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The Educational Review

MONTHLY RECORD FOR INDIA

VOL. LXVII JUNE 1961 NO. 6

EDUCATION AND MORALS

N. S. Padmanabhan, B.A., B.T , Ammapet (Tanjore Dt.)

If education may be described as a process that prepares us for complete living, does the present system of education in schools and colleges go to substantiate the concept ? Do the alumni that leave the portals of the Temple of Learning imbibe and possess the moral and mental stamina required of them to face the realities of life, and have that spark in them to glorify themselves as well as the nation they belong to ? A casual and an unbiassed observer would of course have some scruples in admitting an assertive and affirmative answer. Pronouncements by eminent educationists and statesmen made on the convocation platforms and in other forums of thought and discussion have only testified to misgivings. True, rapid strides in the development of education in all its facets and phases, quite in tune with modern trends and sentiments, have been taken and re-organisations and reforms pretaining to the core, content and structure of the educational activity have been contemplated, planned and executed with utmost care and precision. Nevertheless, the behaviour and conduct, now and then of those who flock into the universities and schools of to day, do but imply a lack in their personal wholes and a gap in their acquisition of virtues, the intake of which alone can mould them into fit citizens of the world order. It is the bounden duty of those interested in the making of it to have a genuine appraisal of the problem and try at an enduring solution.

Centuries ago, education was, so to say, a mere religious undertaking. Its function was nothing more than 'initiation into the life of the spirit, a training of the human soul in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue'. The study of the sciences and arts mostly connected with life-situations had at the same time a definite bearing on religion and its tenets. Fortunately, religion did not then imply the narrow and ephemeral tendencies that it has now come to represent, and its moral spirit permeated as well as sanctified the various courses of study. Seekers of knowledge left their humane and humble way, with hopes high and minds resolute. A vivid picture as to what role they had to play stood before them and guided them in their periods of trial. Life was a mission for them, and each, with his bubbling enthusiasm, was ready to undertake it in all seriousness and earnestness, The curriculum was not the only effective ingredient. The environment, namely, the school campus and the august presence of the teacher, was also the other healthy factor accelerating the creative drive. The downfall of this excellent system of education with a religious bias began when it ran into narrow channels of thought.

During the period when the British rule was over us, we were both driven by necessity and caught under the lure of high-salaried jobs of authority and power, Even the fundamental values of education became changed. National consciousness was conspicuous by its absence, the powers that be taking care to stem it, if ever it began to manifest itself in some corner under any pretext. Winds of stark

materialist philosophy began to blow from the West, and as a result, people were more after a bread-and-butter goal in education, gradually losing thereby their age-long faith in moral discipline. The semblance of orderliness and peace evident was born out of outward authority and an inward inferiority-complex. A seething aversion to foreign power and the ideology it stood for was always there with the intelligentsia, but sheathed for the time being. The dynamism of the ancient days seemed to be under duress.

It was given to Gurudev Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda to fly the banner of revolt against the corrosion of personality that had by then marked the educational process. They were pained to see that those who received the type of education then in vogue were only suited to fill in the places of machines They strove hard to reorientate our educational system, and themselves propounded schemes in their model institutions. The 'Shantiniketan', the 'Sabarmathi' and the 'Ramakrishna Mission' sprang up to reflect the ideas and ideals true to the soil and tradition Education was not to be a stepping stone to jobs It had more meaning, and had indeed a majestic mission to perform. So were the seeds of true educational reform sown in the early decades of this century.

The reorganized courses of studies introduced in *1948* and subsequently in *1959*, embodying some of the salient features of the previous systems, missed the mark, as it were, in giving us the 'man-making' education of their dreams. The classroom, furnished with the latest-fashioned syllabus and other accessories bearing the scent of the age and manned by personnel having the highest academical and technical talent required of them, yet seemed to possess a stigma of unworthiness about it. The instruction that was meted out was purposive, but not wholesome. It was a grand success as far as it contained all the facts and figures that were needed by its recipient to lead a mundane life. Miserably did it fail to awaken the qualities of charity, love and tolerance, essential to prepare the youth to participate purposefully in what is perhaps the most exciting era in the history of mankind. The higher virtues of man were sought to be promoted by the allocation of one period per week to moral instruction, and that, too, without a definite syllabus therefor. Perhaps the upsurge of the secular cult in the political front was at the root of this mal-treatment of a subject of wide import like this. The extension of the frontiers of knowledge was no prelude to the development of sobriety and restraint in the social sphere. Rightly or wrongly, secularism of the scientific present has cut across the canons of faith and tolerance that have been bequeathed to us by the historic past. Subscription to the views, that secularism meant non-religion and even anti-religion and that religion meant only the variety of rituals and practices now in vogue, had led many a member of modern society to scorn or scoff at anything that had to do with religion and brand it as communal or retrograde. As a result, there was no sustaining social force to keep the fire of pure materialism under check, and even secularists of a puritan order came to feel the necessity of nurturing a moral code of conduct as the *sine qua non* of our well-being. A bent of mind in our young men and women to respect law and order and to observe the rudiments of etiquette in behaviour throughout their careers needs to be created, and there is no agency so competent as religion to fulfil this in an exact measure.

Great thinkers in education, those who are in the vanguard of this activity, and last but not least, the government in power owe to the nation a religious bias in education and to prepare and present a syllabus worthy of adoption in all the schools and colleges. A valuable experiment in this direction is reported to have been made by Margaret Barr in Gokhale Memorial Girls' High School, Calcutta. Treatises on the ancient philosophies of

thought and practice, stories and parables from the *Panchathanthra, Hithopadesa* and the like, anecdotes about and biographies of Buddha, Mohamed and Jesus, life-sketches of Tagore, Gandhi, Vinoba and a host of seers and saints who have made history in their respective realms of action above parochial, communal and sectarian sentiments, would surely and conveniently form a syllabus for the moral instruction class.

Any system of education can hold good and enrich society only if it is placed in the ablest of hands for execution. The importance of the role of the teacher in the moulding of fit citizens of a Welfare State goes without saying. Alfred the Great is reported to have said: 'Knowledge is power"; and power is never good except he be good that hath it. Keay, in his book on Indian Education, has this to say: "In India it is the teacher rather than the institution that is prominent, and the same affection and reverence that a Western student has for his *alma mater* is in India bestowed with a life-long devotion upon the teacher" So, that much, he needs to be on the alert and be alive to the problem he has to solve Apart from his high talents, he should be one who can command influence and shape the destinies of young men put under his care and guidance. He needs necessarily to be an exemplar of highest virtues and moral restraint, and be capable of just action. Preferable it would be, if he resides amidst his pupils as is the case in residential institutions.

In all, it is my fond hope and prayer that all concerned would see to it that education doth supply that 'completeness' or 'wholesomeness' to life, which is not now there, and that they would help to train and send away matriculates and graduates robust in body and spirit. As to a hint on how this can be fructified we can turn to the great pioneers of the glorious past. No view of life would be regarded as adequate which did not ultimately rest on a spiritual basis; and hence in education it is regarded as essential that a pupil's life should be lived in a religious environment and permeated by religious ideals "There can be no doubt, however, that the development of India's future educational ideals will not be governed solely by Western educational thought and practice, and in education as in all other phases of social life a mingling of the East and the West is not only inevitable but desirable."

Thus a deliberate bid for a religious or moral bias in education is the panacea for for all the ills we suffer under, and it is up to everyone to work for it, true to our national honour and prestige. Let me conclude this with the words of Dr S. Radhakrishnan, laid as postscript in his *Religion and Society*: "Bearing ourselves humbly before God, conscious that we serve an unfolding purpose, let us brace ourselves to the task and so bear ourselves in this great hour of our history as worthy servants of the ageless spirit of India."

The Changing Image of Tagore in the West

Dr. Edward C. Dimock, Director of the Bengali Studies Centre, University of Chicago.

When the name of Rabindranath Tagore was first heard in the United States, the temper of the times was such that the way was open for a wise man from the East. Poets and philosophers had long been deeply concerned with the thought of India—since the New England transcendentalists, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, about whom Tagore said, "I love your Emerson...in his work one finds much that is of India," and since the great Walt Whitman, whose work Rabindranath loved so much, in the 19th century. In the early 20th century the

world, confused and trembling on the brink of the first World War, found that wise man for whom it had been searching, in the tall, impressively handsome, bearded and robed figure of Rabindranath Tagore. His message of peace, his profound love of God were welcomed with joy, and he himself with great acclaim.

As you may know, Tagore made five visits to the United States—the first one in *1912*, before the publication of his English *Gitanjali* had assured his reputation in the West, and the last in *1930*. Coming as I do from the University of Chicago—the city in which Swami Vivekananda had had his greatest reception at the International Parliament of Religions in the last decade of the *19*th century—I take a certain pride in the fact that it was during Tagore's first visit in *1912* that six poems from his *Gitanjali* appeared in English for the first time, in a small literary magazine called *Poetry*. This first publication was due to the interest and inspiration which the famous Irish poet W.B. Yeats and the American poet Ezra Pound had felt both in Tagore the man and in his poetry, on meeting him in London. Pound, in fact, cabled Harriet Monroe, then editor of *Poetry*: "He has sung Bengal into a nation, and his English version of his poems is very wonderful." With the publication of *Gitanjali* and the subsequent Nobel Prize award, which came in *19.3*, the peace which had characterised his first visit to the United States, when he was living in the small town of Urbana, Illinois, with his son Ratindranath, and working on his *Sadhana* lectures, disappeared. Somewhat to his dismay, he was rocketed into international prominence. He was welcomed with great ovations wherever he went and wherever he spoke—in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and many other cities both in the U.S. and in Europe. *Gitanjali* and the books which followed in English—*Fruit Gathering*, *The Gardener* and others, became, as they have remained ever since, an inspiration and a source of beauty to the American people, as indeed was the poet himself during his stays in that country.

U.S. Feelings Towards Memory of Tagore

There is no time to recount the history of Tagore's many visits and experiences in the United States, I should like instead to tell you a little more about the feelings which exist in the United States today toward the memory of Tagore and toward his work.

The celebration of the *100*th anniversary of his birth has met with great critical and popular success in the U.S. There has been a production of his play, *King of the Dark Chamber*, in New York, which has been acclaimed by critics and supported by the people. Various poets, such as Robert Frost, have given readings of Tagore's poetry, at the celebration sponsored by the Asia Society in New York, to which both the Prime Minister of India and the President of the United States have sent messages.

There have been other types of celebration as well. Indian and American scholars and critics such as Dr Amiya Chakravarthy, Dr. Buddhadeva Bose, Dr. Stella Kramrisch, Dr. W. Norman Brown, Dr. Stephen Hay, and many others, have read papers on the poet and on his works before large audiences; recitals of Tagore's music and performances of his plays have been staged on many university campuses; there have been publications by many scholars and writers, and so on. Of the wide variety of types of celebration which are taking place this year, I mention these few to you because I think that they are indicative of a new type of appreciation of Rabindranath Tagore. For I have sensed in the comments and tributes which I have heard far more than a simple formal acknowledgement of a name which has worldwide stature. I have sensed in the tributes, many of them made by people who knew the poet well, not only genuine love, but also increasing awareness of the significance of the poet's life and work.

These days in the United States there is an ever rising feeling that the East, and especially India, has much to teach the West. Rabindranath Tagore has become again a symbol of all that is great in the ancient and profound religious thought of India and in her literature and art. Even more than this, Tagore is being read again more and more frequently, and the image of him is changing, because more and more people are learning to read his work in his original Bengali, and because Indian poets and critics are making us aware that there is more in Tagore's work than even the greatness of *Gitanjali* and his other works in English.

Evaluation of Tagore's Imagery and Attitude

As the Bengali poet Amiya Chakravarty points out, Tagore's poetic imagery and personal attitudes changed and evolved throughout his life, reflecting the change and evolution of his thought. Chakravarty says:

"Unlike the traditionally revered Indian seer, Tagore was a recluse in boyhood and youth, while he came nearer to people and society in his advancing age."

Thus, in his early meditations, in his early poetry, humanity was never dominant over Nature. Nature represents the frame into which man must fit himself. God, sometimes represented by the flute of Krishna, fills man with joy and power:

> "Silence, now, your garrulous poet—
> Take from him his heart's flute and play your tune.
> In the still of the midnight, fill the flute
> With your breath, and play your beautiful melody.
> Drawn by your song, I have come to your feet
> The words of many days will float away, in the
> Twinkling of an eye
> And I shall sit alone, and hear your flute
> In the vast and empty darkness."

"But increasingly," says Chakravarty, "the poet's images became humanised. Man's daily life became more and more the focus of Rabindranath's attention. Though he retained to the end his deep devotion to God, he turned more to the simple poetry of daily human life and to the wonder of humanity."

This appreciation of the simple dignity of man had of course been with him from relatively early in his career. In *1895* in his wonderful essay on Bengali nursery rhymes, *Chelebhulano Chara*, he wrote:

> "These rhymes may be basic for the examination of the history of our society and language, but even more important, it seems to me, is that there is within them a certain natural and gentle poetic quality."

To him, the simple beauty of these rhymes reflects the unplumbed depths of beauty in men's soul, lying below his consciousness:

> "Driven unpredictably, as by an imperceptible wind, these echoes and shadows (of the visible world) cross and recross the limitless expanse of our inner being, like dream images on the screen of consciousness, now joined together, now blown apart, constantly shifting forms and colours. If one could trace the track of their reflections upon some material canvas, one would see the resemblance of them to the *Charas*. Like reflections of the cloud-played sky upon some shimmering and limpid lake, these *Charas* are reflections of the ever-changing expanse of our inner self."

Tagore's Love of Simplicity

He also loved the simplicity and dignity of the songs of the mendicant beggars of Bengal, the Bauls. In his *Religion of Man* he wrote:

> "One day I chanced to hear a song from a beggar belonging to the Baul sect of Bengal. What struck me in his song was religious expression that was neither grossly concrete, full of crude details, nor metaphysical in its rarified transcendentalism. At the same time

it was alive with an emotional sincerity."

The Baul concept of *Monur Manus*—the "Man of the Heart," the God within man, the simulataneous movement of man toward God and of God toward man—this too is the essence of Tagore's religious poetry.

He loved simplicity in poetry; he loved simple people. in them he saw the reflection and he felt the full joy of God. He speeks of sitting on his veranda at Shantiniketan and watching the grace of the women going to the well for water. He speaks of sitting on a ship's deck in Hong Kong harbour, watching the rhythm of the muscles in the sailors' backs as they worked, He found a divine beauty in these things.

Tagore's Poetry for all Mankind

It is this Tagore, poet of man as well as poet of God, whom we in the West are now coming to know. Metaphysics may differ from culture to culture, but faith and humanity do not.

Prime Minister Nehru has said that Tagore is a great poet and a great humanist. Indeed, Tagore was an Indian, a Bengali, and he sang of Bengal and of Indian life. But his love was for God and for all mankind. Thus, when he writes:

> "O bird,
> Why, from time to time, do you forget to sing?
> Why do you not call?
> Do you not know that morning is vain, without your voice?
> The first pure light of dawn touches the trees,
> And your song trembling leaves,
> Do you not know that you are the friend of the light
> Of the dawn?
> The goddess of wakefulness sits at the head
> Of the bed of death, and spreads
> Her scarf 'and I'
> Do you not know that she is there?
> And now, in the depth of dark dreams,
> In the night of sadness
> Who will sing your morning song?
> Do you know who will sing the song of new life?

When he sings thus, his feeling is lyric and personal; his words and his images are Indian; but his poetry, his joy, and his sadness reach out to all mankind. This was the end to which his life and all his work was dedicated, and now, *100* years after his birth, we can say that his spirit is indeed triumphant.

The Challenge of Indiscipline

K. Ramanathan, M A B T., V.T. College, Tirupparaitturai.

Instances of grave indiscipline among students are the news that touch the headlines of our dailies today. Educational institutions, which are verily the arsenals of democracy, are tending to become workshops where strikes and attack on invigilators have become common features They are becoming noisy marts, astir with emotions and commotions. The general methods of schools and colleges is thus tainted. To whichever side we turn, there is only morass and confusion; student unrest and indiscipline has become a part of the general malaise of society. Not only does India suffer under that strain, but the whole world is in such a predicament though causes may differ. When our country is fighting for progress to pulsate with a new life and living, forces counter to our aspirations and ambitions weigh us down. Causes for such restlessness, rebelliousness and turbulence are legion, and to detail here all the reasons in all their ramifications will be impossible. So my intention now is to essay on some important aspects. If we are to effectively meet this challenge, definite changes and reforms must be made.

During the freedom struggle, the powerful unrest and disorder were the result of

the enthusiastic and spontaneous participation of youths in a high and noble purpose. But now the unrest and disorder are often initiated by some political parties whose leaders by their captivating power of eloquence hold away over the student populations and unleash such fiends of indiscipline to gain their own frivolous, narrow and selfish ends. Now a stage has been reached, when the leaders of political parties and politicians in whose hands quiver tremendous power and the destinies of the future, must realise that their propaganda and influence should not poison young minds and sweep the youths off their feet. Efforts must be taken to weed out such pervading influence of the politicians in schools and colleges. Care must be taken to see that politics is not projected inside educational institutions. Our pupils must all be educated to practise independent thinking, arrive at correct judgements and light upon sober decisions, so that they will not allow themselves to be enveloped by any kind of fissiparous tendencies of some narrow politicians. They must also be educated to understand the real significance and meaning of freedom, liberty and equality. The students must be educated not to make a wrong interpretation of these, and think that they are licensed to launch strikes, or do anything as they please. If to these growing unhealthy and undesirable practices and trends a break is not applied through proper education, they will corrode the young minds and cultivate only wrong values. So all that education can do to change this turbulent state of affairs, must be first attended to, realising the monstrous nature of this problem and how pernicious it will be to society, if it is not immediately controlled. We have to thank the political parties of the Madras State who have seriously considered this problem and taken a positive view that, if followed, is going ultimately to help the progress of the country.

Because of the economic stress and the consequent keen competition for jobs today in society, the students, even before they enter on the responsibilities of life, feel the pressure of it on them as well as on their parents, who are not able to meet the heavy expenditure for educating them, first at schools and then in colleges, where the expenditure per capita amounts to the income of more than 4 or 5 persons. The sufferings of their parents and the people of immediate environments and the consequent lack of comfort and peace for the student population itself, have given them only a distorted and pessimistic view of life. A decree or a diploma is required as a passport for any job. It necessitates both the "haves and have nots" to take college education. Education appears to everyone only as the means for getting jobs later, and every other purpose of education is lost sight of.

Grim and grave becomes the situation, when pupils are ushered into the responsibilities of our democratic society and when they knock at all doors for employment; only some get absorbed and so many swirl in the vortex of unemployment. Some find that merit is muzzled and mediocrity boomed". Sometimes some are not able to reconcile themselves to sinecurism in high offices, and the preferential treatment offered to some in our democratic country. These go to dwarf the spirit of the young and promising who always have an eye on the outside world; these will corrode their mind, may lead them to restlessness and waywardness, and develop in them a sense of frustration and cynicicism.

Teachers anywhere in this world are expected to inculcate in their wards a high sense of social and moral values and to develop in them intellectual honesty and moral rectitude. The pupils must see them being lived out by their teachers first. If this education is to be effective, it is needless to mention that the teachers must first evaluate themselves and sink their petty notions and differences. They will have to evolve a corporate personality and exercise their cumulative influence on them. It has to be borne in mind that in a school, which becomes a cockpit of

petty controversies and politics and where there is no cooperation among the staff themselves for flagrant reasons, the child of indiscipline will get 'vitaminised' and grow into a monster beyond the power of anybody's control.

If at all one can say that men in the past feared God, avoided thinking ignoble thoughts and hesitated doing sinful acts, it was simply because of the fervent belief that there is a God overhead who watches all our actions and even feels the pulse of our thoughts, But today some people laugh at such beliefs; they are thought of as fictitious, fantastic and fabricated notions. This has resulted in 'no fear for a Moral Governor' who worked within the conscience of everyone and controlled his actions and thoughts. As the respect and fear for this Eldest of elders is slowly waning, no wonder if the respect and fear for our own elders, fathers and forefathers deteriorates. Proper discipline takes place from within and without. Education today must be directed towards building up character, right conscience, a religious sense combined with an awareness of the presence of God in all His manifestations, or else the present trend will surely shake up the very foundation of our educational edifice.

Teaching of English as a Second Language

Barbara Vereker, London Journalist and commentator on social affairs.

[The report has just been published of the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language held at Kampala, Uganda, early this year. It was the first of the auxiliary conferences arising out of Commonwealth Education Conference held at Oxford in July 1959.]

"It has recently been said that one of the dominant forces of today, almost everywhere—at both the personal and the national level—is a passionate and insatiable demand for education," observed Mr. Michael Grant, President and Vice-Chancellor of the Queen's University of Belfast, at a conference held in Kampala, Uganda. He said one of the biggest single educational undertakings in the world today was the teaching and learning of English.

The conference, at which Mr. Grant was acting as chairman, was the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as Second Language, held at Makerere College, Uganda, in January this year. It was attended by representatives from 23 Commonwealth countries, and observers were present from countries including the United States and the Republic of Sudan, Unesco, and the staff of the United Kingdom Commissioner for South-East Asia. They included members of the teaching staffs of universities, training colleges and schools; inspectors of education and others concerned with educational administration and cultural relations; and also specialists in audio-visual aids—including broadcasting—and publications.

They were present not as government delegates, but in their individual capacities as persons with special knowledge of the subject. As Mr. Grant pointed out, they were in the somewhat unusual position of not being concerned in any way with politics, nor could there be any question of their efforts attempting to supersede, weaken or dilute any of the cultures of Asia or Africa.

Raising teaching efficiency

The place of English varies in different Commonwealth countries from that of sole mother-tongue to that of first foreign language, with many subtle graduations between these two extremes.

For some years to come, it will be the common language of technology and commerce and of public and professional life throughout the Commonwealth, as well as being the easiest medium of communication with many foreign countries.

One of the chief aims of the conference, whose report has just been published, was to discuss ways and means of increasing the efficiency of the teaching of English as a second language at all levels, and in accordance with the needs and wishes of the countries concerned. Before the conference opened, a number of papers dealing with certain basic considerations were prepared by specialists from many parts of the the Commonwealth as background material for more detailed discussion of particular aspects.

One of the chief needs at the moment is an increase in the number of adequately trained teachers; and although the ultimate aim is to provide at all levels qualified teachers who are indigenous to the country in which the teaching takes place, expatriate teachers from the English-speaking countries will be needed for many years to overcome the scarcity of qualified teachers in many of the countries where English is not the mo her tongue. They will be employed increasingly as teacher trainers or university lecturers rather than as teachers in the schools.

There is also an urgent need for more teaching materials such as simply-illustrated reading matter in English, including periodicals, for people whose literacy in the language is not of a high standard. The conference also drew attention to the importance of the radio for the teaching of English, and to the possible use of television. Syllabuses should cater for the four fundamental skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and the conference considered the various types of examination and the best methods of approach to them.

Medium of Instruction

English is introduced as a medium of instruction for a variety of reasons and at different stages of educational systems. Where it is considered that the language of the child's own country can continue to widen the range of his experience, there may be no need to introduce English until a later stage of his development. Usually when English has been introduced, the decision has been taken with an eye on what, for the child is a distant target: the demands of future employment, success in later examinations, and ultimate profit from later opportunities for educational advance.

At the moment, some of those from Commonwealth countries selected for courses at universities and similar institutions at which English is the teaching language, do not always have sufficient command of English to enable them wholly to follow and understand lectures and other forms of tuition. Students and prospective students in this category form an important social group, and for them, as for all other people in the Commonwealth, the purpose of teaching English is that they may, through the medium of language, gain access to what a wider international society has to offer.

Practical Application of the 'Gita'

Sri R. Srinivasan, M A.B.T , Madras.

One may read many valuable books and hear many interesting, instructive lectures. But they are of no use, unless one tries to put in actual practice at least a fraction of what one has read or heard. In that sense, mere rote memory of the *Gita* is not worth having. Many are of the view that the *Gita* is intended for a man who has taken to the ascetic life. But in my humble opinion, it is more intended for a family man, who has got into the spiral of family worries and who is tossed to and fro as by the waves of on ocean. In his daily life, every day from morning to sunset, he experiences different shades of joy and sorrow, and often finds himself in a difficult position to arrive at any firm decision. Whichever decision he takes finally, he often repents for it later, thinking that the other solution would have been a better one. Thus, he is constantly at war with himself, and he finds no peace within. To such a man the teaching of the *Gita* come like a boon from above, and practical and timely application of them makes him a man of an equable frame of mind. I intend giving below a few such practical applications in our day to day life.

Discharge of one's duty

Every moment our lives are full of duties to different individuals in different matters. Many of them overlap, and place us in a difficult position to decide. Arjuna, taken to represent the common man in the world, feels so in the battle-field. He is not prepared to kill his kinsmen for the sake of a kingdom. It is there that the sacred *Gita* took birth. Krishna clearly explains the duties of different castes among men, and tells him that a Kshatriya is by duty bound to wage a war against *adharma*, and trying to escape from that duty involves sin. He takes the full responsibility for the caste system, and expounds in detail the duties of different men at different levels. The long and short of it is that one should do one's duty, though the performance of that duty may cause embarrassment and displeasure to some. In our daily life, we are able to see clearly what our duty is in a particular situation. Fully knowing that, we try to avoid discharging that duty on some pretext or other, since we may have to incur the displeasure of those who are well disposed towards us. Sometimes, false prestige stands in the way. For example, every Brahmin knows that it is his duty to learn the *Vedas*, to recite them regularly fully knowing their meaning and perform the *sandhyavandana* thrice a day. But how many are so doing? When a Christian feels proud of reciting the Bible even in the street, when a Muslim does not feel shy of praying at specified hours, why does a Hindu think it *infra dig* to visit temples? In ancient days, Brahmins spent all their time in learning the *Vedas*, *sastras* and doing daily *pujas*. They had no need to work for their family needs, since they were supported by men of other castes. But now the times have changed. They have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. So, it is true that they cannot spend as much time as their forefathers did in religious studies. But it does not mean that they have no time all to devote to their religious duties. They can definitely find an hour a day for learning the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. Thus, we see that, even when we know our duty, other considerations weigh more with us, and we refrain from discharging our duty. The *Gita* tells us that we commit sin by not discharging our duties. Our aim in life should not be to please others at any cost. We must go on performing our duty, little caring for the likely effects on others.

In the discharge of our duties, we must adopt a particular frame of mind. It is not for us to expect the fruits of our

labour. The Lord may give us the desired fruits or not. This simple thing, understood in proper perspective, will greatly lessen the tension in our mind. Daily at all hours, we are doing some work or other. There is none born on this earth who works without any particular aim in view. There is no harm in having such an aim also But great is the harm when we attach too much importance to that aim. In that case, the achievement of the aim, no doubt, gives happiness. But the non-achievement makes a man miserable, in some cases beyond tolerable limits. If we closely analyse the reasons for our dejection, anger, acts of suicide etc., we will understand that they are the direct results of the failure to get the expected fruits of our labour. Nearly, ninetynine percent of our sorrow will disappear, if we attach the least importance to the final result of our actions. In that case, there is no room for any disappointment in the end, and consequently, there is no need for anger, jealousy etc, Hence, every moment of our life, we must be ever conscious of the fact that God created us only to act, and that He may or may not applaud our actions. The common man and the follower of the *Gita* perform actions in the same manner, but the real difference between the two comes only in the end. The latter stops with the performance of the action, but the former looks beyond, eagerly expecting the arrival of the fruits of his action. He loses his balance of mind, when the fruits do not reach him.

Thus, we see that it is for us to do our duty even at the risk of all other things in the world, and even that duty should be performed without expecting the fruits of the labour.

How to make up the loss of teaching hours due to teacher absence in the School?

S. K. De, M.A. (Cal.), H. Dip. Ed. (Dublin), Cer-in-Psy. (Edin.), Calcutta.

It is not possible for anyone to work all the year round without being absent for a single day. One may meet accidents of various types such as railroad or motorbus accidents, may fall down from a high place or may be overtaken by any kind of sickness that flesh is heir to. In fact, only very few people, as statistics inform us, go through a year without undergoing at least one siege by influenza or the seasonal sickness. Besides these aceidents and sicknesses, teachers may have to be absent for private or personal causes. They may be absent due to death, disease or marriage of any of their friends, relatives or members of their family. Considering all these, teachers have been allowed, nowadays casual leave for two weeks and medical leave for another two weeks in the year. This is quite all right. But when leave of this type becomes chronic and teachers become absent in a large number on a day or for days together, it becomes difficult for the head or the superintendent to run the school.

Teacher-absence due to sickness is seasonal, attaining its peak in January and February and again in August and September. Sickness and consequently absence in this period may be due to the change of the season and therefore not unjustifiable. But why absence is larger on a Monday than any other day of the week or on the day following a casual holiday is not known to us. Moreover, statistics show that absence is greatest among primary school teachers and more frequent among the women teachers than among the men. It is greater in bigger schools than in smaller ones, and more in big cities than in villages. It is greater in those schools where leave rules are elastic and more liberal policies of pay for absence is followed. In other words, teachers' absence increases in direct relation to the time off that is granted with pay[1]

In big schools having *40* to *45* teachers' absence sometimes is recorded up to *12* to *15* teachers a day, and in schools employing *25* to *30* teachers the absence reaches *7* to *10* teachers a day. Normally, it is not so, of course. But when it happens so (and it happens during the days of going through the papers of the S. F. candidates of the Board of Secondary Education), needless to point out, it becomes never possible to run the school properly. But the school must go on, and pupils are not to be left to themselves. To mitigate this difficulty, regular teachers are given extra classes, sections are combined (which, of course, is not possible in mammoth Calcutta schools), pupils of higher classes, the clerk and the librarian are sent to teach in the lower classes, lower forms are dismissed two or three periods earlier, or the school itself is closed in the last period to give some relief to the fatigued teachers. This sort of stopgap teaching is no teaching at all—it keeps the show anyhow, that is all.

This teacher absence is not peculiar to India alone—It is perhaps the same all over the world.[2] In the American school system larger schools usually give a greater number of leaves with pay than the smaller ones. Many school systems there give full pay for a few days. There are again other schools which give "no pay" and again some which give "full pay indefinitely". But even such liberal plans have not been able to bring down teacher—absence to an irreducible minimum.

1 W. D Kuhlman 'Teacher absence and sick leave regulations", pp. 100—101. and also W. S. Monroe "Encyclopedia of Education and Research", pp 1267.

2 N.E.A Journal reports that, in an average school year in America, at least 285000 teachers were absent or one or more days, losing time totalling at least two million school days.

Investigations have been carried on in America to find out the days of teacher absence in various States and in various school systems. These investigations show that there is a high correlation between the amount of absence and the number of days of pay given for inability to attend school. For example, school systems which give ten days of pay for disability each year have approximately twice as much absence as school systems which give five days.[3]

In our country, similar investigatons should be made, and measures should be taken to mitigate the difficulties of daily absence and make up the loss of teaching hours. In one school, I introduced the system of attendance bonus at the flat rate of Rs. 60/-for those who should not take leave for more than five days (casual or sick) in the year. The system worked well, and reduced teacher absence considerably. After four years, I collected data and checked the result of the innovation. It was found that those who had to take leave by force of circumstances, for more than five days, and therefore, were deprived of the benefit of the bonus, had the tendency to take leave for the whole period allowed by leave rules. Next, to check this tendency to malingering, I introduced a slab system of bonus, i.e., Rs. 60 as attendance bonus for those who will not take any leave for more than five days; Rs 30/- for those who will not take leave for more than eight days and so on; but before seeing the effect of this new system, I left the school. Another system may be tried, viz., payment at the rate of the salary of the teachers for the days of leave not taken.

Many teachers here object to this system of attendance bonus on the ground that it will expose the teachers and will show that they unreasonably take leave when they are actually fit to work. This argument is not convincing. All teachers are not Judas Iscariots, nor do teachers as a group take "all they can grab." This will rather show that teachers are ready to work even at the cost of personal sacrifice, if their condition is sympathetically considered.

The American school system is trying various means for mitigating the evils of teacher-absence, which will be dealt with in the subsequent passages. One such means is what I tried in my school. They call it 'salary' bonus, which is meant for those teachers who will perform their duties every day. This system has been working well in some States, which can be proved from a letter of a superintendent of a school.

"Four years ago we instituted a bonus system which has enabled us to reduce our teachers' absence to a minimum. In addition to this, we have found that the plan keeps the whole teaching force satisfied with our method of taking care of what is sometimes a troublesome problem.... Our bonus system gives to each teacher the sum of 50 dollars at the close of the school year for perfect attendance, three days being allowed at all times with no deduction on account of a death in the immediate family. For each day of absence on account of disability, the teacher loses 5 dollars from the 50 dollars bonus, although her regular salary goes on just the same; thus, if a teacher is absent for ten days on account of disability, she has exhausted her bonus of 50 dollars. She would receive her full salary for the ten days so lost, but following this period, per diem deductions are made from the monthly salary. Should a teacher be absent five days during the school year, she would have no regular salary deduction, but would receive only 25 dollars at the end of the school year. Our practice has been to include whatever bonus is due to the teacher in the salary of the last month. Under the old system of allowing ten days of disability leave with full pay, I found many wilful violators of the rule. Also, the scheme tended to penalise those teachers who were faithful and conscientious and who took good care of their health. We feel that the bonus, system has worked wonders with the regular attendance of

3 W. S. Elsbree. "The American Teacher", pp. 486—498 for historical data.

our teachers, and has helped in keeping up a fine spirit among the personnel." [4]

American school systems have adopted various other means for reducing teacher absence to the minimum. These measures are dealt with here below:

1 Substitute-teacher service: To keep the school work going onin spite of teacher absence, the Board of Education in America has made provision for the substitute-teacher service Every school system recruits an adequate number of qualified substitute personnel. The list of such substitute-teachers is revised every year, and their number is approximately *15* per cent of the list of regular teachers. Some schools keep a few extra names in the list, because of the danger that an unusual amount of sickness will exhaust the supply. Such substitute-teachers may be full-time or part-time. Generally, more satisfactory work is rendered by the full-timers than the part-timers. An estimate of the cost of substitute service is included in the annual school budget, and the estimate is made on the basis of experience of previous three consecutive years. The average cost of substitute service is approximately *1 50* per cent of the cost of regular teachiag service. The cost in the elementary schools is slightly higher than the average cost in secondary schools.

Many, of course, object to this system of substitute-teaching on the ground that it would be a mere makeshift only to ke p the class together, unless the regular teacher's absence is exceptionally prolonged. There may be some truth in the statement as good teaching service is not available, specially in the peak periods of absence. But some teaching is better than no teaching, and if regular teachers, overburdened with their own work, are compelled to do the work of absentee teachers day in and day out, the teaching would be not only haphazard but a mere eyewash. In spite of all theoretical objections, substitute-teaching with certain safe-guards has been found to be satisfactory on the whole. Substitute-teachers are generally recruited from (a) women teachers who, when married, do not desire to continue as full-time teachers; (b) experienced and inexperienced teachers who fa l to secure regular employment; (c) advanced students from local and neighbouring training colleges; and (d) fresh scholars from universities who are on the look-out for jobs.

Each substitute teacher is provided with a copy of the course of studies in each of the subjects which he will be called upon to teach, so that when the regular teacher returns, he may be able to take up immediately the work where the substitute stopped.

No uniform system is followed for the payment of substitute-teachers. Some schools do not pay a monthly salary, but pay all of them a flat wage for each day served, irrespective of their qualifications and experience. The usual wage is approximately two-thirds of the daily salary of the regular teacher [5] Substitute-teachers gain teaching experience for their future employment in the schools in which they work as substitute-teachers; they may get a chance also in summer schools and evening schools, if their work is satisfactory. Leaves of absence for an extended period are often granted to teachers for physical recuperation, family crisis, travel and exchange teaching. Usually no pay is given for such extended absences. Substitute teacher's service is requisitioned during such long absence also[6].

2. Cumulative leave:—Another device for minimising teacher absence is permitting disability leave to cumulate from year to year. At present, only a few schools have been able to provide cumulative leave for the teachers, but there is a tendency in this direction. The cumulative leave plan was found in approximately 7 per cent of the cities of *2,500* or more population in

4 Quoted by Ward G Reeder in "The Fundamentals of Public Administration."
5 C.O Baldwin; 'Organisation and Administration of Substitute teaching".
6 D, H, Cooke; 'Administering in Teaching Personnel".

1929, in *14* per cent in *1931*, in *33* per cent in *1940–41*, and in *46* per cent in *1950–51*. Under this plan the days of sick leave available, but not used each year, may be added to those available in later years. Thus, in a school system allowing ten days of sick leave a year, a teacher who over a period of five years was absent respectively, *3*, *7*, *2*, *0* and *4* days would have a cumulated reserve of *34* days. Therefore, if in the sixth year of service, a serious illness was encountered the teacher could be absent without loss of salary for *44* days. Practices vary regarding the number of years over which the days for disabilityleave are permitted to cumulate, or regarding the total number of days which may be cumulated. The usual limit is from two to five years; in some States the limit has, however, been extended from ten to twenty years. After ten, fifteen or twenty years of uninterrupted service if the teacher should have a long period of disability, he could have pay for these days, or if he resigned from the school, he would receive full pay for those number of days. This plan tends to eliminate unnecessary absence without forcing the teacher to continue to work when in serious ill-health.

3. Health Service: —Another method of reducing the service loss due to illness and other disabilities of teachers and for increasing their efficiency, is for the school to extend to teachers the health service that is provided for the pupils.

4. Accident Insurance: —Group accident insurances that are normally provided for the pupils are now being extended to teachers. In *1941–42*, nearly half of the city school systems of America made their pupil-nursing services available to teachers, and more than a third of them cooperated in maintaining group hospitalization and group health insurance.

Generally, the premium of these insurances is very small, as their insurances are on a group system. Recently, there is a movement to make it compulsive for the board to pay a certain percenge of the premium.

These are the various methods which have been adopted by the school systems in America to minimise the difficulties of teacher absence.

In India, too, the problem of teacher absence must be solved—the sooner the better. The provision for substitute-teachers should be made in the school budget, every year, at the rate of *10* per cent, at least, of the number of regular teachers in the school. A list of unemployed graduates and retired teachers may be made on a zonal basis for each school to requisition their services whenever necessary. But, in our opinion, the better method would be to introduce an attendance bonus system in all schools, either at a flat rate, or on a slab system, or on a daily wage system, whichever may be thought better. The budgetary estimate of attendance bonus will never exceed the expenses of the substitute-teachers; rather, the system will nullify the necessity of appointing substitute-teachers. Moreover, teaching by regular teachers will, undoubtedly, be far better than the teaching of the substitute-teachers.

We must not forget that there is a high correlation between the loss of teaching hours and failures in the final examination.

Sir Alfred Lyall on Hinduism

P. R. Krishnaswami, M.A., Madras

In trying to interpret aright the spirit of the Hindu religion to Englishmen and English rulers of India, Sir Alfred Lyall found it convenient to call his studies, *Letters from Vamadeo Shastri*. He meant to represent in the Shastri the most cultured type of the Hindu. English readers were apt to regard the Shastri's views as Lyall's own, and that was not very wrong, but credit was due to Lyall for assessing correctly the Hindu outlook in religious matters. "Vamadeo Shastri" has however a special significance, because we are assured that the name was the dramatic representation of a famous *sanyasi* at Benares of Lyall's acquaintance, who had been the Prime Minister of an Indian State, and who at the height of his glory, retired to the holy city for religious meditation. Tagore has exclaimed, 'O India, thou hast taught rulers of men to leave their crowns and sceptres, to renounce their thrones and kingdoms, and take the garb of poverty." This great ideal of renunciation has not failed to impress the mind of English writers on India, for even Kipling, the voice of British imperialism, has embodied it in a pretty story of the *Second Jungle Book*, entitled "Puran Bhagat". The ex-Prime Minister, who had been lionized in London drawing rooms, retires to the forest, where the fiercest animals obey him like kids. The *sanyasi* can never get over the instinct of social service, and he loses his life on one such occasion.

Reflecting on the liquidation of the Indian empire, an English civilian who had served in India pointed out, as among the blunders of the British government, a confident expectation that India would be wholly Christianised. The successful British administrators in India were those who conducted themselves without betraying religious bigotry. Sir Thomas Munro and Montstuart Elphinstone, who represent the first quarter of the nineteenth century, suffered from no blind obedience to Christian dogma. Munro did not countenance Christian proselytising among the Hindus, and remarked that the best that an Englishman could do was to live to a high moral standard and set a good example to others. It is recorded that Munro made numerous benefactions to Hindu temples, both in his official and in his personal capacity. Elphinstone showed so little Christian zeal that he gained the reputation of cherishing "dangerous principles" The British rulers in India were constantly put to restraining the enthusiasm of the people in the home country to promote missionary influence in India, so as to achieve wholesale conversion. William Wilberforce, who carries a great name for putting down the slave trade of the West Indies, was too bigoted to appreciate the philosophy and religion of the Hindus.

Among the superior administrators of the last quarter of the nineteenth century stands out conspicuously Sir Alfred Lyall, poet, biographer, historian and administrator. He carried out in the province of which he was Governor, Lord Ripon's liberal policy of local self-government. Of greater value are the profound studies of Indian problems, which he left behind in two volumes of *Asiatic Studies*.

It was unfortunate that the great German scholar of Sanskrit, Professor Max Muller, had remarked in a speech at Westminster that Brahminism was a decaying and moribund religion and had no chance of survival. It was not a proselytising religion like Christianity, Islam or Buddhism. Taking up the cudgels in behalf of Hinduism, Lyall sustains his arguments with striking ability. Hinduism does not indeed seek conveesion of outsiders like Christianity, but it is a natural religion, and the natives of the country are born into it. Every year there is a large number of savages and hill-tribes evolving to a higher faith who are

absorbed in Brahminism, and Lyall assessed this number as larger than that of conversion to all other religions. Hinduism has not lacked reformers who have arisen from time to time to purify and keep alive the great ideals. Hinduism represents a high religious ground that has been for ages a dividing line between the religious systems of neighbouring countries. It has no system. "Only in India has natural religion survived long undisturbed, and it has reached a height and expansion which are unique. Hinduism is a way of life in itself, a scheme of living so interwoven with the whole existence and society of those whom it concerns, and placing every natural habit or duty so entirely upon the religious basis as the immediate reason and object of it." Hinduism is an elastic faith. "From the feeling that a God is phenomenally everywhere, the train of thought advances to the conviction that God is phenomenally nowhere, to the idealism that regards the whole world as a subjective creation of one's own illusive fancy." Though Hinduism comprehends faiths of different stages of evolution, there is no kind of hostility between them. One who worships at an ordinary temple, and seems to adore a shapeless image, actually holds the highest Unitarian doctrines.

Lyall set his face against the Christian missions converting Hindus. 'Every nation seems to me to form its own phase of religion according to its own peculiar idiosyncracy, and it is idle to think of ingrafting the rigid and simple faith of the Saxons upon the Hindoos" He also believed that missionaries, as he saw them, could not succeed in their work. "Ministers, sent out to convert the heathen with a decent stipend and a comfortable house will never do any good."

The son of a clergyman, Alfred Lyall was born on the 4th January, *1835*. He felt discontented with the atmosphere of his home-country and decided to go to India, which he did towards the end of *1855*. Lyall was like William Delafield Arnold, the son of Dr. Arnold, who also left for India to escape the suffocating atmosphere of England. Lyall feels no disappointment after arriving in India. He, writes to his brother James in *1856*: "You will like this country better than England so come out here as soon as you can" He was no doubt actuated by sympathy for people over whom he was set to rule. During his tenure as Lt. Governor, when appointing an indian as Judge of the HighCourt, he said he wanted to appoint Indians to high posts whenever he could, because that was the "only chance of placing government here upon a broad and permanent basis." Like other conscientious administrators, Sir Thomas Munro among them, Lyall disliked the custom of the rulers migrating to hill stations for a good part of the year, because thereby they lost touch with the life of the people, and became inclined to live in selfish pleasure.

As Lyall joined the Indian service in *1856*, he lived through the Mutiny, driven to fight and defend himself actively. The memory of the Mutiny left no bitterness in him. He went home on furlough in *1861*, and he filled successive high posts till he became Foreign Secretary and later Lt. Governor.

After retirement from the Indian service, Lyall was made a member of the Indian Council, where he remained fifteen years till *1903*. It is to Lyall's credit that he produced valuable books in his retirement. *'The Rise of British Dominion in India'* is his contribution to Indian history. Prompted by John Morley, he wrote the biography of Tennyson for the English Men of Letters series. He wrote also a life of Lord Dufferin. He wrote several poems born of his Indian experiences. *Theology in Excelsis* is regarded as the best of his poems. It embodies the reflections of an Englishman who has been promised his life by Muslim rebels, if he embraced their religion. *The Meditations of a Hindu Prince* is most characteristic of Lyall. It expresses an eagerness to find a solution for th

mystery of human life, by turning to every possible authority in the land, including the English people. The quest is in vain.

Is life, then, a dream and delusion, and when shall the dreamer awake?
Is the world seen like shadows on water, and what if the mirror break?

51st Madras State Educational Conference.

(Continued from page 97).

Resolutions.

The Madras State Educational Conference, requested the Government to remove disparities in pay scales that still existed between teachers with the same qualifications under the management of different institutions.

It urged the Government to grant house rent allowance to teachers of aided institutions and decided to observe July 4 as "House Rent Allowance Day".

It pleaded for the extension of the ten-rupee temporary pension increase to the teachers retiring from non-Governmental institutions also. Other resolutions related to the demand for uniform pay scales to language pandits on the basis of qualifications and fixing a sum of Rs. *100* as basic pay for lower and higher grade teachers, the failure on the part of several managements properly to implement the revised scales of teachers, and the need to pay salaries to the aided elementary school teachers who were thrown out of employment in June *1959* and could not be re-employed at once, for the period of their break of service.

The Conference requested The Government to apply the recently announced formula namely n/*120* of the average salary of the last three years subject to a maximum, to all living teachers retired before *1-4-1955* to headmasters and L.T's retired before *1-7-1960* and to the non-teaching staff in non-Government schools.

Liberalisation of Provident Fund rules was requested, as also removal of disparities in regard to the age of retirement of teachers under different agencies.

Prescription of uniform leave rules for teachers in non-Government institutions was urged as also the reduction of the pupil-teacher ratio to *20:1* in elementary schools and *30:1* in secondary schools.

The Government were requested to appoint committees of teachers handling classes to go into the syllabus and reverse the same suitably to our national geniues.

The Government were asked to permit teachers of *10* years' standing to handle XI standard classes.

Lecture and Exhibition

Mr. R. Bhuvarahan, Headmaster, Seshaiyengar Memorial High School, Woriur delivered the Sabhesan Memorial Lecturer.

In connection with the Conference, an educational exhibition in the compound of the Bishop Heber High School, Teppakulam, was opened by Mr. M. Palaniandi, M.P.

Concluding Session

Mr. T. P. Srinivasavaradan, President, in his concluding remarks, endorsed the view of Mr. Theodore Samuel, Principal, Bishop Heber High School, Puthur, that the opening of the eleventh standard in almost all the high schools should be expedited, since their opening in a few schools only would give room for unhealthy rivalry. He paid a tribute to Mr C. Subramaniam, Education Minister, and was confident that the Minister would continue to do his best for improving the lot of the teacher. He emphasised the importance of physical education and supported the demand for better scales of pay for physical training intructors. He said that post-graduate trained teachers should not consider teaching in the high schools as below their dignity. In matters of administration, if headmasters were consulted, there would not have been so much confusion regarding the age of retirement, pension, etc.

He urged that regular physical training classes for students should be conducted either during morning or evening hours.

He said that only students of over and above the age of *17* years should be promoted and admitted to pre-university course in colleges as only then they would be physically and mentally strong to grasp the subjects.

The president suggested reduction in the strength of students in college classes from *100* to *40* students. In this case, he said, the professors and lecturers could easily pay individual attention to students. He also suggested meetings of headmasters, managements and departmental heads for exchange of views in advance to avoid conflicting circulars in the field of education.

Mr. R. Bhoovaraghavan proposed a vote of thanks.

S.I.T.U. Elections

In the election of office-bearers to the South India Teachers' Union for *1961-62* Rev. D. Thambuswami, Principal of the Kellett High School, Madras, was elected President and Mr. R. Bhoovaraha Iyengar, Headmaster of the National High School, Tiruchi and Mr. V. Anthoniswami, Headmaster of the S. V. B. High School, Tuticorin, as Vice-Presidents. Mr. S. D. Krishnamurthi Rao was re-elected Secretary. Mr. V. K. Venugopal, Assistant, National High School, Tiruchi, was elected Joint Secretary, and M. J. D. Muthiah of the Kellett High School, Madras, was re-elected Treasurer. Mr. A. S. B. Phillips, Assistant, Schafter High School, Tirunelveli, was chosen convener of the Vigilance Committee.

EDITORIAL

Science in Schools

It was announced on June 9th that a five-point programme had been drawn up by the Union Education Ministry to give special emphasis to science teaching in secondary schools. This is stated to be the result of deliberations following the suggestions made at the last meeting of the National Development Council and at gatherings of State Education Ministers and educationists earlier, that a firm technical bias should be given to secondary education during the Third Plan.

The first step to be taken to improve the teaching of science in our schools is to recognise the sad fact that it is much worse than what it was twenty five or thirty years ago. Physics and Mathematics or Physics and Chemistry could then be chosen as optionals in this State, in the fifth form. In some States, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics could be so chosen. During the fifth and sixth forms, students electing science were asked to do dozens of experiments in the laboratory. They had to answer practical tests in the public examinations. In addition to elective science, they were also taught general science.

The standard of attainment in science of the average student who completes his secondary school today is obviously much lower. The first downward step was taken when elective science was abolished. Nor can it be denied that the dominant trend, since Independence, has been towards deliberate lowering of standards. The laudable zeal to help the backward to catch up has taken queer political turns and worked havoc with standards in education all round. The survey of science teaching that the Union Ministry is contemplating will reveal how much valuable ground has been lost during the last ten or fifteen years.

One of the important facts about the present situation is that pupils do no practical work in schools. In many schools, there are no experimental demonstrations in science classes, though the barest minimum of laboratory equipment may be maintained for satisfying the inspecting authorities. The syllabi also have been watered down. Even in the pre-university class, hardly a dozen practical experiments are done by each pupil. In the result, the undergraduate student of science today starts at a considerable disadvantage.

We have also to recognise the fact that students in India generally suffer from the fact that unlike their compeers in Europe and America, they are not familiar with the applications of science in daily life. Their knowledge largely tends to be merely verbal. Again study of science does not lead them to positions where the knowledge acquired becomes useful. There is no use of giving a technical bias to education if those turned out by polytechnics do not get jobs.

Another important factor in the situation is the provision of incentives for the study of science at higher levels. What are we doing with the thousands of science graduates turned out by our Universities every year? We have blocked them from the study of engineering and medicine. Only very restricted facilities are available for post-graduate studies in science, not to speak of research work. In the circumstances, the vast majority of our Bachelors of Science get absorbed into clerical or administrative jobs. The costly training in science given to them goes to waste. Only the few who enter industries where applied science is required or take to teaching continue to remain in touch with science.

What happens to the B.Sc. after graduation may appear irrelevant in a consideration of the position of science teaching in schools. It is really very important and relevant for the reason, that unless science is studied at higher levels by a large number of competent students, our schools cannot maintain high standards, nor create enthusiasm for the study of science. And science will not be studied at higher levels by a large number of competent students, if they find themselves unemployable after long years of strenuous study.

In the light of the considerations, we fear that the scheme proposed by the Union Ministry may prove inadequate. It may be a 'realistic' suggestion to ask B.Scs. to handle higher secondary classes, but is it not, retrograde, steps seeing that the pre-university classes are now being taught by M.Scs.? What is the nature of the three-year content-cum-pedagogy courses contemplated for future science teachers Will they be graduates or be merely secondary-grade trained teachers? Will the courses be run by Universities? These questions have to be carefully considered, if our science teachers are to be first class men and women.

We are glad, however, to note that provision of elective science is in the Union Ministry's five-point programme. We also welcome the encouragement of co-curricular programmes in science, such as science clubs, science fairs and science exhibitions. They will not, however, carry us far, if the formal teaching is not efficient, and if high standards are not kept in view.

In addition to the proposed survey of the teaching of science in secondary schools, another survey may at the same time be conducted of the study of science in Universities. Attempts may also be made to relate the study of science at higher levels with industry both in the private and public sectors.

OUR EDUCATIONAL DIARY

"PEPYS"

8—5—61 The Madras State Tamil Teachers' Conference held at Gudiyatham requested the Government to revise the pay scales of "Vidwans" and "Pulavars" and to treat Tamil teachers and lecturers on a par with their counterparts in other subjects and to appoint them as Headmasters and principals.

11—5—61 The Deputy Director of Education, Madhya Pradesh, Proudly made the well deserved claim that primary teachers of the State were the best paid in the whole of India. Passed Matric and trained teachers got anything between Rs. 90 and Rs. 170 in addition to allowances upto Rs. 15.

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The Government of Madras has announced that hereafter girls would be permitted to appear privately for the S.S.L.C. examination after they had attained the age of twenty and had passed the E.S.L.C. or III Form.

[Why this minimum age of twenty while the minimum age for regular candidates is only 15?]

13—5—61 Sri T. P. Srinivasavaradan, in his presidential address at the 61st Madras State Education Conference,

made the following points :--(1) Upgrading of High Schools; (2) establishment of a statutory body for Secondary Education which would revise and direct the course study; (3) the need for pre-school education for boys and girls from the 3–6 age group; (4) the need to give the present secondary education a fair trial before trying to alter it; (5) checking of deterioration in standards by reducing the teacher pupil ratio to 1:30 (6) the need to begin the study of Hindi from the VI Standard, so that the student would be enabled to study one more (a fourth) language in the High School stage; (7) *the need for reducing the heavy syllabus to enable improvement in standards*; (8) *the unsuitability of Basic Education which was designed by the Mahatma for a different set of circumstances and* (9) free medical aid to teachers.

[Point (4) has reference to our Education Minister's plea for keeping the Pre-University classes as they are and for a re-examination of the entire question of upgrading High Schools. Point (8) *is a bold utterance on the part of a responsible educationist. In the name of Basic education, standards are going to dogs.* Point (7) rightly urges the need for reducing the heavy load of syllabus. Specially in High Schools and Colleges, English lessons ought to be far fewer, so that the language could be studied thoroughly. Ten lessons ought to suffice at the rate of one lesson per month. Reduction of syllabus is really long overdue in the case of Primary and Higher Elementary stages where solid foundations should be laid in core subjects like 3 R's.]

13—5—61 Pattom Thanu Pillai, the Kerala Chief Minister, said that he had issued instructions for the construction of sheds to accommodate additional students and that no student should be denied admission for want of space.

14—5—61 The Government of Kerala has decided to defer further expansion of the pattern of Basic education in the State. This followed the reports of the Basic Education Committee and the Legislature Estimates Committee. The official announcement says .....The Government is convinced that the result so far obtained by the introduction of the reform does not present a happy picture.....valuable features of basic education are very little in evidence in the generality of basic schools. Also, these schools have more or less fallen in line with the conventional type of schools, with the further disadvantage that the standard of literacy among the pupil in these schools has defenitely dereriorated the basic system as it existed at present may not suite to the conditions drevailing in the State."

[It is a happy trend in education that at last educationists, official and non-official, have mustered sufficient courage to speak out their minds on basic education.]

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Sri T. P. Srinivasavaradan, speaking at the Trichy Conference, said that only students who had completed seventeen should be admitted to the P.U.C. class, and that they should be given physical training daily.

[Impliedly, Sri T. P. Srinivasavaradan perhaps wants to advocate secondary education till the seventeenth year, i.e., two years of additional study in the schools, because the present rule is that the student should have completed his fifteenth year when he appears for S.S.L.C. examination. Otherwise his suggestion may not be acceptable because we cannot allow our students who have passed S.S.L.C. to idle away the intervening period till they attain the age of seventeen. The suggestion to increase the secondary course of study for those who intend to pursue higher education is by no means novel. It is in vogue in West Germany. It has certainly

undoubted advantages. I trust that Sri T. P Srinivasavaradan would do wide propaganda in this direction. It would help to put secondary education standards on sound foundations.]

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Sri T P, Srinivasavaradan also made the sound suggestion that the strength of the college class should be reduced from *100* to *40*.

[This is a reform long overdue, specially in the context of the low standard of secondary education. But I am afraid that this reform has to wait for an indefinite time, however urgent it might be. The question of finance would be a formidable obstacle, and so the suggestion, though excellent, must remain utopian.]

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In accordance with the recommendations of the Kerala Educational Advisory Board, the Kerala State has permitted the opening of schools with English as the medium in municipal towns with a specified minimum population. Sri R. Sankar. Dy. Chief Minister, seems also to be of the view that the medium of instruction in secondary schools should be in English.

[Even in the Madras State, it is announced that permission has been granted for making English the medium in three more secondary schools. The importance of English is being slowly but steadily realised, because of our need to be abreast of the technological advance of the present day. At any rate, it is barest justice that the option of running schools with English as the medium should not be denied. If I may make a humble suggestion, the medium of instruction be switched on to English, in the case of students taking to academic courses, from the eighth standard.]