

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

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TWO ANNAS

GUJARAT'S NEW RESPONSIBILITY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A secondary school teacher from North Gujarat conveys a sound idea through a letter on seeing the increasing possibilities of a separate State of the Gujarati-speaking region of India coming into existence. He writes to the following effect :

"Many hearts are glad as the possibilities of a separate Mahagujarat State coming into existence increase. This is but natural. But looking a little deeper one would notice behind the gladden hearts more of a feeling of self-interest than of disinterested pleasure at the establishment of a Mahagujarat State. Industrialists must be feeling glad at the prospects of larger profits. Many members of legislatures must be enjoying rosy prospects of becoming ministers. Many government servants must be enjoying dreams of rise in service. There would, however, be but few who are now pleased because they see the possibilities of every citizen of Mahagujarat becoming happy and prosperous and getting a chance to have free education.

"If Mahagujarat is to be established in the real sense of its name, if it is to be set up for Sarvodaya all the administration of the whole of the new Mahagujarat State will have to be carried on in Gujarati. English or Hindi cannot serve the purpose. Some may believe this insistence is mad, some others may call it narrow-minded and still some others would give it other bad names. But I have confidence that persons like you would perceive the truth and take steps in the right direction.

"As I have stated above ordinary officers will begin to try to become chief officers as soon as Mahagujarat comes into existence. An ordinary executive engineer will seek to become the chief engineer. An average sub-inspector or inspector of police will dream of becoming a superintendent of police. Many will forget the true objective in view for the establishment of a separate Mahagujarat State. I wish and hope that on the establishment of Mahagujarat everyone of its citizens will feel that it is ours, and for the good of all of us, and that it can last and prosper only if all of us together endeavoured for its good. We would have performed our true duty only if we set about to serve the cause of Mahagujarat in that spirit. But, I feel, all the internal administration of the new State without the exception of any department whatsoever will have to be in Gujarati if this objective is to be served. If there is a want of proper words and terms, if there is a lack of books a way should be found to meet the difficulties but we should not take defeat."

Let me state at the outset that there is no need to use the term Mahagujarat for the new State of Gujarat; the word *Gujarat* is adequate to express all that it means and is the best. It would be well for all of us to give up the use of

the adjectives *maha*, *vishala*, *brihad* etc. keeping in mind the sentiments they have given rise to. Besides, there is no need for these various adjectives in order to express the sentiment we have. The simple understanding that the region inhabited by people speaking Gujarati is Gujarat is not only fine but full.

Readers know that I do not like the idea of a single bilingual Bombay State. Therefore, I see the hand of God in the possible establishment of a separate state of ours in its place. It would have been well if the proposal for the separate state had been made right in the beginning instead of our arriving at the idea in the way we have been forced to do. But there is hardly any sense in crying over split milk.

The correspondent has been cautious enough to state that the possibilities of the establishment of a separate State of Gujarat coming into existence are increasing. This is because the decision has not yet been finally taken and there is yet only a fairly good chance of his wish being fulfilled. Still, looking to the fair prospects his discussing the point nearest his heart is not baseless. It is quite pertinent and timely.

Gujarat needs to be informed about a particular aspect of the question of the formation of a bilingual State of Bombay. Many of my Maharashtrian friends have asked, with deep personal sympathy for me, one question regarding the decision by Gujarat. The question was: Gujarat preferred the formation of a bilingual state: it was good that all Gujarati-speaking areas were included in the proposed bilingual state; following the same line of thinking the Maharashtrians proposed to include all Marathi-speaking areas in one Maharashtra State and further proposed a bilingual state along with all the Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking areas; why did Gujarat not agree with the proposal?

The reader is aware that the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee as well as the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad sponsored the idea by a resolution. From the time Gujarat showed disapproval of the idea a new chapter of forming three separate states took the field and the S.R.C. proposal for a single bilingual state receded into the background.

The question from the Maharashtrian friends is easy to understand. If in asking it they are

doubting the *bona fides* of Gujarat, I must humbly point out to them that, they are not fair or correct.

The reason why Gujarat refused to agree to the proposal of a larger bilingual state is absolutely clear. Maharashtra should recognize the refusal as honest and trust its *bona fides*. What Maharashtra proposed was not a *permanent* solution; what was proposed was an option for Gujarat to go out of the bilingual state and form a separate one of its own. It meant that the proposal was based on the idea of the formation of a united Maharashtra State on the basis of language. And, I for one, do not see any objection to the proposal as such. But what was sought to be considered was a *permanent* arrangement. The proposal from Maharashtra did not include the idea and therefore the suggested solution proved itself, it is obvious, almost out of place.

The friends who asked me the question felt that my argument could be easily understood. I need not go here into the other details of the discussion I had with them. But one or two points, which I urged before them on my own, deserve mention here.

For one thing, I told them, those who swear by the one state, one language principle should not in all honesty and fairness come out with a proposal for a bilingual state.

And how can one explain the Congress which swears by non-violence and a Sarvodaya worker of the standing of Shri Shankarrao Dev joining hands with the forces of communism and socialism which do not see any objection in taking to violence to achieve their ends or forces which do not recognize or believe in the identity of ends and means, for the establishment of a Samyukta Maharashtra State? It is now becoming clearer as time passes that the Congress in Maharashtra and the city of Bombay will have to suffer the evils resulting from such an association. The Congress will have to make a serious effort to wake up and get out of its pernicious effects.

Let me now come to the point discussed by the correspondent. He has brought out two or three ideas in his letter: 1. that when a separate State of Gujarat comes into being everyone of its constituents should function with its general welfare in view and should not be drawn away by one's partial narrow interest; 2. that the tasks before the new State are to make the poor happy, to give good education free, and to increase the wealth and prosperity of the whole country; and 3. that, according to the particular insistence of the correspondent, it should be definitely understood from this very day that the administration of the region comprising Gujarat shall be carried on in the Gujarati language. It is as plain as day that all the three of the correspondent's ideas are perfectly true, of great importance and very essential.

Even while the reorganization of states is yet under consideration our leaders have been

apprehending certain dangers. They grant that if states were separated and organized on the basis of language their public affairs and other activities will be conducted in their respective languages and that would be all to the good. They also concede that such a course would work for the educational and cultural progress of the common people. But if our minds became narrow, so that separating walls were erected in our hearts and states began quarrelling with neighbouring ones for the economic development of the various regions or if we forgot the sentiment that India is one country and that in her prosperity lies the prosperity of her parts we would be inviting a larger evil, our leaders apprehend, while trying to free ourselves from the unnatural influence of the English language.

This danger does not exist only as between the regional states but as between district and district, caste and caste or class and class within the same state. So the problem is not merely inter-state but intra-state also. All this fear only warns us that we have to undertake our work in all fields by quickening the sentiment that we Indians are one nation and one people.

The apprehension felt by our leaders is not unfounded. But the remedy does not lie in dividing the states into four or five Zones. Nor could the danger sensed be avoided by carrying on the education, administration and business in the courts of justice in the regional states in Hindi instead of in the regional language. The true remedy of cleaning hearts is to clean them and not devise some mechanical remedies. While considering all the tasks lying ahead of us we should keep the sentiment of our being one people in the centre; and there can, of course, be no harm in organizing Zones etc. for the purpose. Within a regional state, too, the administration will have to be carried on keeping this larger outlook in view.

The correspondent has laid great emphasis on the idea of the regional language being the language of the administration of the regional state. And the emphasis is right. I believe that that can be the only real objective for creating a separate state for a linguistic region. By carrying on all our affairs in the language of the people we will not only be cultivating their full strength and capacity but the way to utilize the strength and capacity to the fullest extent in the service of all can be found also in the same direction. A refusal to accept the idea would be a refusal to allow the people to have a taste of Swaraj. And under the people's government that has been established in India who can dare to refuse to them their right to govern themselves? If the millions are concerned with or interested in the reorganization of states on the basis of language it can be only on this account and none other. If, however, the educated and the advanced classes impose other motives on this simple basic idea they would be betraying the people. Such

betrayal cannot last long under Swaraj, that is people's own government. So all these classes should in their own as well as in the larger interests of the whole people, give up unseemly rivalries for power and self-interest. When people will get an opportunity to know and learn everything in their own language their strength would be cultivated as a matter of course and will manifest itself through our democratic constitution. One can, therefore, hope that the forces of class or other narrow interests, which may have been blinded into forgetting Sarvodaya or the interest of all, will feel the healthy pressure of the democratic strength of the people, correct their ways and reform themselves. The truth which is embodied in the conception of states organization on the basis of language has been brought out on these lines by Gandhiji and he built up popular power in Gujarat that way. We have to prove now our strength and capacity as developed by Gandhiji. If a separate State of Gujarat does not come into being a composite state will take its place. In that eventuality there should be provision for allowing the people of Gujarat to carry on their affairs in their own language so that they can achieve true progress in all directions as indicated above.

In the end we should remind ourselves of one thing and that is about Hindi the language of inter-provincial intercourse. What has been said regarding language above is incomplete without a recognition of the significance of Hindi in our affairs. If every state based on language believes in the unity of India the test of the faith lies in its immediately giving Hindi an honourable and compulsory place in its educational curriculum. In proof of the genuineness of the faith the people of the state should also begin to take steps to learn it. Only by such endeavour could the transfer of public servants, judges and teachers between the states be made possible. There is no intention and there cannot be any intention of closing the doors to people speaking another language in setting up states based on language. Indeed, the thing has been clearly prohibited by the Constitution itself. In order to achieve an easy and natural inter-communication of people between the states Hindi should be taught as a compulsory second language throughout the whole country in all branches of knowledge. It is a matter of deep regret that in creating a natural atmosphere of the unity of India, state governments have shown indifference to this vital question and are hesitating to take firm measures. The mistaken policy regarding English still holds ground giving rise to various evils. The policy hurts the cause of education in two ways in that English is not taught properly and Hindi does not find its legitimate place. A knowledge of the English language is necessary for us in our circumstances. But if it is to be imparted in the proper manner, to fix up and pursue a language policy indicated above is the only

way. Let Gujarat work on these lines and vindicate before the nation the truth of the policy. This, to my mind, is the new responsibility Gujarat has to shoulder in the days that lie ahead.

31-12-'55

(From Gujarat)

ARE WE RULED BY ECONOMISTS?

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

I draw the attention of the reader to an article "Unity through Constructive Programme" appearing elsewhere in this issue. Shri Kripalaniji is wholly right there. Unfortunately our leaders are not agreed about the items of the historical Constructive Programme. See, for example, the attitude of the Planning Commission on its foremost item which, we promised, would be the first and immediate work of the Swaraj Government, — I mean Prohibition. The drink revenue is coveted for development plans which are highly inflated and unnecessarily centralized and made big-looking. The really big and marvellous things are what touch and ameliorate our massive population in their daily economic and social life, and thus stir the minds of men. These are undoubtedly prohibition, Khadi, village industries, basic education. But what do we see?

The President spoke in uncompromising terms about our state of education. Prohibition will save crores to the poor people. But the classes would not like to let them have them, as they need finance to pay for their pet things of centralized industries. I hope the Government which promises to have a Socialistic Pattern will realize that anti-prohibitionism which is the attitude of the Planners, even from the time of the first Five Year Plan, will not be allowed by the Cabinet to throw out the recommendations of the Prohibition Committee. Will the Congress President see to it? He is the custodian of the promise that the Congress gave to the people when calling upon them to fight against foreign rule. Can it be called a *National* plan which can dare negate Prohibition as a welfare activity to be taken up first?

Gandhiji had said that Prohibition will succeed if the basic fact of the problem is clearly visualized, viz. do not have covetous eyes over drink revenue; first decide that we let that go. And we had decided so. The British Government charged us then that we were not honest about it; that we only wanted to harass the British rulers by creating financial troubles; that the step was not humanitarian but was political. Are we out to prove that the charge was true? Prohibition is not a problem in finance. It was decided so by the Nation long ago. It is therefore, the earnest of the Government that we have in India a people's rule—a rule for the poor. I hope we are not ruled by mere economists, but by those who declared that they stood for the service of the Daridranarayana.

6-1-'56

HARIJAN

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BHOODAN, SARVODAYA AND POVERTY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Dr. Mehtab, Governor of Bombay, has reiterated his belief that Bhoodan will distribute poverty; it will not increase wealth. And he has added that he should have said that earlier. That is, it looks so true and important to him.

If a patriotic servant of the people like Dr. Mehtab says this with such emphasis, one must give serious thought to it. But the difficulty in doing it is that one fails to understand what he really means to say. It is not enough to vaguely insinuate that Bhoodan will distribute poverty; one must explain the objection to the movement further.

Does the phrase suggest that Bhoodan will create poverty? One can hardly say so. Charity or giving from one's possessions is an unmixed good. What possibly can be objectionable in it? It is for such action that the Gita says,

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् । २. ४०

(Even a little of this righteous course delivers one from great fear.)

Therefore one is at a loss to know what Dr. Mehtab really means to say.

He expressed his view again in Orissa. Bhoodan has taken a new aspect in that State. A new experiment in this movement has begun there. It is a unique thing there that Bhoodan got about 800 entire villages. Village workers are being stationed in them to undertake village reconstruction on the Bhoodan ideology. Ambar Charkha will be there. Many other items of village development programme will also be undertaken by the workers. Shri Vinoba described the nature of this programme to a press conference at Vijayawada on 20-12-55:

"The distribution of land would be according to the size of the family. Adults of 21 years would elect a committee of ten or fifteen members to meet the various needs of the people, such as removal of illiteracy, provision of facilities for marketing the produce of the village, irrigation, encouragement of village craft and exploitation of forest wealth, liquidation of agricultural indebtedness and promotion of fine arts. Steps would be taken to provide all facilities so that people need not go out of their area to fulfil their needs, including university education."

Is it that Dr. Mehtab or some political or other groups in Orissa do not cherish this ideal or the idea? Or they might be holding it impossible. Or there might be some other objection. It would be good if these people expressed it in clear terms.

The idea of Gram-Raj is not new. Those old workers who fought India's battle for freedom know that, in post-1934-5 years Gandhiji placed before the country his programme of village ser-

vice through Khadi and home industries and said that there must be stationed a worker in every village or a suitable group of villages; he will try to rebuild the entire village life through the constructive programme. Through this programme villages will be made self-reliant and conscious of their rights and duties. On their basis will be built up a strong and united peaceful country and its State. Gandhiji gave us such a vision of new India years ago. The country has still to realize it. We cannot afford to forget it.

The recently started development programmes of the C.P.A. and the N.E.S. also aim to station village level workers all over the land. Is it not born of a similar idea? And can we say that this is distributing poverty?

Shri Vinoba has revived this old idea of Gram Swaraj through the Bhoodan movement. He has added the land problem in the programme. However, it in no way changes nor disturbs the original idea; rather it makes it more explicit and broad-based. In Orissa workers of the Sarva Seva Sangh have begun to implement the idea under his direct guidance. The tried old veteran servant of the people, of the eminence of Shri Gopabandhu Chawdhari is the leader of this band of workers. If an experiment of this kind, in devoted service of villages is 'distributing poverty' then one feels like asking, what is 'poverty'? And to whom is it being distributed?

If this expression is, even unknowingly, meant to derogate village development service or the village industries that we aim to rehabilitate and expand in our village economy, in comparison to the large-scale big industries and their big talks we so much hear these days,—if it is so, then it is a grave mistake. To whom is poverty distributed if village industries prosper, if village service programme is implemented, and if landless people get land? If it might be replied that the donor of land or property becomes poor to that extent, it will not be proper; for he who owns donates. Therefore, really speaking it is rather distributing property or prosperity, and a poor man becomes comparatively richer thereby!

Our villages which are unemployed enough should rise to undertake the venture of producing food and cloth etc. needed by them; rather, the State must endeavour to make them ready to do it. For that it should find for them better and more efficient implements; it should help them by necessary finance, marketing facilities, price-equalization etc. All wish that this thing be done quite well.

Such a programme of village rehabilitation and removal of un- or under-employment will have adverse effect on the machine industries, most of which today are engaged in producing cloth, oil etc. and thus compete with village industries. Is it that this is really what is resented in the name of poverty? The right thing rather is that these mechanized industries that

unfairly compete with village industries should now seek to restrict and ultimately relinquish the sphere of their activities through a phased plan. This will be governed by the speed with which we usher in the policy of decentralization through the village industries. Such a change will be merely a process of ushering in economic Swaraj based on equality and providing a decent standard of living to all. It may be that those few who have got rich through the unnatural way of centralized industries in cloth, oil etc. will suffer to an extent. Is this what is meant by 'distributing poverty'? Surely this it is not; rather it is sacrifice in the cause of the national good. Leaders of the people like Shri Mehtab should rather advise people to consciously begin to sacrifice in such a way, because the real distribution in such a programme is that of property or prosperity.

At the end, I may quote a talk with Gandhiji that Shri Manubehn Gandhi has recorded in her diary of 18-4-'47 at Patna. She writes,

"I asked Bapuji, you are against machinery and stand for village industries. Now suppose people take to village industries. What will be the fate of so many factories in cities like Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Ahmedabad etc.?"

"Bapuji replied: I would not feel sorry if all the money invested in that amount of iron goes out as scrap. Real India lives in her villages. Do you know that European cities like London etc. exploited India and Indian cities in their turn exploited India's villages, and thus only could the palaces in these cities be possible, reducing the villages to wretched poverty? I wish to rehabilitate these shattered villages. I do not surely suggest that all factories in all the cities be crushed out. My only plea is that let us be wise enough to be warned of the mistake and not repeat it. Let us stop exploiting the villages and closely inquire the wrongs or injustice done to the villages and rectify it by making the village economy strong."

6-1-'56

(From Gujarati)

UNITY THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

(By Acharya Kripalant)

As long as there are a hundred different and conflicting problems in India, there can be no unity in this unfortunate land. Only when there is one supreme problem which we feel we must solve or perish, will we be united. Such a supreme problem was that of national independence before it was achieved. Today also we have a supreme problem if we will but recognize it. It is the problem of the ignorance and poverty of our masses. The fate of our democracy and even of our common culture depends upon the quick solution of these twin problems of poverty and ignorance. Gandhiji recognized this even before Independence was achieved. His constructive programmes were designed to combat these two evils. He often said that there is one supreme interest of the masses and any other interest that is in conflict with this interest must yield place to it. If today this interest is made supreme in

the life of the educated and politicians there will be no communal, caste or provincial differences. Then there will be no conflicting interests but one supreme interest, an all-India interest to which we all must address ourselves. May we have the strength and the wisdom to recognize this supreme interest and work for to the good and glory of our nation.

(From *Vigil*, December 31, 1955)

THE PRESIDENT ON EDUCATION

The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad inaugurating (Dec. 28, '55) the thirtieth All-India Educational Conference, said that it was regrettable that a person should be given place and honour in society, not on the basis of his intellectual attainments and honest selfless work, but on the gross considerations of wealth in his possession. "This change of emphasis in human values will prove to be disastrous if it is not checked in time," he warned.

Referring to the educational system in the country, Dr. Prasad said "As far as I know, we have not succeeded till now in this work of changing the educational system to suit the needs of independent India. I would even say that we have failed to put in the efforts which we should have by now to change the education system to suit new conditions."

"Our country's educational system is not a new one. If I say that it has been in existence for the last 125 years, I will not be wrong. This educational system was started with a particular aim in view. But that aim no longer holds good now. Certainly that is not our aim now. But the pattern of education even now, more or less, is the same as it was before. I know that some steps are being taken to change it. But they are not adequate to meet the needs of our present day life."

The President said that in this country, as in all others, the system of education was divided into three parts. The three parts represented three different periods in a student's life, namely, the primary, secondary and higher secondary. These three stages should be inter-related and there should be no difficulty of going from one to the other.

"For this reason, if we want to reform the educational system in our country, then the most important stage of reform is in the field of primary education. We have to tackle first the question of primary education and then of secondary, and higher secondary education. We have to dovetail the three parts into each other so that no difficulty may arise for a student from going from the first stage to the second and the third.

The President further remarked "I do not want to blame anyone for this. Some things so developed that after freedom we thought that first of all reform of university education should be undertaken. A University Commission was then set up. Later came the Secondary Educa-

tion Commission and now perhaps some thought is being given to primary education. It is not that those who are in charge of education have completely forgotten the primary stage of education. But in my view it would have been better if we had started with primary education, and then dealt with secondary education, ultimately taking up the university education. If this course had been followed, then the spectacle we are now witnessing in the sphere of education, we would not have witnessed."

Regarding university education the President said, "Even those boys who got an opportunity to study in the present-day universities were not equipped properly to face life. After passing out, they could neither go back to their villages nor get suitable work in the cities. A few amongst them do get some job or the other. But many among those who graduate from the universities are useless. I do not want to make any complaint against them. They are not to blame. What they are taught in these universities and what they learn do not equip them for anything worthwhile."

"The standard of university education is going down no doubt. But what is the reason for it? The main reason is that from the beginning the standard of education is so low. The standard, therefore, cannot go up in the higher stages of education. It is not possible. Many students reach the college and university stage. They cannot benefit by college or university education, because they do not acquire the aptitude in the lower stages for higher learning."

Dr. Prasad said that it would be better if a process of selection was gone through when students applied for higher education. He did not mean to say that any deserving people should be barred from undertaking higher studies, but some selection should be made. This would lessen the burden on not only the university authorities, but also on parents who had to spend a lot of money on giving their children the university education.

The President then referred to what he called the "craze" for opening schools and colleges of the conventional type.

The President said that he did not want to destroy this enthusiasm of the people: "I want that what is necessary should be done. The present-day need is not that schools should be opened but schools of the right type should be started. Schools and colleges should be opened with a particular aim in view."

The President said that the main question to be considered was whether the education being imparted in schools and colleges was beneficial to the country or not.

Dr. Prasad said that India had progressed in the economic sphere after independence. But there too the stress was on the acquisitive side of things or amassing more wealth. This tendency should be curbed. Honour and money

should not become synonymous. "We have to change these social values where honour depends on the length of one's purse."

The President said that "It was necessary that people should be better off, but too much stress on acquiring wealth was not good. Men could not rise high only on the strength of money. In fact, this craze for better things of life and more money might come in the way of the country's progress. This habit of measuring everything including a man's greatness and honour by the yardstick of money is not good. People should not get intoxicated with this money-craze."

(Abridged from *National Herald*, Lucknow, 29-12-55)

INDIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

(By J. D. Sundaram)

Wrong Perspective

In his inaugural address to the recent conference of Agricultural Economists at Poona, Shri Rama Rau, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, propounded the thesis that the attempt to develop cottage industries through various restrictions on the corresponding medium and large-scale industries might probably aggravate, rather than solve the prevailing problem of unemployment in the country. According to him, with the growing pace of migration of population to the towns and cities and with the increase in the educational facilities, unemployment among the relatively better educated classes in urban areas was more serious than that among the people in rural areas. As cottage industries with their low level of earnings were not likely to be attractive to the urban educated unemployed, curbs on the expansion of medium and large-scale industries were likely to worsen the existing problem. In his considered view, the remedy lay in the rapid industrialization, improvement of housing conditions and slum-clearance in urban areas rather than ban on industrial expansion. He therefore, desired the economists to examine dispassionately the nature of the unemployment problem and suggest remedies, free from either ideological prejudices or economic superstitions.

2. While few will disagree with Shri Rama Rau that the problem of unemployment in India is endemic in the economy rather than a temporary, short-term phenomenon that can be 'liquidated' over a period of five or ten years, the limited statistical data on the quantity, quality and composition of urban unemployment belies his claim that the problem of the educated unemployed is the more acute and should, therefore, be the basis for a realistic economic policy.

Facts of the Case

3. Unemployment in urban areas assumed the proportions of a national crisis in post-independent India since the general price recession that came in wake of the new monetary policy initiated in November 1951. The sudden mon-

tary correction, on the one hand, and the introduction of multi-point sales tax, decontrol measures, nationalization of road transport and similar measures adopted by State Governments, on the other, led to a sharp reduction of employment opportunities in distributive trades and administration. Statistical information to measure the magnitude of this problem in urban areas is not available; and the periodic reports of the Employment Exchanges serve more as an index of the trends than of the size of the problem. As urban areas are relatively better organized, more politically conscious and enjoy clear contacts with political parties, trade union leaders and newspapers, the incidence of the sharp increase in the number of the unemployed, relatively better known, due to the establishment of several employment exchanges in important industrial and urban centres, has received, and continues to receive, wide publicity and consequently, has evoked wider appreciation. But neither in its magnitude nor in its social incidence can it compare with the problem in the rural areas. In other words, public awareness of the urban problem was greater due to a number of fortuitous reasons.

Character of the Problem

4. It is little appreciated that urban unemployment in India consists, mainly, of unskilled and illiterate workers, and only partly of, literate, skilled and semi-skilled workers. As a recent analysis of the registered urban unemployed in the city of Calcutta, and this is true of most other urban centres, as well, shows: (1) about 48 per cent of the registered unemployed are unskilled workers; (2) the bulk of the educated unemployed are fresh, newly-passed matriculates, intermediates or graduates, who have no special training skill, aptitude or preferences, and who in the main are in search of administrative or clerical jobs; and (3) the majority of such literate, unskilled, untrained persons are also unwilling to move out to different parts of the country. The registered unemployed, who have some experience or training or are skilled in any craft or calling find it relatively easier to obtain employment than the educated 'unskilled' persons. Unemployment among the very highly qualified or technical personnel is very small, and lasts, relatively, for a very short period of time. The inference from this analysis is obviously that the continuation of the present 'general' educational system, is bound to accentuate rather than relieve the problem, as no economy or pattern of development can absorb in gainful, clerical or administrative occupations the enormous annual output of India's schools, colleges and universities. The solution of the problem thus lies in a deliberate attempt to increase occupational mobility of the urban educated youth, and wear away the prevailing concepts of 'genteel' professions through a reorientation of education rather than through further urbanization and industrialization.

5. The predominance of unskilled, illiterate persons among the registered unemployed in urban areas, and their general preference for jobs, such as chaprasis, watchmen etc. on salary scales ranging from Rs 30 to Rs 50 per month reflects the conditions in the surrounding rural areas rather than the conditions in the urban areas. Unskilled, landless and land-owning agricultural labour moves out into towns during the agricultural off-seasons, and has given the Indian industrial labour the principal 'migratory' character and accounts for the prevailing absenteeism. Availability of work throughout the year in their own places will definitely stop this movement. Lack of work rather than attractions of urban areas is the cause of the seasonal migration.

6. To sum up: the size of the urban unemployment problem, relative to that in rural areas is smaller, as the urban population relative to the rural population is smaller. The bulk of the unemployed in urban areas are unskilled, illiterate workers from surrounding rural areas, in search of 'menial' jobs on salaries ranging from Rs 30 to Rs 50 per month. The so-called 'educated' urban unemployed has no training for any jobs, and no pattern of industrial development can create, annually, an adequate number of clerical jobs to absorb them. Consequently, the remedy lies in providing the bulk of the youth in urban areas education with a vocational bias, and train them in specific crafts to earn their living.

Rural Problem

7. As against the conditions in urban areas, as the recent reports of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee show, under-employment in the rural areas is large and widespread, and although its incidence varies from region to region, nowhere is it small enough to be ignored; and employment in agriculture during the season does not fetch an adequate wage to maintain a reasonable standard of living. The 1951 Census Report has made it familiar that self-employed workers predominate in agriculture as well as non-agricultural operations, and owing to extensive under-employment among them their conditions of life and work today are bad in the extreme. In a democratic country ruled by public opinion and majority vote, the needs of the vast millions who lead a sub-marginal life, ought to receive priority of attention. The lack of organization and contacts with political and other bodies has been mainly responsible for the steady, continued deterioration in the conditions of both agricultural and non-agricultural workers in rural India. From the point of view of the magnitude, diffusion, incidence, the problem of under-employment in rural areas is the basic, primary problem because not only does it involve a tremendous waste of human resources but it is a standing danger to the social and political stability of the country.

The Answer

8. It is precisely on this account that the Karve Committee recommended a permanent ban on any further expansion of industries in the existing urban centres or on their periphery, and a deliberate attempt to adapt modern scientific techniques to the needs of a decentralized pattern of economic development that integrates agriculture with industry. Without the basic conditions of work or assured sales of their output the self-employed artisan in the village cannot expand his production; much less adopt improved techniques. So long as the conditions in rural areas continue as they are, and continue to be altogether ignored as hitherto, or altogether distorted as is now being done by several political, industrial and other experts, the primary problem of economic development will continue to be impossible of solution.

Ills of Urbanization

9. It is erroneous to argue in the face of the facts prescribed above that the lure of the higher incomes and the varied opportunities draw the rural population to urban areas. The so-called higher earnings, in the face of higher costs of living in urban areas and lower levels of housing and other basic amenities of human living available to lower income groups in real terms are lower than earnings in the rural areas; and are available only to a very few of the thousands that migrate to towns. Continued migration to towns in such conditions is most certainly harmful to the economic, social and political welfare of the country. Continued unemployment of the illiterate, unskilled, rural worker, and continued living in unhealthy hovels or in slums, with many moral and spiritual temptations all round, make this class susceptible to the lures of political and economic extremes, and a standing threat to the life and property of the people. Urbanization that follows non-regulated industrial expansion is, as the economic history of the world amply proves, an unmitigated evil; and where demographic trends are as those of India, is definitely to be avoided.

10. Shri Rama Rau is in a position to commandeer information on the social, economic and political incidence of urbanization, which, orthodox economic theory considers is the index of industrialization and economic development. Urbanization in each of the advanced industrial countries of the world took a tremendous toll of human lives; and Governments in power survived in those countries probably because they were either aristocracies or monarchies. It is certainly impossible for a democracy with universal adult franchise like India either to tolerate it or consider it as evidence of normal growth. In other words, planned economic development

must, specifically, regulate the pace, the form and the areas of industrialization and urbanization in the larger social interest.

11. Once again Shri Rama Rau and several industrialists have raised the cry of inflation to frighten policy-makers from accepting the recommendations of the Karve Committee. They dread shortages of consumer goods if cottage industries are allotted the responsibility for the production of the estimated increase in consumer demand. Once it is decided that cottage industries should form an integral part of our economy and its development, and the basic operative conditions are provided, the organization of production or increase in output in accordance with demand is not impossible of achievement. Has not our agriculture, the most striking example of private, 'unorganized' small-scale industry, exceeded the targets prescribed by the Plan?

[Shri B. Rama Rau's remarks quoted at the beginning of this article reminded me of Shri G. D. Birla's very similar plea of attending to 'educated' unemployment of the classes to the utter neglect of the masses, which was commented upon in a previous article of mine. (Vide, *Harijan*, November 19, 1955, "The Present Economic Climate"). Shri Birla spoke to the Private Sector; Mr Rama Rao now addresses the Government or the Public Sector. Both together show the direction in which they desire the economic wind in the country to blow. The Industrialist, the Banker, the Economist and all such other few in India seem to join this chorus against village and small-scale industries at present. Let Indian democracy be clear about these symptoms.

6-1-56

M. P. J

Clarification

Some readers drew my attention to Shri M.V.'s article in the *Harijan*, Dec. 3, 1955,—'Giri Committee's Report on Agricultural Labour' to a statement in the second line of its first para, where it is said that 'it (agricultural labour) represents nearly 70 per cent of the total population of the country.' They asked whether agricultural labour meant landless labourers or whether it only meant the people living on agriculture. I referred the point to the author. The latter is true, viz. 'according to the 1951 census, 70 per cent of the population depend upon agriculture for their livelihood.'

6-1-56

M. P.

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