a new era by finding out and executing ways and means of employing the vast masses of our rural population in producing their own needs of food and cloth and other simple things of their daily household life, and thus of removing the curse of their poverty and unemployment. This is not merely economic, but it is a fundamental change in the reconstruction of our body politic.

Looking to the economic aspect of this work, we have to note that if full employment should be the only legitimate aim of any economic planning worth the name, then the work of planning for full employment is to be done by this Board. It is hoped, the Board will do its work keeping this larger view before it. If the Board does this, it will be the real Planning Commission of the people. It is said that another plan is to follow the first one now under implementation and on its basis. The nature of such a future plan will depend upon how the A. I. K. V. I. Board functions and succeeds in its onerous duties. It will be the duty of all those who work for Khadi and village industries to help the Board with their advice and co-operation. The Board legitimately expects us all to give it. It is also necessary to bring economic thought and attention to bear on this, rather than on other miscellaneous items of the F. Y. Plan, because therein lies the way to find out a true economic plan for India.

(From the original in Gujarati)

25-2-'53

RE-INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH IN BOMBAY STATE

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

It is perhaps not known outside the State of Bombay that the Government of Bombay has adopted, since 1948, the policy of teaching English in the schools of the State from Std. VIII and not earlier, i.e. after a child finishes the seven years' course of primary or Basic education and if he desires to study further. Statistics show that out of 100 children that enter the school in Std. I only 10 at best continue in the secondary stage, and of these 10 studying in the secondary stage not even two on an average go to Higher Education. Moreover it is not sufficiently realized to what an extent such too early introduction of English has been one of the main causes of stagnation and wastage in primary and secondary schools.

Some interests in a few urban areas of the State are at present moving against this policy of the introduction of English from Std. VIII in the State, and they desire to pick holes in it and get it reversed. And it is amazing to learn that the Director of Education has obliged this move against State policy, by issuing a note to secondary schools and their teachers' associations and registrars of Universities of the State, asking them to send their opinion on this question of reintroducing English and thus reversing the well-considered policy of the State. Though I may, in fairness, add here that the D. E.'s note says that (this note) "is intended to provide a basis for discussion and does not necessarily reflect the views of Government." It is also queer that while on the one hand the D. E.'s note is sent to the Universities for their opinion, it is not sent to primary educational bodies like the School Boards etc., even though it is said in the note that "final decisions will be taken only after considering views of all those intimately concerned with problems of primary and secondary education."

The School Board of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in its meeting of 26-2-'53 discussed this question of re-introduction of English. The resolution that it passed is reproduced (from the original in Gujarati) below:

When to introduce the study of English in the educational system in Bombay State is being discussed at present. This School Board believes that it should express its opinion on this vital question concerning it.

English was never a subject of study in the primary education of this State even under the British Rule. And it is obvious that it was as it should be, as English should have no place in the primary stage of education.

Accordingly, English was not taught in the first seven years of a child's schooling. However, a bifurcation was allowed at the fifth year of schooling and middle schools and High Schools were permitted to teach English from that year, to the permanent detriment of seven years' primary education and its prestige and importance in the scheme of education in the State.

It also tended to less attention being paid to it comparatively to the upper stages of education. Consequently the primary stage of education of the citizen has been continually suffering under this handicap and it could not gather the importance it deserved in the system of education in the country. It is quite apparent now that, though unknowingly, this has greatly harmed the progress and development of the nation.

Educational reformers of the country have been expressing themselves that this thing was bad in various ways. Fifteen years ago Gandhiji focussed the attention of the people to this defect of our educational system by putting before the country his scheme of Basic Education, and thereby strengthened the forces of reforming this fundamental drawback at once. This has tremendous effect on our system of national education—to such an extent that today the nation has decided to adopt Basic Education as the pattern of primary education for the whole country.

Another important result of this was that the first seven years of a child's education were allotted a place of prestige in the national educational reconstruction, and the Constitution of India, accepting this principle, directs that: "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." (Constitution of India, 45)

During the last ten years, the Government of Bombay has taken two or three important steps to implement this reform. This Board appreciates and welcomes them. These were as follows:

1. The first eleven years of schooling that divide into two stages: primary and secondary, be serially graded as 1 to 11 standards, and the first seven standards came to be marked as for free and compulsory primary education.

2. English that was taught as a subject in the last 3 years of the primary seven years was stopped and the first seven years' course was planned to be developed as a continuous one unit as Basic Education in the State.

3. In the last 3 years of such a seven years' unit, was introduced the study of Hindi, as the national language.

The above-mentioned reform began three years ago, and it is showing good and desirable effect: The primary stage of education has grown in importance and favourable atmosphere for the acceptance of this reform in education is being created among the general public.

Last year, the above-mentioned scheme of reform was disturbed by reintroducing English in Std. VII. This Board considers it a faulty step. That the reintroduction of English in Std. VII is optional to the child has rather gone worse in that it has brought about two types of students entering Std. VIII, those that had English in Std. VII and those without it. This has resulted in disturbing the harmonious and uniform work of Std. VIII or else it has made admission to Std. VIII difficult for those who came without English from Std. VII.

Moreover, by such a change in this well-considered scheme of reform there has grown in the mind of the public a kind of want of confidence in the fixity and continuity of Government policy, a thing which is very harmful for the growth and development of a sound educational system.

Now at present a further suggestion is being mooted that English be reintroduced in Std. VI and V even. This Board emphatically protests against it and requests Government that the policy initiated since 1948 should be strictly adhered to. And consequently English that was reintroduced optionally in Std. VII last year should continue in no manner; and the study of

English should be introduced only after the 7 years of primary or Basic Education course.

It must be remembered that Hindi and Handicraft have been introduced as subjects of study in Stds. V to VII. If English is reintroduced in these standards, this welcome reform will have little scope or time to flourish; not only that, it will mean a heavy additional burden of the study of quite a new language on the student. Therefore English should not be given place along with the study of Hindi in Stds. V to VII, but may well have its place from Std. VIII, wherefrom should begin legitimately secondary school courses.

Hence, this Board recommends to Government that Government should firmly adhere to its well-defined policy of introducing English from Std. VIII.

This Board thinks that Primary Education being its legitimate sphere of activity, the change of reintroducing English concerns it and therefore its opinion on the matter should be known by the Government.

27-2-53

FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR VILLAGES

[This is the concluding instalment of "Full Employment Plan of a Village". Previous three instalments appeared in the *Harijan* of 14th, 21st and 28th February.

—Ed.]

Building up Village Leadership

One outstanding gain to be derived from reorganizing village life, as indicated (in previous instalments), is that it will build up village leadership. Today wealth and talent are drained from villages to cities and villages are left without leadership, a factor greatly responsible for the stagnation of village life. The reorganization is likely to put a stop to this drain and provide opportunities for local talents through public institutions and gainful occupations in the form of village industries. The reorganization providing opportunities for development on a wider basis will also change social values which are today of a negative character based on rigid caste rules. The village development programme as envisaged here, is thus bound to develop as a socio-economic programme aiming not merely at greater material wellbeing but also establishing a casteless and classless social order based on moral values. The economic programme has been more fully dealt with here, because it provides the framework even for social values and facilitates social reform.

We have called village development a planning movement. A co-ordinated approach implied in planning does make for the best possible use of the resources, but in its wider aspect planning makes the masses move and releases their creative energy for productive purposes. It has, of course, to be emphasized that planning to be real has to be undertaken by the local people concerned with the help and guidance of Grama Sevaks and experts. The Grama Sevak should keep this central idea in view and rather than preparing a plan for the people, he should set them on the task of making their own plan. Being vitally interested in local projects they will naturally take active part in framing and executing the plan.

Welfare Work v. Social Order

Should this be regarded as a tall order to be accomplished by the village people? Those with a morbid outlook depict a gloomy picture of the idleness and ignorance of the village people and hold that moral betterment should precede development programmes involving radical changes in the social structure. Moral betterment is to be achieved through welfare activities. These, however, keep the people dormant and expectant of help and benefits which are limited by the availability of outside resources and do not release their creative energy on the basis of self-help. Creative energy can only be released by a programme based on positive outlook and conceived in terms of a social order which guarantees full employment with a full standard of life and of providing a social framework which is capable of achieving the objective. The Gandhi Ghar Plan* prepared for Vedchhi envisages such a social order and provides a social framework in the form of the village working as a compact unit. By creating circumstances of which man is often a creature, the Gandhi Ghar Plan provides incentives to people to shed frustration and morbidity and to be up and doing.

Full Employment Not Possible?

There are people who suggest that provision of full employment to our masses is hardly feasible under conditions of our backward economy. We can only invite such people to study the Vedchhi Plan* which promises to raise employment from 66% to about 100% within the very first year of its execution and to provide a decent standard of life in respect of diet, clothing, housing, education, health and other amenities.

The Theory of Unit Cost

The theory of unit cost which seems to dominate the minds of people requires to be examined in a proper setting viz., in fixing terms of work for the primary producer in the rural areas. On what terms does the nation want the farmer to produce food or raw material for it? If the issue is forced, minimum wages which can ensure a decent standard of life will have to be determined for the farmer and the farm labourers. But minimum wages pre-suppose full employment, which our agriculture today does not provide. This leaves two courses of action: either agriculture is rationalized and the surplus population is provided with other occupations or the population dependent on agriculture is given a minimum wage on the basis of the volume of employment that it affords at the present level. In the latter case the prices of agricultural produce will have to be sufficiently high. It is no longer possible to keep these prices residual as is the case today. This theory of residual prices for agricultural produce or for raw materials is going to be questioned very seriously. As in the

case of manufactured goods, there will be persistent demand for relating the prices of agricultural produce to cost on the basis of minimum wages and, if the farmers get themselves sufficiently organized, there is no reason why they would not demand the right to determine the prices of their produce on their own terms. If then, minimum wage has to be provided to the farmer and the farm labourer it can be done either by raising the price of the agricultural produce or by reducing the cost of production through diversion of surplus population to occupations other than agriculture. If village industries can fulfil the role of providing these other occupations they should be looked upon as a mode of production capable of filling in the gaps of a planned economy especially for rural areas. Thus the question of unit cost assumes quite a different form and a different significance. You either pay a higher unit cost for the agricultural produce or a higher unit cost for the village industries products.

(Concluded)

SOVIET WAGES AND PRICES

Sir,

Mr T. Cherconitonko, leader of the Soviet delegation bringing food 'gifts' to India declared that the average Soviet worker earned Rs 600 per month. The Soviet dictators have... a great propaganda-drive of alleged economic achievements and rising consumption standards. This planned propaganda is retailed through local communists and fellow-travellers and lazy-minded lecturers and journalists who, instead of undertaking a serious study of the subject, mouth and scribble current slogans. So that our people may form their own mind and judge for themselves, we give the following table:

	1926/27 roubles	July 1, 1950 roubles	Increase
Bread, rye	(kg) .08	2.0	25 times
Milled groats	" .106	4.00	28 "
Flour, 3rd grade	" .21	3.91	20 "
Butter	" 2.2	40.32	18 "
Sugar, lump	" .717	13.20	18 "
Milk (liter)	.22	3.15	15 "
Eggs (10)	.5	11.9	24 "
Calico (meter)	.4	8.58	22 "
Shoes, leather (man's pair)	8.75	221	25 "
Wages (yearly average)	624	6,000	9 1/2 "

It is clear that Soviet standards of living have halved during the period of communist domination and exploitation. The rigours of poverty have increased further because the wealth is very unequally divided. At the base is about 10 million to 20 million labour; at the apex are the NKVD officials and Red Army generals, party hierarchs and expensive propagandists. At least 40 per cent of the total income is consumed by the privileged 12 per cent.

* See the book, 'Full Employment Plan of a Village', Sec. II and III which deal with it.

VICE AND MODERN CONDITIONS

[From a report (*National Herald*, January 29, 1953) of a speech by Shri K. M. Munshi while inaugurating the third All-India Conference on Moral and Social Hygiene, January 28, 1953, Lucknow.]

"I want the Conference to note the several factors which have been contributing to an increase in commercialized vice.

Joint Family and Caste

The joint family, which provided an insurance against a drift of helpless women to street life is breaking up. . . . "Each caste in the past had its own public opinion, its social and moral code, and its regulative agency. This provided a check on irresponsible behaviour and imposed a collective responsibility on the caste to look after the needs of the helpless members. The caste feeling has more or less disappeared in educated circles in India.

Modern Urban Life

"The next great factor which multiplies the problem is the growth of large cities. In such cities, the caste feeling tends to become weak ; no caste control is possible ; group life, as known in the west, is unorganized. Disparity in the proportion of sexes is on the increase.

"In large cities where the upper classes adopt western ways, educated women live a life different from ordinary women. They do no manual work, even the bringing up of children is left to maid-servants. In old days, the more highly placed the woman was the more strict was she in her behaviour. But now the maid-servant, coming from the rural or the poor classes, is first shocked at the transparent *saris* and low-necked blouses of the mistress and her free and easy ways with men. Then the mistress becomes to her the standard of respectability, the object of envy. She tries to imitate her mistress ; she has however no social life except with male servants. Naturally, her moral inhibitions break down. She takes to a profession which makes easy for her to satisfy her craving to live — may be in tinsel form — like her mistress.

Impact with West

"The result of impact with the west has given us certain notions which have led to a change in moral and spiritual standards. The purity of woman was, in India, a fundamental article of unalterable faith. Its supremacy was unchallenged throughout the land. Even those communities which, for want of culture, did not accept it in practice, looked forward to it as the standard associated with higher social status. This supremacy is either challenged or undermined in the very classes which once upheld it as the law of life. Marriage was a sacrament —, the marriage of souls. Modern notions have made of it a contract, a thing which could be easily dissolved. Still worse, where the influence of the west is greatest, marriage has come to be looked upon as a marriage for pleasure. Luckily in India, however,

among large classes of people, sanctity of marriage is still a cherished article of faith.

"Another factor is the movement of large masses of uprooted migrants after the Partition particularly to the large overcrowded cities.

"Another feature is the disappearance of certain wholesome taboos. In India, for instance, we had an inborn inhibition against members of different sexes not married to each other coming into physical contact. It put a rigid, almost a physical barrier on the sex urge. Western impact is breaking it down."

Sex Propaganda

"But more than any other factor responsible for increase in the vice is the sex propaganda going on in all urban areas. Everyday, agencies of propaganda — newspapers, cinema houses, songs and literature — give lessons on disregarding taboos and customs, in defying social and moral inhibitions which have built up self-restraint in the course of centuries. If the cinemas have produced one devastating effect, it is to undermine the sanctity of sex relations. Even the modern advertisements weaken sex-restraint emphasizing sex in glamorous terms. Everyone complains against this menace. No one has seriously thought of meeting it. It is for this association to be in the forefront of the movement to purge the country of this evil.

Birth-Control

"Even our family planning activities require to be conducted a little carefully. In the measurable future they are not likely to affect the rate of population growth appreciably. Out of the daily increase of 10,000 hungry mouths in the country, it would be unreasonable to expect a reduction of even a thousand mouths in ten years. But a very active propaganda for family planning has had deleterious effects in the U.S.A. and other countries, as testified by social studies, and is likely to have similar effects here : The sanctity attached to marriage tends to disappear ; the family tends to disintegrate ; the moral basis of society to be undermined. Planning aids, widely advertised, teach people that restraint is no longer necessary ; that promiscuity has no danger ; that aids are cheaper than marriage."

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