

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

CONCENTRATE ON THE VILLAGE

(By Gandhiji)

In reply to a question by Maurice Frydman, viz. —

“What then is the secret of your concentration on the village?” Gandhiji said:

“I have been saying that if untouchability stays, Hinduism goes; even so I would say that if the village perishes India will perish too. It will no more be India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers, as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villages using even modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.”

“I have been trying to understand your village industries movement,” said Mr Frydman, “for the last two years, but I have learnt today in a few minutes what I had not learnt during these two years. You are more radical than Socialists. They are against the worker being exploited; you are not only against this, but also against the worker exploiting others.”

Harijan, 29-8-'36

There is no question of refusing to take advantage of labour-saving devices. If the villagers had enough to eat and to clothe themselves with, there would be no cause for home-grinding or home-husking, assuming that the question of health was not of any importance or, if it was, there was no difference between home-ground flour and mill-ground, or home-husked rice and mill-husked. But the problem is that the villagers became idle when they left off husking and grinding even for their own use, and made no good use of their idle hours, whether for uplift or otherwise. A starving man or woman who has time on his or her hand will surely be glad to earn an honest anna during that time, for he or she will resent being advised to save his or her labour

when either can turn it into a few pice to alleviate starvation.

I have no partiality for return to the primitive method of grinding and husking for the sake of them. I suggest the return, because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who are living in idleness.

In my opinion, village uplift is impossible, unless we solve the pressing economic distress. Therefore, to induce the villagers to utilize their idle hours is in itself solid uplift work.

Harijan, 30-11-'34

ENGLISH — PREJUDICES AND FACTS

[Below are extracts pertaining to the problem of English from the Presidential Address of Shri Jhinabhai R. Desai, Principal, Sheth C. N. Vidyavihar, Ahmedabad, at the third Convention of All Gujarat Secondary Teachers' Organizations held at Gavada on the 24th and 25th January, 1953.]

For sometime past stories have been current to the effect that as a result of the abolition of English from the lower standards of schools in Bombay State, Secondary Schools have received a great set-back and many Secondary teachers are thrown out of employment. From that point of view it will be pertinent to place before this Conference some relevant figures without any comments. In the year 1947-'48 when English was still being taught from V Standard the total number of students studying in the Secondary Schools was 3,08,541. After that English was abolished and within three years thereof, in the year 1950-'51, this number rose to 4,13,000. Thus within a short span of 3 years more than a lakh of students were added to the strength of those in the Secondary Schools. The proportion of the schools has not increased accordingly. In 1947-'48 Secondary Schools numbered 1,199. In 1950-'51 the number rose to 1,296. This means that there has been an increase of about 8 per cent in the number of schools, whereas the rise in the percentage of Secondary School students has been by about 33 per cent. From these figures it will be easy for one to judge for oneself the soundness or otherwise of the statement pertaining to the precarious position of Secondary Schools as a result of the abolition of English.

Did We Err ?

It is a commonly accepted fact that the place

that English had acquired in our curriculum was unnatural and that it had crippled the expression and intellect of the child to an unbelievable extent. Hence very appropriately our State took the bold step of abolishing English from the first seven standards. Subsequently English was permitted to be taught optionally in the VII Standard. Consequently in our State, as a matter of fact, pupils now learn English for 5 years. But recently the stories have been made current that in this measure our Government had very grievously blundered. It has been stated that our State has been a solitary exception in the whole of India in respect of such a step with the result that in the competitive sphere with regard to Government Services, Public Service Examinations, Trades, Business and Banking Concerns students from our State stand at a great disadvantage as compared with those from other Indian States. Similarly, as in the Universities also, it is stated, the medium of instruction is English, it will create great difficulties for our students. All these matters need to be carefully and dispassionately scrutinized without any bias.

Let us take the first statement. As a State are we alone in the whole of India to take such a progressive step? Barring some solitary exceptions various Indian States have more or less reduced the number of years devoted to the teaching of English in their schools. From that point of view the following table is worth a careful perusal. It shows the number of years for which English is being compulsorily taught in various Indian States before the school-leaving stage. The population figures in different States are also given along with these details. This will give us an idea of the number of people who are with us in this great experiment of ours.

English for 8 years	
State	Population
1. Ajmer	6,13,000
2. Manipur	5,78,000
3. Tripura	6,39,000
	18,30,000

English for 7 years	
State	Population
1. Assam	90,44,000
2. Delhi (only for boys) (for girls 6 years)	17,44,000
3. Cutch	5,68,000
	1,13,56,000

English for 6 years	
State	Population
1. West Bengal	2,48,10,000
2. Madras	5,70,16,000
3. Orissa	1,56,48,000
4. Hyderabad	1,86,55,000
5. Mysore	90,75,000
6. PEPSU	34,14,000
7. Travancore Cochin	92,80,000
8. Coorg	2,29,000
9. Bhopal	8,36,000
	13,89,61,000

English for 5 years	
State	Population
1. Punjab	1,29,41,000
2. Jammu & Kashmir	Not available
3. Bilaspur	1,26,000
4. Himachal Pradesh	9,83,000
5. Vindhya Pradesh	35,75,000
	1,76,25,000

English for 4 years	
State	Population
1. Bihar	4,02,26,000
2. Bombay (5 years by option)	3,59,56,000
3. Saurashtra	41,87,000
	8,03,19,000

English for 2 years	
State	Population
1. Uttar Pradesh	6,32,16,000
2. Madhya Bharat	79,75,000
3. Rajasthan	1,52,91,000
	8,64,82,000

These details are for the year 1951-'52. They do not include details for Madhya Pradesh as some important decisions are reported to have been recently taken in that State with regard to English, but I have not been able to collect any authentic information about the same. So far English was taught there for 7 years and its population is 2,12,58,000. From the figures given above it can be gathered that there are three States including ours that teach English for 4 years and their total population is 8,03,19,000. There are three other States who teach English compulsorily for two years only in the last two standards and their strength is 8,64,82,000. If the population of both these groups which is 16,68,01,000 were taken into account it will be almost half of the total population of our Union which is about 35,00,00,000. As a matter of fact, English is being taught in our State for 5 years. Hence the population of such other States (which is 1,76,25,000) also should be included in this group. From that point of view the total population of those States where English is taught for a year more than in our State, (i.e. for 6 years) is 13,89,61,000.

From this it will be seen that we have a majority of the population of our Union with us in the step with regard to English which our Government have taken. How then could it be said that we have been alone in this venture? In these circumstances it is indeed very difficult to understand the statement of those that maintain that our State in this respect had blundered.

This apart, it is hardly practicable to insist upon a uniformity in educational programme through the length and breadth of such a vast country as ours. It is but natural that the educational systems and contents of different States should be based on their basic requirements and to that end some differences are bound to exist in the educational system, from State to State. Neither in the past nor today in different

Indian States has there been a uniformity in the number of school years leading to the school-leaving examination. In some that stage is reached within 10 years whereas in others the period for the same is 11 years. Similarly the insistence that English should be taught in all these States on a uniform level is also out of place. If for instance a State like Assam may deem it necessary, because of its peculiar local conditions, to teach English for more years than we do in our State, should we also adjust our programme accordingly? It is needless to state that there would be hardly any sense in doing so. In short today in India there are two major groups with regard to the teaching of English, viz. one group teaching it for 6 years and the other for 5 years or less. The first group consists of about 14 crores of people, the latter of about 18 crores. We are among the 18 crores. Should we take the plan of the minority viz. 14 crores as our ideal and go back on a very important step we have taken?

Then it is our common experience that as a result of the abolition of English from the lower standards the intellectual efficiency of our students has increased. With regard to English the teachers who have taught that subject in schools for a good many years assert that those students who are in the IX Standard today and have learnt English in the new set-up of things will, so far as English is concerned, be on par when they reach XI Standard with the standard of English as it exists today in the XI Standard. I have found this claim to be highly justifiable after a careful personal investigation and Ahmedabad Headmasters' Association and Secondary Teachers' Association have in joint collaboration thought of undertaking investigation in the matter on a very wide scale. In these circumstances I would very respectfully urge upon the Government to appoint a committee of experts to investigate into the results of the working of the new syllabus on the general development of the students and their attainment in English. The Government should entertain no proposal for a change in the *status quo* till it is in possession of the findings of such a committee. I am confident that the findings of such a committee will be almost like our own experience in the matter which compels us to sound a note of warning against any hasty step. In this respect it will be worth while drawing the attention of the Government to the fact that the way they revised under external pressure their original decision of abolishing English from the Middle School and permitted it to be taught optionally from the VII Standard has created our present troubles. Now to yield further to such a pressure and make still more compromises by permitting English to be taught optionally from the V Standard will be fraught with very grave results and I very earnestly request the Government not to commit the mistake of yielding to such a pressure.

I SAW THE MAHATMA

(By K. S.)

Sunny and bright was the day
The evening was happy and gay
It was ere Independence Day
I went my homage to pay
To the Mahatma — the belov'd father
Of our nation. And people did gather
In their thousands to hear the Saint
And in their minds his impression paint.
I have in pictures seen him
And guess'd a form tall and dim;
But now my opinion I reverse
To tell the truth the whole universe.
Amid the vast multitude, I saw
The glowing form and stood struck with awe.
His colour was that of sandalwood,
As though he had attained childhood.
His face was calm and peaceful,
To a child it wasn't fearful.

His lips were always ready with a smile,
The protruding nose deserv'd a look 'while.
The loving eyes beneath his determin'd brows
Were seats of *Ahimsa* for political grouse.
The bald head with golden hairs sparse
Ever fill'd with all his people's cares.
There sat he upright on the pulpit high
With his children squatted in silence nigh.
He with shrill manly voice began to speak
And everyone did pin-drop silence seek.
Some with eyes fixed at him began to stare,
Some with open mouths seemed to gulp words

And some with't faith did begin to adore,
Yet some mischievous tried their tricks no more.
His real voice that was ever stronger
Won't have its magic spell any longer:
For he is laid in an eternal couch
By Fate's vile yet inevitable touch.
The whole nation and indeed the whole world

The perennial tears swelled and swept
And inundat'd the entire surface of earth
And every mourner strove to 'void his death.

The cataclysm began to subside
But only by slow degrees died:
For it is fruitless as the saying goes
To cry ov'r spillt milk. It was an SOS
Heard from a distant ship in a disturb'd sea
That was wrecked by ocean's rage in glea
Ere the rescue convoy could reach the spot
To save the souls from their fatal lot.

India in him has lost a precious jewel
Her countenance, without it, doesn't look well
Should all global riches the void level,
Nay, it can't so well her beauty refill.

Oh! like mighty Caesar his life he gave
Moved he not the precious soul to save;
Or like Jesus who preached people oft
Real path to learn eternal blisses loft.
Endured he great Abraham Lincoln's fate,
As he full well knew his end ere late:
For the President slain soon after freedom won
Thus the price of peerless freedom given.

HARIJAN

Feb. 14

1953

REGARDING BASIC EDUCATION

(By Magambhai P. Desai)

A valued friend who was present at the UNESCO Regional Conference on Primary Education, Bombay, writes as follows in the course of his letter :

"I have read with interest through the valuable editorial that you have written in the *Harijan* of January the 10th, under the heading 'Planning for Basic Education'. I agree with the good deal of what you have said and, in fact, I may venture to point out that the criticism that you have made about the kind of Primary Education in the ordinary schools and the lines on which it can be reconstructed is a matter of common agreement amongst all discerning educationists. I would, however, take the liberty to point out that the remark made by you regarding the role of the Indian Delegation at the UNESCO Regional Conference is not quite fair and is obviously due to the fact that you have had to rely on the Press reports which are not naturally concerned with, or even know very much about, the actual educational discussions that go on in the various Committees and Commissions, but only pick out whatever appears to have to be of 'sensational' interest. The Indian Delegation did bring very clearly and emphatically the contribution made by Basic Education to the whole idea of Education at this level. In the Curriculum Commission as well as the Commission on Teachers' Training this problem was specifically discussed. In fact, you may perhaps be interested to know that the long resolution which you have quoted with approval at the end of your editorial was actually drawn up and proposed by.....(an Indian) member of the Curriculum Commission, and it was accepted unanimously and almost without any change. A good deal of discussion preceded its adoption, because some of the ideas underlying it were new to the delegates who had come from the other countries and they had to be convinced that this was the proper approach. You would, however, appreciate the fact that we could not very well insist on the term 'Basic Education' being adopted by all the countries of the region concerned and, therefore, the only practical and reasonable approach was to incorporate, in the general recommendation, some of the main ideas which underlie the concept of Basic Education and leave room for elasticity and local adjustment which may be found necessary in view of local conditions."

I gladly accept the correction and thank the friend for it. However, I do not quite agree why a resolution appreciating in a general way the Basic Education Scheme of India could not be considered its proper work by the Seminar. Nor do I quite see why India, in all humility but with the firmness born of the courage of conviction, did not give a bold and clear report of what she has done and achieved till now in this field and how it proposed to change the entire field of education through the new idea given to her by the Father of the Nation. I also view with very

grave concern the steady reaction gaining ground, that is apparent at high level, regarding agreed educational reforms, some of the most important of which are the improvement in the position of English in our educational system, place of Hindi in secondary and higher education, the introduction of handicrafts in schools, and recognition of the social and cultural importance of regular manual labour by students. This is also telling very adversely upon the progress and development of Basic Education or whatever is being done about it at present. If Basic Education is what we swear by as our national policy and programme, it is not enough if we are merely interested in it or conversant with what it says. We have to implement it and show results and perfect it further so as to march on to reform secondary and higher stages of education as well. And if we wish to be forewarned before the surging tide of democratic ideas that are rapidly growing in the countryside and the fast growing impatience of the masses to be in their own and assert themselves and their rightful position in our new democracy, — before these overwhelm us, one has to be impatient about immediate things that matter here and now. Basic Education is one such thing. According to Basic Education, education is what teaches or should teach the nation how to live well and peacefully by producing and distributing justly our basic needs of food and cloth etc. ; therein is contained the whole programme of all education worth the name. Therefore, all I intended to convey through my previous article was the urgency of action and of progressing further, in howsoever small a step but with a firm and convincing one, and not allowing reaction or conservatism and vested interest overpowering it. I will be only glad to be assured of this, which unhappily the present situation in matters educational does not do.

31-1-53

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NOTES

Hindi and English

The *National Herald*, Lucknow, in its editorial of January 29, 1953, regarding 'Hindi and English' says:

"In spite of the stonewalling to which many admirers of English—and English cricket—resort, it is increasingly admitted that no mental laziness should further delay active thinking about displacement of English, if the educational system is not to collapse in a confusion of standards. Those in charge of education at least must give up unsatisfactory habit of making statements involving them in the illogicalities inherent in ill-thought-out programmes.

"The discussions on the language problem converge on two points, that Hindi shall replace English as the official language of the Union of India within the next 15 years and that English shall not continue to be the medium of instruction. Any distraction from the theme can only be by way of discussing the time-table. . . . The trouble is with regard to the time-table and the reaction following the threat of dislocation of the vested interests."

Will our men "in charge of education" at least heed to the warning and advice contained in the remarks quoted above?

2-2-53

M. P.

Clarification Necessary

The following is from a speech of Shri Purushottamas Tandon while inaugurating at Gorakhpur, January 27, the first session of the Gorakhpur Janapada Sahitya Sammelan.

"In certain areas of the country slogans for regional languages or English have been raised. It is very dangerous for the country. It was really imperilling the country's freedom by still refraining from changing the working in certain offices from English to Hindi. Hindi should be our compulsory language and other languages like Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati etc. be taught as second language. But in no case English should be our compulsory language." (*The Leader*, Allahabad, January 30, 1953).

I hope Shri Tandonji was speaking for U. P. and other parts where Hindi is a regional language and not the whole country when he said that 'Hindi should be our compulsory language and other languages like Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati etc. be taught as second language.' The report quoted above creates doubt and cause for fear in the mind of the reader, specially so because Shri Tandonji is against the retention of Urdu as a State language, even though it is another regional language of U. P. He owes to the country to clearly state what, according to him, should be the position of regional languages in regard to their importance as the medium of instruction and administration in their respective regions.

2-2-53

M. P.

VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT — A PLANNING MOVEMENT

[This is the first instalment of "The Full Employment Plan for a Village" as stated in the previous issue of 7-2-53 — 'Planning for Full Employment']

Planning for Economic Freedom

We have reached a stage when village development cannot be attempted by piecemeal or token activities. The development programme has now to aim at complete economic freedom for the village masses, providing them with minimum standards of life. The first thing for the villages to do to achieve this objective is to take the initiative of shaping their life out of their resources. They will have to control all sources of waste and exploitation which they can do only by pooling resources and by functioning as organized groups. In other words, village communities will have to set before them the task of planning for the best possible use of their resources for the attainment of higher standards of life.

2. Stopping Waste and Exploitation

The village communities can undertake planning as indicated above on the basis of political and economic decentralization. Through political decentralization, Gram Panchayats can be empowered to be self-governing units within certain limits and can mobilize resources within their jurisdiction to the best advantage. They can, for example, put a stop to waste which means misuse or non-use or under-use of resources and takes various forms such as (1) waste of man and animal power; (2) waste of water resources; (3) waste of manurial resources; (4) soil erosion; (5) uncultivated lands. They can also influence public finance policies which draw funds from rural areas and spend largely on towns and cities. Economic decentralization can stop exploitation of rural areas which takes such forms as (1) unremunerative prices of agricultural produce; (2) unfavourable balance of trade arising out of the exchange of low priced raw materials for high priced finished goods and the consequent loss of processing cost to the villages. Decentralization, both political and economic, which is a distinguishing feature of Sarvodaya, is capable of building up a prosperous life for the village communities.

3. Restating the Proposition

Even though Sarvodaya is thus capable of enriching the life of the village masses, they do not seem to put forth any irresistible demand for its establishment. In political sphere, village communities do appreciate and aspire for the decentralization of power. It is in the economic sphere, however, that they have yet to appreciate the benefits of decentralization. If the programme of economic decentralization has not so far impressed them, it is not because of its inherent

weakness but because of its unco-ordinated presentation.

In the first place, the masses have been allowed to form an unfortunate impression about the Sarvodaya order of society as promising a hard life full of drudgery, through the non-use of scientific achievements. Secondly, the Sarvodaya Programme could upto now be presented to the people only in the form of token activities which could neither produce any appreciable change for the better in the life and conditions of the people nor could they present a picture of life emerging out of a co-ordinated plan. Unco-ordinated items could only expose their weak points. It is only an integrated approach making for a total programme that can give legitimate places to items which could then contribute to the total prosperity of a group. It is thus a question of restating the proposition of Sarvodaya in a form which can be appreciated by the masses and in which they see their *udaya* — prosperity. The best way to do this is to make the masses realize that Sarvodaya is not a mere pious programme but the only one capable of building up a prosperous life for them in a most orderly manner. To this end, some definite and concrete basis of the programme will have to be defined and the whole edifice built upon it so as to demonstrate the practicability and the utility of such a programme.

4. The Basis of the Programme

The following directive principles of the Constitution can well be made the basis of this programme :

The State shall direct its policy towards securing —

(i) that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood ;

(ii) that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subservise the common good ;

(iii) that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment and

(iv) the State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organization or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and in particular, the State shall endeavour to promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas.

[The following directives also should be included in the programme. It must be noted that the development programme is meant to be for *Samagra* Gram Seva; it should touch the whole life of the village community. Hence the directive principles regarding Prohibition, Basic Education, Go-Seva also must be made the basis of the Plan.

29-1-'53

"GRAMODAYA KHADI SANGH"

(By Krishnadas Gandhi)

[The following decision was taken by the Trustees of the Charkha Sangh in their meeting at Tirupur on the 20th November, 1952.]

Till now the Charkha Sangh was engaged in making individual spinners spin and in purchasing yarn from them. From now onwards steps should be taken for this kind of Khadi work to be carried out by Grama Samitis. Special efforts for maximizing local consumption of Khadi should also be made.

For several years in the past the Charkha Sangh was not only doing production and sale of Khadi but also trying through the same work to spread the message of Khadi among the people by placing before them new programme of work periodically. The above-said resolution is also only one such. This is an indication of the efforts made towards achievement of the ideals of Khadi by the Charkha Sangh.

The Charkha Sangh has taken this decision only after taking stock of the present situation and the general atmosphere. The atmosphere is changing speedily, most unexpectedly and strangely giving rise to new and never known problems before we could think of tackling any of them. On one side poverty and hunger is stalking the length and breadth of the country. On the other side unemployment and under-employment is also increasing every day. Centralized mass production industries are also growing. Due to the competition by the mass production industries the few cottage industries that still remain with the people as their means of livelihood are fast dying out. The same fate is overtaking Khadi work also. The Government, the people and Khadi artisans, all are agreed to accept Khadi as a means of giving employment to the masses. But at the same time they want mill cloth also for its cheapness. These two desires are mutually conflicting. This conflict has to be eliminated.

The mutual conflict between the mill and Khadi has not so far been understood clearly by the people. Making the people realize this basic conflict is also one of the fundamental objectives of Khadi work. The people have not so far realized this basic conflict because they have not done any Khadi work themselves. If the villagers and artisans take an increasing share in the management of the Khadi work of their own villages it may be increasingly possible for them to realize the conflict. They may become more and more conscious about their fundamental rights and safeguards for work. They may also think of boycott of mill goods, and of taking the pledge of Gramodyoga products in their daily life.

Today there is one school of thought in the country which contends that it is fundamentally wrong to assume that there is a basic conflict between the mill industry and the Khadi industry. They say that the country should be ready to derive the benefits from both the mill and Khadi industries by devising ways and means of co-ordinating them to work as complementary to

each other. Now, the question is only how to bring about this co-ordination. Even for co-ordinating the mill and the charkha, control over the mills and safeguards for Khadi are of paramount importance. The importance of this also will be more keenly appreciated and understood by the people when they themselves do Khadi work.

In addition to the above advantages, there may be several other benefits accruing incidentally by inducing the people to take more and more responsibility in Khadi work. The village-folk may develop a sense of self-reliance and self-help in themselves and gradually become free from the sense of helplessness and frustration.

The Charkha Sangh has decided to get as many of their best workers as possible free from the fetters of routine clerical work and to send them out into the villages to organize such village committees of local people and artisans to take the responsibility to do the Khadi work in their own villages and such committees will be known as "Gramodaya Khadi Sanghs".

This name will stand constantly as a remembrancer for our objective as all round village development; Khadi as the means to attain it; and Co-operative organized effort by working as small sanghs.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR UNIVERSITIES

(By Arvindlal L. Mazumdar)

In my previous article, 'When Should the Change Be Effectuated?' (vide *Harijan*, 7-2-'53) I discussed the first of the two questions taken up there. I now take up the next question: What medium should the Universities adopt—Hindi or the regional language?

The supporters of Hindi put forward mainly these two main arguments:

(1) Hindi is the language of the Union. In course of time all inter-State communication will be in Hindi. The language of the Centre will also be Hindi. It is meet, therefore, that Hindi should be the medium of instruction at the University stage.

(2) If regional languages become the media, separatist tendencies and narrow provincialism will grow. Hindi, on the contrary, will be a unifying force for the whole nation.

Now let us closely examine these viewpoints. It is true that the official language of the Union will be Hindi; inter-State communication too, will be in Hindi. But what percentage of University students will be in the Government employ? Thousands of graduates will be working in their own regions where at State level and at the district level language will be the regional language. Thousands of these graduates will have to work with the common man, where in the same region, Hindi will not be at all needed. On the contrary, graduates trained in Hindi will create a gulf between themselves, and the masses, just as English did, though to a lesser extent. The use of Hindi will be confined primarily to those in the Government employ, many of whom while writing or speaking within their own State will have to use the regional language. Students will have learnt Hindi for about seven years in school and four years in the college—where it is expected to be made compulsory—and they would have got sufficient acquaintance with Hindi. Those who aim at Government employ may take Hindi as

special subject in B. A. Courses, which should be provided by the Universities. There seems to be no reason why, for the sake of a few hundreds, thousands should be compelled to learn through the Hindi medium.

That study through regional languages will promote separatism and provincialism is not such a danger as it is made out to be. It is not the medium but the content that matters—not the form but the spirit in which education is imparted. To quote only one example, students graduated from the Gujarat Vidyapith are perhaps the most non-communal and above sectarianism in their outlook, though they have studied all throughout through the Gujarati medium. Similar instances may be quoted from other provinces. On the contrary, do we not find such separatism and provincialism among those who have been taught throughout through the common medium of English? The plea, therefore, that students studying through regional languages will develop a narrow outlook does not stand the test of reason or experience.

Lastly it is sometimes argued that the translation of books in all the different regional languages will involve a very heavy sum-total of expenditure which will not be the case if the renderings are to be made only in Hindi. Here, too, the expenses of translation are only, as stated above, a passing phase. Of course some expenditure *shall* be recurring, but with the passage of time the expenditure will naturally dwindle. But even if the expenditure is heavy, that is no reason why for such a reason lakhs of students should be compelled to study only through Hindi. If the expenditure is an evil, it is by far the lesser evil.

So far an attempt has been made to meet the claims of Hindi as a medium. But why all these arguments and counter-arguments? That a child or a student should receive all his education in his own language is the most natural state; and is a principle educationally and psychologically so sound that it needs no support of arguments in its favour. In fact, receiving one's education in one's own language is the birth-right of every child and the State cannot tinker with it. Sooner the State appreciates this the better it is for all of us.

But what about multi-lingual places like Bombay or Madras? The reply should not be difficult. The Universities there should allow all colleges the option of the medium—Hindi or the regional language—as the Gujarat University has already done. It will be said that this would lead to different colleges teaching in different languages in the same town. Well, where is the harm? In Bombay, for instance, some colleges will teach through Marathi, others through Gujarati and so on. Some colleges naturally will have a Hindi side or a pure Hindi medium—catering the needs of those who have none of the regional languages as their mother-tongue. The process of growth and adjustment of such institutions will be governed by the law of demand and supply. Again one need not wait for this in Bombay or Madras for the linguistic redistribution of provinces, for Bombay and Madras, whether formed into independent States or parts of bigger redistributed provinces, *shall* remain multi-lingual; and such a provision for colleges with different media will have to be made by any government in authority.

Thus, given will, resoluteness and fixity of purpose, the problem of the change-over of medium, though apparently difficult would soon become easier of solution. It is for the Universities now to make a start, and for the State Governments to see that the Universities are persuaded to make an early start and move with the times.

Bombay,
20-1-53

KILL THIS NARAKASURA

(By A. V. Barve)

Writing on the *Narakachaturdashi* day, I am naturally reminded of the killing of the mythical demon Narakasura, which is even up till now enacted by crushing under foot, on this day, a bitter fruit called *chiranta*. *Naraka* literally means hell and has come to be associated in the popular mind, with human faeces and urine and this foul-smelling, open and covered Narakasura is stalking the whole of this holy land from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari and from Port Kandla to Calcutta and deserves to be killed and buried in the bowels of the earth, without further delay. In doing this, we shall be 'killing two birds with one stone', as the proverb goes. We shall remove an age-long nuisance and add crores of rupees worth of wealth in the form of organic manure, to the 'hungry' soil of India. How to proceed about it is the question.

Dirt, philosophically speaking, is nothing but matter in a wrong place, and that is quite true about the valuable manure in the form of nightsoil. What is so offensive and foul-smelling when allowed to lie uncovered anywhere, when covered with earth and buried for some months, becomes a valuable poultice called *sonakhat* or 'gold' manure. The Japanese use this manure in its raw state to manure their fields and orchards. But that gives a most offensive smell. The better way is to bury it for a few months, so as to turn it into an innocent brownish substance, undistinguishable from ordinary earth.

India, with its population of about 35 crores, is wasting about $35 \times 6 = 210$, two hundred and ten crores of rupees worth of national wealth, at the present price level, in the form of loss of organic manure. Every man, from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the petty official of the Agriculture Department, knows this or at least ought to know, but nobody finds time to set about remedying this waste. Says Pandit Nehru in his *Discovery of India*, "But it does seem odd to me, that in their enthusiasm for the artificial product, people should *forget natural manure and even waste it and throw it away*. Only China as a nation has had the good sense to make full use of the natural stuff." (Italics mine)

When Pandit Jawaharlalji wrote this, he had no power to bring his views into action, India being then in bondage. But she has since then achieved independence, with Panditji at the helm of her affairs, as Prime Minister. Panditji's Government has spent crores of rupees, over the construction of the Sindri Factory for producing the 'artificial product' but they have not done

anything so far, to prevent the waste of natural manure. I have suggested to the Central Government a remedy for this; but they have paid little attention to it.

The question that naturally arises in this connection is, 'Can the people of India, with their proverbial lethargy, be ever induced to give up their age-long dirty habits on a voluntary basis?' The reply is unfortunately in the negative. Gandhiji, Senapati Bapat, Vinoba Bhave, Appasaheb Patwardhan, Kakasaheb Barve and their esteemed co-workers have tried their hand at this reform, but small has been their success. At this rate, it may take centuries to change the habits and stop the waste. Then what is the remedy? It is legislation and education and organization of public opinion, through Press and Platform, *pari passu*. An All-India Act should be passed making it compulsory, by stages if necessary, for the Grama Panchayats to be established in every village for this among other purposes, and municipalities and corporations in towns and cities, to construct a sufficient number of public latrines and urinals of the cheapest possible type, suitable to the particular locality.

I have drafted legislation for this purpose and sent it to the Central Government; but they have only circulated it to A & B States. I hope, preparations will be made before the next Diwali, in the form of legislation, to kill demon Narakasura, once for all. A sum of, say, a hundred crores of rupees spent over the construction of the cheapest type of latrines and urinals, as a part of the Five-Year Plan or apart from it, will yield even better results than some items of the Plan.

[The question raised by Shri Barve is not merely economic but sanitational and hygienic and pertains to our good manners as well. It is not good that persons should have to let go privacy for want of latrines in the villages; it is worse if they, by force of habit, have been dead to the need of such privacy. It is also a practical proposition that, just as the cities the villages too should be organized through their Panchayats to look after and arrange for their water supply, drainage, conservancy, sanitation etc. It should be a part of the national health programme as well. The C. P. A. of India should try to work out this suggestion and give to Government a workable scheme for carrying it out on a national scale.]

29-1-53	M. P. J.
CONTENTS	PAGE
CONCENTRATE ON THE VILLAGES	425
ENGLISH — PREJUDICES AND FACTS	425
I SAW THE MAHATMA REGARDING BASIC EDUCATION	427
VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT — A PLANNING MOVEMENT "GRAMODATA KHADI SANGH"	429
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR UNIVERSITIES	431
KILL THIS NARAKASURA	432
NOTES:	
HINDI AND ENGLISH CLARIFICATION NECESSARY	429