

Dr. S.C. Dutta Birth Centenary Year Lecture 2019

"Can Education Now or of the Future Make us More Humane"
Dr. Lakshmidhar Mishra, IAS (Retd.)



Indian Adult Education Association
International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education
17-B, Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi - 110002, India



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TRIBUTE TO DR. S.C. DUTTA

—A Distinguished Adult Educator (1919-1987)*



Dr. Shib Chandra Dutta (1919- 1987) popularly known as Dr. S.C. Dutta, occupies a unique place in the history of Indian adult education not only as a person who dedicated forty long years(1948-1987) to the cause of adult education but also made some significant contributions to the professional development of adult education as a field of practice and a discipline of study. Although his main concern and contribution was towards building organizations specially the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA) which he served in various capacities as Associate Secretary (1948-1956), Honorary General Secretary (1957-1978), Vice President, (1980-83), Treasurer 1984-86) and President in 1987, he played a key role in setting up an international organization viz; Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education-currently known as Asian South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) in 1964 which provided a platform to several non-governmental organizations and individuals in the Asia Pacific region to work together for promotion of adult education. In order to encourage the university community to introduce adult education courses, Dr. Dutta worked closely with Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, the then President of IAEA and set up the Indian University Association for Continuing Education (IUACE) which he served as the founding Secretary for thirteen years (1966-79). Dr. Dutta, played an important role in the formation of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA) during the international conference held at UKAI Dam in Surat in 1987. He was a UNESCO Consultant and participated in several national and international

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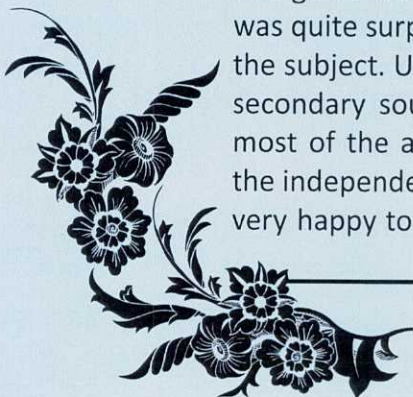


conferences and made significant contribution to adult education policy formulation and programme planning and implementation in India and other Asian countries. Being a prolific writer, he published a number of books and papers and edited the *Indian Journal of Adult Education* for a number of years. He was one of the most fascinating and unassuming adult educator who worked with ease with grassroots level workers, administrators, academicians, political leaders both at national and international levels. He belonged to that remarkable generation of adult educators who not only believed in voluntarism but also practised it and set an example for others. A review of his four decades of association with adult education bears testimony to his inherent belief in the democracy of adult education and success in creating a space in the academic world for the study of adult education, building institutions, shaping the policy and programmes of adult education.

Getting to know Dr. Dutta

Dr. Dutta was born on August 26, 1919 in Ambala, Punjab in a middle class family. After his early education in Ambala, he did graduation from Hindu College in 1939 and Master's Degree in History from the University of Delhi in 1946. He was actively associated with literacy programmes during his college days and organised literacy programmes under the Student Literacy League of Delhi University. Because of his interest in literacy work, he joined IAEA as a paid staff for six months during 1948 and left when he was selected as a Gazetted Officer in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of Government of India. Dr. Dutta, however, continued his association with IAEA and interest in adult education even after joining Government service. He devoted after office hours and Saturdays to work for IAEA in a purely honorary capacity.

Although my association with Dr. Dutta was only for a year prior to his demise on December 4, 1987- it left a lasting impact on me. It was during the train journey to Surat (Gujarat) to participate in the international seminar organised by the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults that I got a chance to meet him and discuss various aspects of adult education. When late Shri J.C. Saxena, the then General Secretary of IAEA, who was travelling with me introduced Dr. Dutta as the President of the Association, I felt honoured and delighted to meet a stalwart in the field of Indian Adult Education and learn more about IAEA. As I was working on a project on the History of Adult Education in India commissioned by the Directorate of Adult Education of Government of India, I was eager to get as much information and guidance from Dr. Dutta about the historical development of adult education. I was quite surprised to know that he had deep understanding and knowledge about the subject. Unlike academicians whose knowledge often depended on reading from secondary sources, Dr. Dutta had first-hand experience as he was associated with most of the adult education programmes planned and implemented in India since the independence. Being a repository of vast experience and varied expertise, he was very happy to answer all my questions till late night in a very scholarly but informal

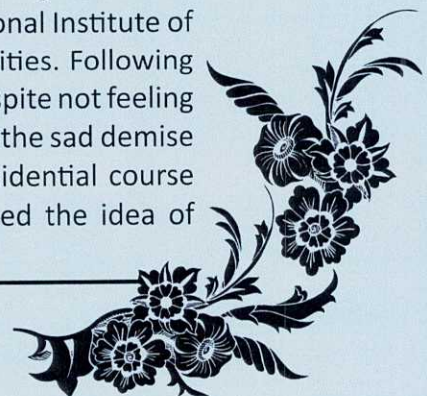


manner. He suggested that I visit IAEA library and consult several publications related to my research and if need be, contact him again. Subsequently, I decided to record his views in a systematic manner by drafting a detailed questionnaire. He invited me to his house to record the interview which covered several facets of his work and views on adult education. After making use of the interview for my research, I forgot about it. However, after the demise of Dr. Dutta, the interview was published in a special volume of *Indian Journal of Adult Education* brought out in his memory.

Although, I have been associated with IAEA over the last three decades and undertook various activities and interacted with a number of adult educators, I did not realise the manifold contributions of Dr. Dutta to adult education in general and IAEA in particular till I started working on a coffee table publication on Seventy Five Years of the Association. As I started going through the vast collection of primary and secondary sources at the IAEA library and conducting interviews with a number of adult educators, I realised the key role of Dr. Dutta in building up the Association and his deep commitment to adult education. It was at this juncture that I came into contact with Shri Sharat Kumar Dutta, the son of Dr. Dutta when I shifted my residence to the building in Green Park, South Delhi where he was residing. My informal interactions with him provided me lots of insights into the life of his father besides providing me with rare photographs from family album.

Developing training as a professional development programme

Dr. Dutta had realized the importance of professionalization of adult education and took various initiatives during 1950s and 1960s. Apart from building strong professional organizations at national and international levels, Dr. Dutta worked to introduce adult education as a course of study at the university level and organised a variety of training programmes for adult education functionaries. After having planned and organised several training programmes for adult educators at national and international levels, Dr. Dutta had realised the need for and importance of strengthening the training of adult educators as a professional development programme by designing short and long duration professional courses in adult education developed in cooperation with universities. With this idea, he visited Jawaharlal Nehru University to discuss the possibilities of developing a professional course. Dr. Anita Dighe who was the then Director of Adult Education at JNU and myself, an Assistant Director were very happy to work with Dr. Dutta in designing a professional course. Since the course was to be of six week duration and residential in nature and JNU did not have guest house facilities, Dr. Dighe suggested that we should collaborate with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) as it had better facilities. Following week, when the meeting was convened at NIEPA and Dr. Dutta came despite not feeling well, he collapsed while arguing the case for developing a course. After the sad demise of Dr. Dutta, JNU and NIEPA collaborated and organised the first residential course for Directors of State Resource Centres. Subsequently, IAEA discussed the idea of

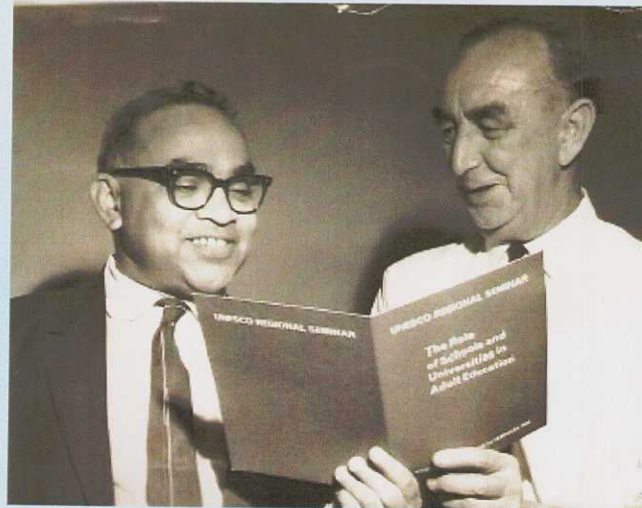


designing a series of short duration courses for adult educators and made a beginning by launching a ten days course on Research Methodology in 1991 in collaboration with university of Kerala. Subsequently, during my tenure as the Director of Adult Education Programme in JNU, the course was expanded by including a section on recent developments in the field of adult education and continued to be offered as a joint programme of IAEA and JNU for over a decade.

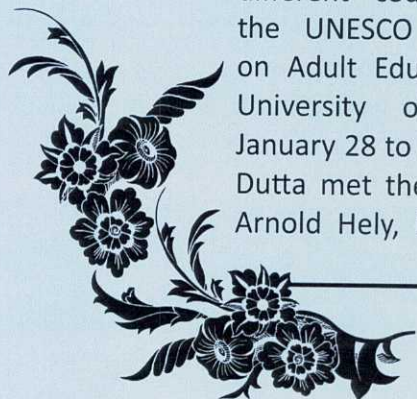
In order to encourage the university community to introduce adult education courses, Dr. Dutta worked closely with Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, the then President of IAEA and set up the Indian University Association for Continuing Education (IUACE) which organised a series of conferences at different universities to sensitise university community about adult education. The office of IUACE was located at IAEA for several years and Dr. Dutta served as the founding Secretary. Dr. Dutta, continued to work with higher education system to establish Departments of Adult Education in Indian Universities. In 1952, he submitted a proposal to the University of Delhi to set up a Department of Adult Education. Though it did not materialise due to lack of funding support from government, he succeeded when the University of Delhi introduced a paper on Adult Education in the Batchelor of Education programme and later set up an Extension Lecture Board to organise extension lectures by the teachers of the university in different parts of Delhi on themes of contemporary relevance. Dr. Dutta along with Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta continued to liaise with University Grants Commission (UGC) to fund Adult Education programme in Indian Universities and succeeded when the UGC drafted guidelines and allocated funds to Indian Universities to set up University Departments of Adult Education during 1980s.

Dutta's role in building ASPBAE

Being the Honorary General Secretary of IAEA which was well known in the field of adult education during 1960s, Dutta was a regular invitee to several international conferences organised by the UNESCO and World Confederation of Teaching Profession (WCOTP) held in different countries. In one of the UNESCO Regional Seminar on Adult Education held at the University of Sydney during January 28 to February 1, 1964, Dr. Dutta met the key organiser Mr. Arnold Hely, Director of Tutorial



Dr. S. C. Dutta -founding Chairman and President of ASPBAE with Mr. Arnold Hely- first Secretary General.



Classes (which later became Adult Education) at the University of Adelaide, who was working towards bringing Australia into the mainstream of world adult education. At the end of the seminar an interim Executive Committee of seven members: Ang Gee Bah (Malaysia), S.C. Dutta (India), Robert Gibson (South Pacific), Arnold Hely (Australia), Leuan Hughes (Hong Kong), U KyawKhin (Burma) and ArtemioVizconde (Philippines) was formed to discuss the organizational structure and name of the organization. The committee resolved to name the new organization as Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education(ASPBAE) and elected Dr. Dutta as the Chairman and Mr.Hely as the Secretary General. The organization came into being on February 1, 1964

While Dr. Dutta continued to provide leadership to ASPBAE for twelve long years (1964-76) as founder Chairman and President, Mr. Arnold Hely served as the First Secretary General for three years (1964-67). Since both of them have been attending international conferences and known to each other and had the same commitment to adult education, they could work as a team. In fact Mr. Hely attended the Silver Jubilee conference of Indian Adult Education Association held in New Delhi in September 1964. In spite of limited resources, ASPBAE organised a number of activities and brought out ASPBAE Journal which was edited by Mrs. Bimla Dutta (wife of Dutta) for twelve long years (1964-76) in a purely honorary capacity. Dr. Dutta being the President took initiative in organising the following programmes on behalf of ASPBAE:

Conference on South –East Universities in Adult Education, Hong Kong, October, 1964

Manila Conference of ASPBAE in 1965.

Educational Institutions and Literacy, New Delhi, 1966

Urban Adult Education in Developing Societies, Singapore, November, 1967

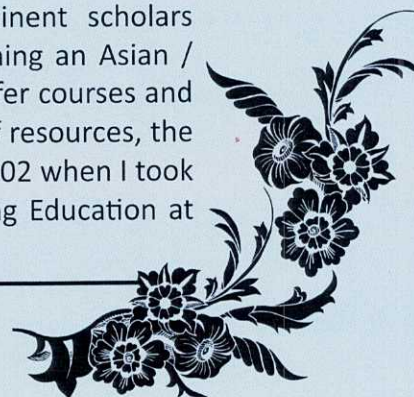
The Training of Adult Educators Workshop at New Delhi during May 5-13, 1972.

ASPBAE Conference on Center for Continuing Education, New Delhi, May4-11,1974.

Besides the above,several programmes were also organised by different regional groups of ASPBAE during 1970s and 1980s.

On completion of 21 years of ASPBAE Dr.Dutta not only took initiative in organising an international conference in New Delhi but also brought out a Souvenir— titled *ASPBAE Comes of Age (1964-85)*. Dr. Dutta continued to attend ASPBAE meetings and conferences and provided guidance till his death in 1987.

The extensive international travels and interactions with eminent scholars in different countries motivated Dr. Dutta to work towards establishing an Asian / Commonwealth Institute of Adult Education in an Asian country to offer courses and conduct researches in adult education. Mainly due to the shortage of resources, the idea remained a pipe dream. His idea, however, wasmaterialised in 2002 when I took initiative in setting up an International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education at IAEA headquarters in New Delhi.



Publications

Dr. Dutta made systematic efforts to bring out several publications besides encouraging others to write on adult education. He felt that adult education being an emerging discipline needs scholarly publications. Apart from the three important publications viz; *History of Adult Education in India*; *On To Eternity* Vols. I-IV; his other publications include — *Adult Education in South Asia*; *Literacy to Liberation*; *New Trends in Adult Education in India*; *Place of Recreation in Social Education*; *Social Education—Ten years in Retrospect*; *Unity in Diversity: Role of Adult Education* and *ASPBAE Comes of Age (1964-85)*. Dr. Dutta collaborated with Dr. John K. Friesen of University of British Columbia and brought out an important publication on *University Adult Education* based on the papers presented in the conference of Vice Chancellors organised at Bhopal. As a part of the forthcoming Golden Jubilee celebrations of IAEA in 1989, Dr. Dutta had planned to bring out a series of monographs on history of adult education in different states and commissioned several scholars. Since he had difficulty in finding a person to write on adult education in Bihar, he requested me to write on Bihar, as he had seen my paper on the “Mass Literacy Campaigns in Bihar (1938-1939)” published in the *Journal of Education and Social Change*. Accepting Dr. Dutta’s request, I wrote a monograph on *Adult Education in Bihar* which was published by IAEA and released during the Golden Jubilee conference. Some of the important publications commissioned by Dr. Dutta and released during Golden Jubilee year -1989 were: *Mass Movement for Adult Education* by B.R. Patil, *National Literacy Mission : Problems and Prospects* by J. C. Saxena & Sachdev J.L.; *Adult Education : A Focus for the Social Sciences* by James A. Draper, *Adult Education: Some Reflections* by B.B. Mohanty.

Dr. Dutta contributed to planning and policy making in adult education mainly



Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice President of India is being welcomed by Mr. & Mrs Dutta on the occasion of Silver Jubilee function of IAEA

through participation as an expert member of several committees viz; Central Social Welfare Board, Workers Education, Social Education, Ministry of Education, World Confederation of Teaching Profession. However, his significant contribution to policy making was when he along with Dr. Roby Kidd, drafted the chapter on Adult Education in the *Report on Indian Education Committee (1964-66)* which continues



to be referred by adult educators even today. He took great pains to edit and publish the *Indian Journal of Adult Education* during 1950s when there was dearth of resources and staff. He played a key role in planning and implementation of most of the programmes organised by IAEA. Since he had friendly relations with most of

the leaders and academicians, he could seek their cooperation in the implementation of programmes. Several leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Zakir Hussain and important Ministers attended IAEA programmes on various Occasions.



Dr. Dutta received Arnold Hely Memorial Medal of ASPBAE during the Regional Conference of ASPBAE held in South Korea in September 1985.

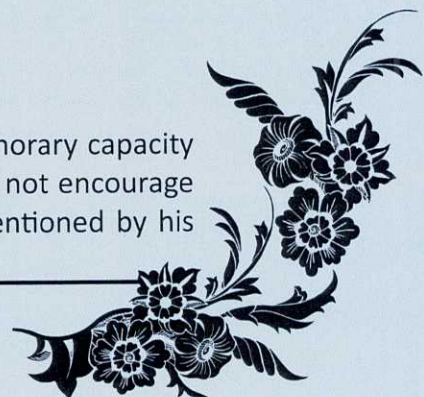


Dr. Dutta with his wife –Mrs. Bimla Dutta who edited ASPBAE Journal for twelve years (1964-76)

Dedicated adult educator

Not only did he serve IAEA in all the key positions in a purely honorary capacity but also encouraged his wife also to work for IAEA. However he did not encourage his children to join the Association mainly to avoid nepotism, as mentioned by his

In recognition of their meritorious services rendered to adult education, Dr. Dutta received several international and national honours. viz; Honorary Doctorate by Keimyong University of Republic of Korea and Nehru Literacy Award both in 1985. In the same year, ASPBAE awarded the Arnold Hely Memorial Medal to Dutta for his contributions to the development of ASPBAE and adult education in Asian and Pacific Region.

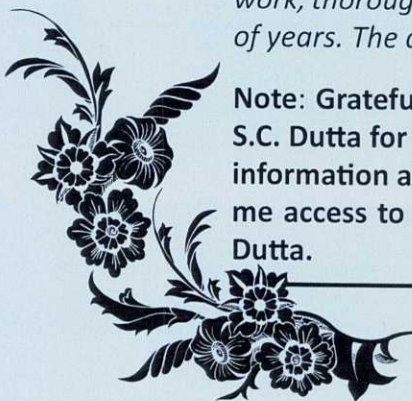


son-Shri Sharat Kumar Dutta. His wife observed that he had no time for family and he dedicated his life to IAEA. It would not be an exaggeration to state that his first love was adult education and he was married to IAEA. His wife- Smt. Bimla Dutta - also joined him in most of the activities of IAEA and ASPBAE and even served as a Vice President of IAEA during 1990-97. She edited the Hindi Journal –*Proudh Shiksha* for some years and donated the salary to IAEA. She also edited the ASPBAE Journal for twelve years (1964-1976). It seems that Dr. Dutta was very passionate about his work and spent all the free time to work for the IAEA. According to his wife, he was a workaholic and ignored his health which led to his early death. He took great pains to collect funds for the building of IAEA headquarters by personally approaching the Union Ministers, public and organising film shows and often felt very worried when the work did not progress as planned due to the shortage of funds. Being Delhi based and staying at Daryaganj, near to the Indraprastha Estate, (where IAEA building was coming up), he regularly supervised the building work as if his own house.

Irrespective of his wide contacts with dignitaries and achievements, Dr. Dutta kept a low profile and remained as a humble voluntary worker of IAEA. Shri K.C. Choudhary, the current President of IAEA who had long association with Dr. Dutta are called the simple lifestyle of Dr. Dutta who used to wash his clothes at night when staying at guest houses during conferences. According to him Dr. Dutta was an extremely popular leader who maintained a very cordial relations with everybody and took several initiatives in furthering the cause of adult education. He used IAEA funds very judiciously. A review of his work at IAEA shows that he was a rare combination of scholar, activist, effective speaker and an institution builder par excellence. His wife considered him *as a yogi who was above caste, creed, colour, provincialism or communism*. According to her, *he was a socialist, a communist, a revolutionary and a reformist*. Dr. Dutta's role in IAEA cannot be expressed better than the following observations made by the late Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, then President of IAEA on the occasion of the inauguration of Shafique Memorial building of IAEA on April 26, 1961.

“The world outside may not know but it deserves to be reported with deep appreciation that if there is any single individual more than anybody else responsible for the development of the scope and services of this Association, it is undoubtedly our Honorary General Secretary, Shri S.C. Dutta. It is my duty to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to him for his long and selfless service to the Association. He works in an honorary capacity and makes his wife also to give her service to the Association. He is so modest and works so quietly that nobody knows with what hard work, thoroughness and salient sacrifices he has built up the Association over a number of years. The country owes a great deal to him.”

Note: Grateful acknowledgements are due to Shri. Sharat Kumar Dutta- son of Dr. S.C. Dutta for providing photographs from family album and sharing some personal information about his parents and Shri K.C. Choudhary, President of IAEA for giving me access to important papers and publications at IAEA and sharing his views on Dutta.



'CAN EDUCATION NOW OR OF THE FUTURE MAKE US MORE HUMANE?'

Dr. Lakshmidhar Mishra

Let me at the outset express my deep sense of gratitude to the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Education and, in particular, to its energetic President & Director – Prof. K. C. Chaudhary and Prof. S.Y. Shah for this rather undeserved honour. Please permit me, to begin with, a few recollections of the many seminal contributions made by late S.C. Dutta to the field of adult education in India.

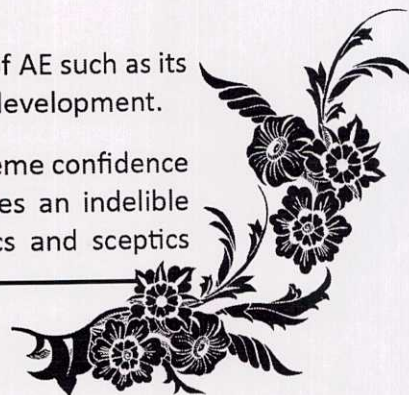
There is a saying in English that some women/men are born great, some acquire greatness while greatness is thrust on a few others. Acquiring greatness would require qualities of head and heart such as a sterling character, care and consideration for others without any personal interest in any event, a deep and passionate commitment to a cause which is of interest and relevance to the lives of many and, in particular, the poor, deprived and disadvantaged, oppressed and marginalized, acceptance of challenge as an opportunity to carve out a niche in the hearts of many and treating human beings – superiors, sub-ordinates, rank & file alike with respect for their dignity, decency, equality, security and freedom without any craving for the loaves and fishes of office or awards, rewards and personal recognition for the contribution made.

Dr. Shib Chandra Dutta admirably fitted into this description but went beyond. He was a complete human being with an integrated personality. He had a humble origin but his abiding interest in and deep commitment to professional development of adult education was manifest right from his college and university days in Ambala and Delhi and even when he was a gazetted officer in the Ministry of I&B in late forties. He had retained his love and profound respect for the discipline of AE as also for institutions like IAEA founded by late Dr. Zakir Hussain, former President of India in 1939 with which he had a long and abiding association at all stages of his life.

Dr. Dutta was an accomplished scholar, communicator, motivator and institution builder par excellence. He sought to translate his personal love and commitment to AE for something larger-than-life, which is universal in scope and content in an un-conventional and un-orthodox manner as would be evident from the following enumeration:

Dr. Dutta was a virtual repository of knowledge, in all dimensions of AE such as its history, research methodology, publication, training and professional development.

He had the skill to communicate with clarity, perspicacity and supreme confidence and yet with a touch of humility as a sender which instantly creates an indelible impact on the mind of the receiver. Even the worst among cynics and sceptics



would be converted to a die-hard optimist by the sheer logic and force of his soulful communication skills springing from the innermost recesses of a sparkling mind.

He had a passionate commitment to institution building in which personal comfort and convenience did not matter. This is evident from his forceful advocacy of developing a professional course for Directors of SRCs at NIEPA with Dr Anita Dighe, then Director, AE, JNU, Prof. Satya Bhusan – then Director NIEPA and Prof. S.Y. Shah despite illness. He collapsed while presenting his case for developing such a course and never recovered.

He promoted and encouraged publications of high quality which provided life, light and romance to the subject of AE while he himself made significant contribution to that domain. He has as many as seven pioneering publications in AE to his credit.

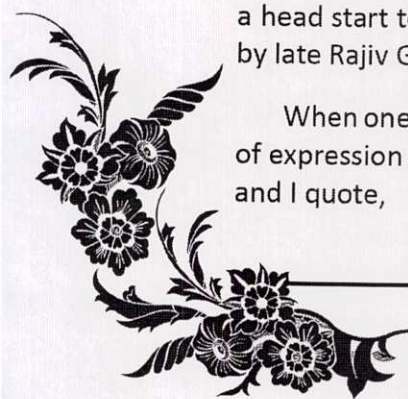
Dr. Dutta will be fondly remembered for his multi-faceted contribution to deepen and strengthen the base of AE in India in late 40s when in the wake of the tragic partition, the country was passing through extremely difficult times, when social education was at a nascent stage of its development and amidst multiple competing claims did not command as much prioritized attention as it should have.

He will be remembered for adding a fillip to the initiatives of Prof. Madhuri Shah, then Chairperson, UGC (late 70s and early 80s) for creation of University Deptts. of AE, setting up of Asia Pacific Bureau of AE (ASPBAE) and formation of Commonwealth Association for Education and Training of Adults (CAETA).

His association with Shri Mohan Singh Mehta (who is universally known and affectionately addressed as Bhai Saab) in India, Dr. John. K. Friesen of the University of British Columbia and Mr. Arnold Hely, Director, University of Adelaide, Australia led to many path-breaking initiatives and fruitful outcomes ranging between institution building, meeting of mighty minds and delightful publications.

I joined as Joint Educational Adviser in the Deptt. of Edn., MHRD on 19th Aug., 87 when Dr. Dutta was alive (he passed away on 4.12.87 at the age of 68). I had the opportunity and privilege of knowing three stalwarts in the field of AE then – Dr. S.C. Dutta (for a brief period of four months), J.C. Saxena and J.L. Sachdeva. Yet to be fully initiated to the domain of literacy, I acknowledge with all humility that during this important learning phase of my civil services career, I had tried to imbibe and assimilate the best out of the three of them and apply the lessons that I learnt to give a head start to National Literacy Mission, which had been conceptualised in 1985-86 by late Rajiv Gandhi, then PM as one of his five technology missions.

When one's mind is full of lofty thoughts, words turn out to be too fragile a medium of expression of one's genuine feelings. As it is said in P.B. Shelly's Ode to West Wind and I quote,



'We look before and after
and pine for what is not.
Our sweetest songs are those
that tell us of saddest thoughts.' I un-quote.

If there is one single individual responsible for development of AE in its vast range, sweep, depth and universality of application, it is undoubtedly Dr. S.C. Dutta. I bow my head before this great man with all humility for all that he said, did and contributed to AE.

I am neither an educationist nor a social scientist nor a profound original thinker. I am an ordinary mortal, a humble worker of and for humanity and in particular for those who are weary and worn, withered and forlorn, who go in darkness, return in darkness and whose whole life is full of darkness without any ray of light.

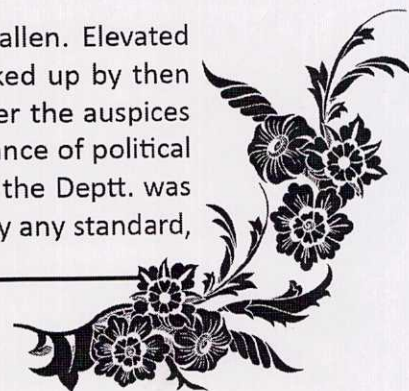
I recall these soul-stirring lines from Debabrat Bandopadhyay's "Halis of Delanpore." Sung by the members of Bhil tribe of Rathlam district. In Bhilli dialect, it would read as under:

'JagoTareti Andhara Mein Jaaun
JagoTareti Andhara Mein Aaun
Mhari Aankhein Umar Me Andharui
Andharui Hai UjaruKatkone Mein'

In bureaucracy and All India Services to which I belong more by chance than by any conscious design, posting to a particular assignment is a sheer coincidence. That basic limitation notwithstanding, I have not spared myself to bring a little cheer to the cheerless faces of those withered and forlorn sections of humanity over more than five decades. Today when I shall be completing four score years soon with a very little elan vital left, I am reminded of what W.B. Yeats, the noted English Poet had written in his inimitable work 'Sailing to Byzantium' and I quote:

'An aged man
Is but a paltry thing
A tattered coat upon a stick
Unless soul claps its hands and sings
And louder ring
For every tatter in its mortal dress'

As I rise to deliver this lecture, I feel both elevated and crest fallen. Elevated because even though I am not a professional andragogist, I was picked up by then PM – late Rajiv Gandhi to be the first humble servant of literacy under the auspices of National Literacy Mission. This was a time when there was abundance of political will to make literacy a mass movement. This was also the time when the Deptt. was headed by Anil Bordia jee (who is no more), Edn. Secy., who, judged by any standard,



was more an institution than an individual, who was a fountain head of in-exhaustible energy, insight and dynamism. This was also a time which witnessed a confluence of creative forces and energies symbolized by veteran adult educators of the character and caliber of late Prof. D.S. Kothari, late Prof. Yas Pal, late Dr. Malcolm. S. Adisesiah, late Dr. (Mrs.) Chitra Naik, late Satyen Moitra and late Mustaq Ahmed to name only a few (I beg to be forgiven if I have rather un-wittingly left out a few names since it is not possible to count and re-count names of all the distinguished adult educators within the constraints of limited space and time).

I recall with nostalgia how after several experiments and amidst doubts and reservations from numerous cynics and sceptics, the mission was formally launched by then PM- Rajiv Gandhi on 05.05.88, how it took off with BGVS as the principal partner, anchor and navigator of NLMA, how Ernakulam provided the launching pad to be followed by Goa, Puducherry and over 200 districts in a short span of 2 years (1990-92).

As a Vietnamese Buddhist monk has said and I quote, "The real miracle is neither to walk on water nor in the thin air but to be able to walk on earth". I unquote.

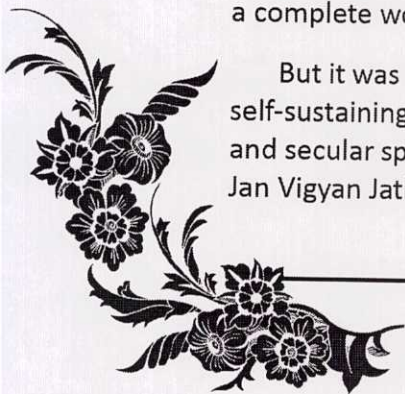
BGVS demonstrated through Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha in a short span of 44 days (02.10.1990 to 14.11.1990) how it is possible to establish a massive emotional engagement with an admi with literacy as the cardinal message.

From Kutch to Kohima and from Ladakh to Lakshyadweep, BGJV criss-crossed 50,000 villages and several hundred towns and cities with thousands of volunteers, traversing across the length and breadth of the country with a gusto and tempo, reminiscent of the volunteers of Bapu at the time of struggle for India's independence in 20s, 30s and 40s.

This was a tumultuous phase of Indian history which was torn between two conflicting ideologies represented by Mandal and Kamandal. The volunteers braved un-imaginable hostility, courted arrest and yet with rare indomitable grit, courage and determination, they forged ahead interacting with tens of millions of people in dozens of languages and dialects, breaking the barriers of caste, class, cult, sect, clan, faiths and beliefs.

They carried hope, faith and conviction to the people by exhorting the un-lettered, 'You can learn. You can be on your own. You can be literate and being literate you can be a complete woman and man and be the architect of your own destiny.'

But it was all so short lived. Where is that gusto and tempo, that unique fabric of a self-sustaining dynamic and constructive mass initiative permeated with the rational and secular spirit of Peoples' science which knitted those volunteers exactly as Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha launched by Prof. Yash Pal had done at Bhopal in Aug 1987.



Today, that spirit of voluntarism which was unique in many ways has been given a go-by. It has been overtaken by a craze for self-aggrandizement, how to acquire quick bucks by fair means or foul alike, how to get adorned with awards, rewards and personal recognition.

There is no survey of literacy conducted like a festival as in yester-years. The three multi-graded and integrated primers as a tool of self-learning which Bordiaji had conceptualized with so much of imagination and scientific perfection have been squeezed without any application of mind.

The two way communication process for monitoring as a tool of correction and not witch-hunting has been given a go-by.

The forty odd Sramik Vidyapeeths to integrate literacy with skill training and lifelong learning have been replaced by Jan Shikshan Sansthans, massive in number (271) but without any systemic direction and focus.

The media centre which under the leadership and amazing creativity of Avik Ghose, an outstanding media professional had designed and produced 140 excellent adult educational films is gathering dust in a lone corner of DAE at Jamnagar House.

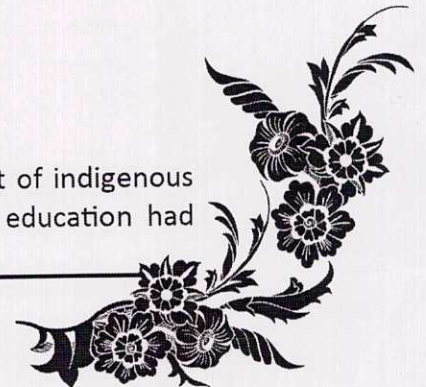
The National Institute of Adult Education which Bordiaji had designed with so much of passion and conviction died an un-natural death before even it was born.

The Jan Shikshan Nilayams meant to be a window to the outside world for the neo-literates, the neo-literates' newspaper and the State Resource Centres (initially fifteen and later thirty-two) which provided flesh and blood to an amazing blend of information, cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills of learning, creativity and mass communication have all disappeared with the winds of change. The identity of functional literacy and numeracy has been subsumed in digital literacy.

I feel crest-fallen as the structure which was so assiduously built by Bordiajee, Anitajee (my most valued colleague who is no more) and many other friends, colleagues and well-wishers of adult education – both living and dead – has been reduced to only a sad memory box which will be erased with the passage of time. The sweet though sad recollections of yester years haunt me and I recall what the English poet John Dryden had said

'By education most have been misled
So they believe, because they were so bred
The priest continues what the nurse began
And thus the child imposes on the man'.

Akbar Allahabadi, a noted urdu poet describing the replacement of indigenous spirit by alien ideas and concepts which characterize present day education had



lamented and I quote from his Urdu couplet:

'Tippal mein bu kya aye
Maa baap ke etware ki
Dudh to dibbe ka hai
Talim hai Sarkar ki'

Viewed in a symbolic sense, this couplet implies that the culture of parents is not reflected in their children as they are brought up on milk powder and education is govt. funded and controlled. I un-quote.

II

Even though we act in the living present we mould ourselves both by drawing inspiration as also learning lessons from the mistakes of the past to build a foundation of the present and provide a beacon light for the future.

Education which moulds our lives, action and conduct had a past; it has a present as also a future. If education in ancient India rested on a set of seminal values and principles which were vital for character building, it will be in the fitness of things to imbibe and assimilate them to build the present as also provide a solid foundation for the future. It is in this perspective that this lecture is a blend of the past, present and future of education with development of an integrated personality which will also be humane as the central focus.

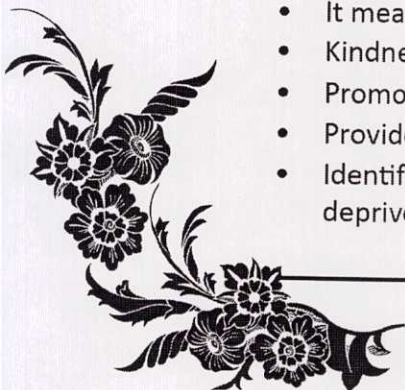
III

The dilemma which confronts all rational thinkers today is this: Education liberates human beings from fads, dogmas, obscurantist ideas and practices, deceit and fraud, manipulation and orchestration, vanity, ego-hassles, pride and prejudice, irrational and un-principled segregation, differentiation and discrimination, mindless hatred, intolerance, injustice and oppression. It is pertinent to ask the following question: "Why is it that education itself is a prisoner of the same forces which it is expected to fight and from which it is expected to liberate scores of human beings. In that sense, is the whole thesis of the liberating role of education not a self-contradictory one?"

IV

This takes us back to the main theme of the talk "Can education now or a future make us more humane?"

- What does humane mean?
- It means kindness and compassion.
- Kindness and compassion have 3 connotations such as:-
- Promote, protect and preserve life;
- Provide relief and succour to the needy, genuinely aggrieved and victimized;
- Identify with the genuine needs, preferences, felt needs and interests of the deprived, displaced and disadvantaged.



V

The importance of life and protection of all lives – plant, animal and man alike has been lucidly and forcefully enunciated in a couplet of Maharishi Valmiki's first stanza of Ramayana and I quote:

'Ma Nisada Pratistham
Twamagama: Saswati Sama:
Yat Krounch a mithunat ekam
Abadhi kama mohitam'

'O hunter, please do not kill this pair of beautiful hawks, immersed in an act of pure love. What lasting fame would you attain if you wantonly kill them?' I un-quote.

The simple philosophical meaning underlying these lines is this: 'Do not indulge in mindless killings as life once damaged, mutilated and destroyed cannot be recreated.

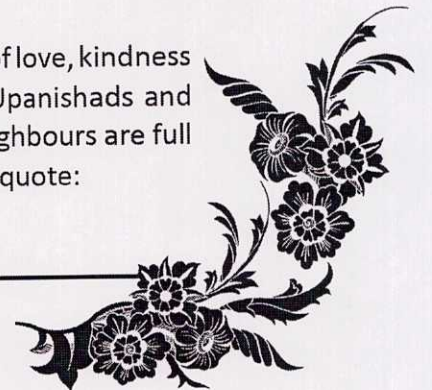
In Bheesma Parva of Mahabharat, Bheesma Pitamaha, the grandsire of Kuru dynasty utters words that reinforce the primacy and centrality of human life. Bheesma had fallen on the tenth day of the battle of Kurukshetra and was lying stricken on a bed of arrows. Yudhisteera, the eldest of the Pandavas approached him and asked him 'O Pitamaha! Please enlighten us as to what is the ultimate truth of life', Quick came the reply and I quote:

'Guhyam brahmam
Tadidam brabimi
Nahi manushat kaschit
Mahattaram bidyate'.

'Let it be known by you, O Yudhisteera, that human beings are the finest and best in creation. There is nothing greater than man'. I un-quote.

'The central message underlying these beautiful lines is important. The battle of Mahbharat entailed a lot of bloodshed for wresting the kingdom of Hastinapur from the clutches of wily Duryodhan. A large number of precious lives were lost not to be regained. The central message, therefore, which has very appropriately been recorded in the great epic is:-'Promote, protect and preserve human life and donot destroy it, for once destroyed, it cannot be recreated'.

The yearning for a clean and congenial existence in an environment of love, kindness and compassion has manifested itself in numerous forms in Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. When a child is born, parents, members of the family and neighbours are full of excitement and joy and sing in the words of Shukla Yajurveda and I quote:



'Pashyem: Sarada: Satam
Jeevema: Sarada: Satam
Srunuyam: Sarada: Satam
Prababama: Sarada: Satam
Adinashyam: Sarada: Satam
Bhuyascha Sarada: Satam'.

'We long to see one hundred autumns in their resplendent glory. We long to inhale the freshness and fragrance of one hundred autumns. We long to listen to the whispers of falling leaves of one hundred autumns. We long to minstrel to humanity in the language of one hundred autumns'. I un-quote.

The warmth, zest and joy with which these lines were composed are reminiscent of the superb beauty of the following lines of William Wordsworth, the noted English poet many centuries later and I quote:

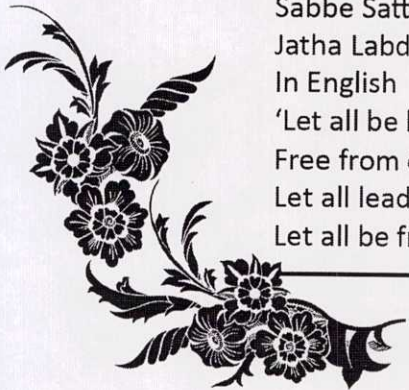
'My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky
So was it when my life began
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die
The child is the father of man'. I un-quote.

These lines indicate how the petals of human life unfold from infancy to early childhood, early childhood to boyhood, boyhood to youth, youth to manhood and manhood to old age. The varied hues of the rainbow are reminiscent of the rich variety and colourful diversity of life.

Lofty thoughts characterised by freedom from danger, enmity, misery and suffering characterise Tripitaka, the Buddhist scripture and I quote the original in Pali as also the English translation:

Pali Version
'Sabbe Satta Sukhita Hontu
Abera Hontu
Abyapadro Hontu
Sukhi Attanam Pariharantu
Sabbe Satta Dukhi Pamuchhantu
Sabbe Sattama
Jatha Labdha Sampattito Bigachhantu'

In English
'Let all be happy
Free from enemies and enmity
Let all lead a happy, contented and delightful existence
Let all be free from sorrow



Let not anyone be deprived of his/her entitlement' I un-quote.
 How strikingly similar are these lines in the Bible and Iquote.
 'Be you all like-minded;
 Compassionate;
 Loving as brethren;
 Tender hearted;
 Humble minded;
 Not rendering evil for evil;
 Or evilling for evilling;

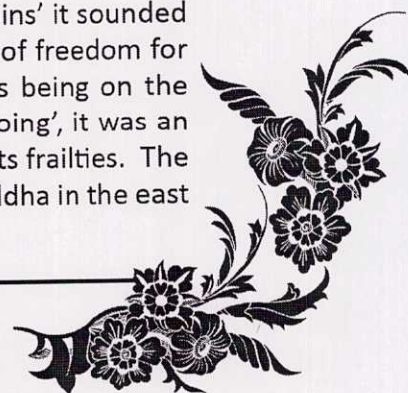
But on the contrary, be of one mind and live in peace'. I un-quote.

Being empathetic is being humane. The simple meaning of empathy is do unto others as you would like to do unto yourself. This has been clearly brought out in the following lines of Mahabharat and Quran and I quote:-

Mahabharat
 'Do not do unto others
 What you do not wish to be done to yourself
 What you desire and long for yourself
 And wish for others too
 This is the whole of Dharma
 Heed it well'. I un-quote.
 Prophet Mohammad has said so in identical lines and I quote:
 'That alone constitutes the noblest religion
 When you like for others
 What you like for yourself
 What you feel painful for yourself
 Hold that as painful for others'. I un-quote.

VI

Humanism as a philosophy (it pertains to being humane) is the product of renaissance which represents an intellectual and artistic movement beginning in 14th century. This came as a refreshing departure from the aristocracy or feudalism of medieval age. The literal meaning of renaissance is renewal of life, energy and vigour. Love of man and appeal to mankind to adore and adopt something better, finer and nobler through literature was the quintessence of renaissance writings between 14th and 17th century. When Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote on the eve of the French Revolution of 1789, 'Man is born free but is everywhere in chains' it sounded his abundance of love of man as an ardent humanist and importance of freedom for every human being. When Jesus Christ uttered the following words being on the cross, 'O Father! Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing', it was an out-pouring of abundant love of mankind tinged with forgiveness for its frailties. The same philosophy was reflected in the philosophy of Confucius and Buddha in the east earlier.



The humanists are positivists who accept service to humanity as the best religion and as their only ideology. They crave for a disciplined human life tinged with respect for pluralism, unity, integrality and universality of mankind. They do not view religion divorced from humanism. 'The Son of God has descended on the earth not to administer comfort for himself but for lessening the misery, pain and suffering of human beings' is the reigning humanist philosophy. The war of American independence – and French Revolution in the later half of 18th Century propounded with one voice, one energy and one conscience the equality of all human beings endowed with certain inalienable rights i.e. respect for life, liberty, fraternity and pursuit of happiness in conditions of freedom and dignity.

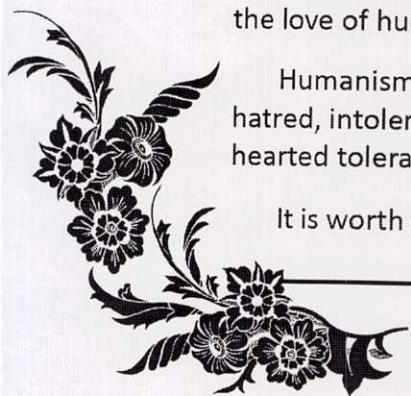
The advancement of science and technology in the 19th century has brought both development and decay of mankind. The scientific discoveries in surgery and medicine have undoubtedly helped to lessen human misery and suffering. Simultaneously there has been a new awakening against injustice, tyranny and oppression and respect for human rights characterized by freedom, equality, dignity, decency and security. A large number of legislations have been enacted to promote, protect and preserve these rights on the one hand while ensuring health, safety and well being of human beings who have been made victims of an unclean, unhygienic and unsafe mechanized environment on the other. Importance of conquering poverty, hunger, starvation, malnutrition and ill health through timely preventive and corrective measures such as social protection including social security has been recognised – globally and nationally. Media and communication agencies all the world over have played a commendable role in (a) extolling the importance of human dignity, justice and freedom; (b) bringing to the surface incidents of injustice, tyranny, and oppression; and (c) sensitising both Government and other institutional/constitutional bodies about the importance of timely preventive and corrective action. It is true that sociologists and demographers like Charles Darwin and Thomas Robert Malthus have a different perception which recognises the importance of struggle and survival of the fittest and weeding out of the weak and inefficient but there is no universal acceptance to such a divergent view point.

That humanism is the key to evolution of human civilization comes out clearly in the writings of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore from Sadhana and I quote:

'Civilisation must be judged and prized not by the amount of power it has developed but by how much it has evolved and given expression to by its laws and institutions, the love of humanity' I un-quote.

Humanism was a powerful force against fads, dogmas, obscurantist ideas, mindless hatred, intolerance and violence and was all in for broad, liberal, expansive and large-hearted tolerance of dissent.

It is worth noting that what Swinburne, the English poet wrote in the 19th century



and I quote:-

'Glory to man in the highest

For man is the master of things' was re-echoed in the following lines of Biharilal, Chandi Das and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and I quote all the three of them in English from the original in Bengali:-

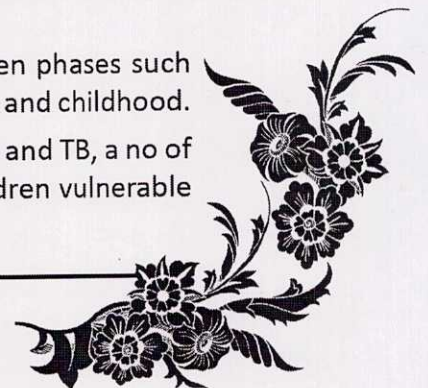
- I. I am immensely fond of human beings and am always desirous of promoting their well-being' Bihari Lal.
- II. 'Listen, O brother! Listen
Man stands head and shoulders
Over everything else
There is nothing greater than man' Chandi Das.
- III. 'I do not wish to die
But want to live in this beautiful planet
I wish to live in the midst of human beings
Amidst the rays of the rising and setting sun
Amidst the verdant green
Of this multi-colored garden of beauty and fragrance
How fervently I wish I could secure a place
Amidst the hearts of living beings'
Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore
In Pran' in the anthology
of poems 'Kadi and Komal'. I un-quote.

VII

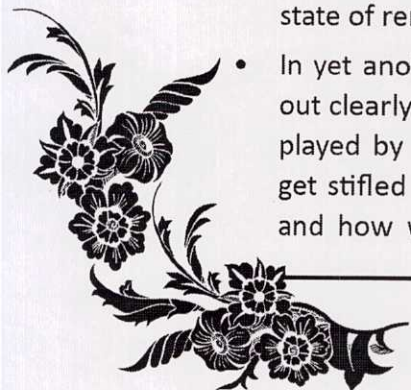
Let us examine the extent to which these values and principles are being practised at home, at the school, at the work place and in any other conceivable forum and the extent to which education can promote and sustain them.

At Home

- A child is the most precious human resource.
- Childhood is the most tender, formative and impressionable stage in the total cycle of human development known for its pristine purity, innocence, nobility and intrepidity of character, un-affected by the de-meaning, de-grading and corrupting forces outside which are also de-humanizing.
- Beginning with pre-natal phase, childhood is spread over seven phases such as early neo-natal, late neo-natal, neo-natal, post-natal, infancy and childhood.
- Starting with congenital mal-formation and going upto pleurisy and TB, a no of risks and hazards are associated with each phase, making children vulnerable to morbidity and death.



- Pediatricians the world over have laid down checks and safeguards to mitigate these risks and hazards to ensure protection and survival of childhood.
 - The primary responsibility for ensuring this befalls on the parents.
 - Parents, who are ignorant and un-lettered, need to think, reflect, critically analyse and introspect as to why they have failed in ensuring protection and survival of childhood.
 - They need to ask themselves whether they have any moral and ethical right to bring children to earth and do to their children what they have been doing for generations such as
 - Running to quacks, charlatans and faith healers when a child falls ill, first get fleeced, impoverished and indebted and then out of desperation bring the ailing child to the hospital at a stage when it is too late;
 - When a child starts showing symptoms of mental illness, parents tend to suppress it lest the child (if a boy) would not get a suitable bride or, if a girl, would not get a suitable groom;
 - Parents who themselves are victims of fads, taboos and die-hard obscurantist ideas (like Ganesh drinks milk) fail to impart rational, secular and scientific values and principles of protection and survival to children.
 - All children are not alike; they cannot be alike as genes of their parents are not the same. Some children are well endowed and fast learners while a few others are less endowed, dim-witted and slow learners. It does not behove of parents to compare two sets of children born under two different circumstances with different parentage.
 - Similarly, it does not behove of parents to compare and label two sets of children such as 'intelligent, high IQ, receptive, retentive, high-scoring performers who come upto expectations of parents 'and slow to act and react, un-responsive, slow in receptivity and retentivity, lazy, lethargic, low-scoring and poor performers who do not come upto the expectations of parents and so on.
 - This is what has been vividly presented in the film 'Tare Zameen Par'(2007), where parents dub their only child eight year old Ishan as 'lazy, lethargic, dim-witted' and where the same child in the hands of a highly sensitive art teacher (Ram Shankar Nikumb, the role admirably played by Amir Khan) achieves a state of remarkable transformation much to the disbelief of the parents.
 - In yet another film 'Raat aur Din' ably directed by Satyen Bose (1967) it comes out clearly as to how a bright and precocious child like Varuna (the role admirably played by Nargis Dutt) and her histrionic talent for singing, dancing and acting get stifled in the hands of an alcoholic, gambler, wife-baiter and abusive father and how with treatment of MPD (multiple personality disorder) she recovers
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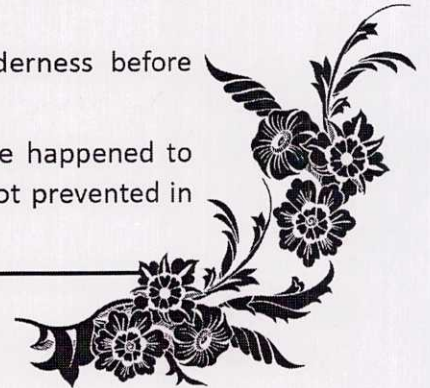
and gets back her self-confidence, courage and strength as also histrionic talent.

- In the first, parents are wrong in (a) ruling, ruthlessly, regimenting and chastising the child; and (b) dubbing the child as lazy, lethargic and worthless. This should not have happened. Parents need to learn lessons from what has been said in the scriptures and I quote:

'Lalayet pancha varsani
Dasa varsani tadayet
Prapte to sodashe varse
Putram mitram Iba acharet'

'Rear the children upto the age of five with care, affection, protection, love, benediction and solicitude, discipline (not regiment) them upto the age of ten years but start treating them as friends as soon as they attain sixteen years of age'. I unquote.

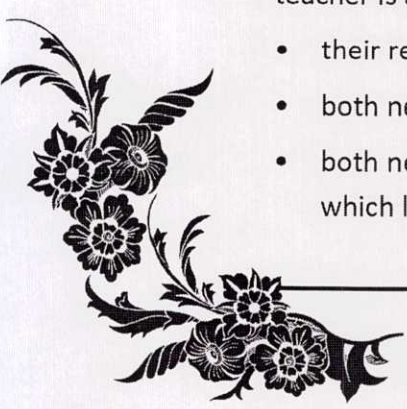
- There are many other parental aberrations which are responsible for ruination of children – physically, emotionally and psychologically such as:-
 - Parents push children involuntarily to work (harsh, arduous, drudgerous and hazardous) instead of encouraging their schooling; as the children cross childhood and enter adulthood, much of their elan-vital is lost along with loss of childhood and they cannot be responsible and responsive adults either.
 - Parents create a repressive environment at home forcing children to desert homes and becoming street children who are highly vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS;
 - Parents carry children with them when they migrate to a worksite at a destination point. Apart from being forced to work at the destination point, getting reduced to emotional and physical wrecks, children become the worst victims of educational deprivation;
- When a boy or a girl who was trafficked, who has been rescued/released from the vice-like grip of traffickers, repatriated and restored to the custody of parents, he/she is not to be treated as an untouchable on account of the prevailing social stigma; instead, he/she should be fully entertained and assimilated back to the fold of the household with the same love and affection which characterised the relationship with parents earlier.
- In all these, million petals of childhood wither away in wilderness before blossoming to the flowers of youth and man/womanhood.
- It is a moot point for parents to ponder over: 'Should this have happened to their children? Was it preventable? If preventable, why was it not prevented in time before it grew to a full crisis?'



VIII

At School

- The Education Commission (1964-66) led by Prof. D.S. Kothari commenced its report with the significant observation 'The destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms (P I).
- To this, it could be added that the destiny of these classrooms is being shaped in teacher educational and training institutions, like NCTE.
- While a sound educational system is considered as the backbone of a developing country, the teacher indeed is the pivot around which the entire system revolves.
- Simultaneously, it can also be said that the foundation on which everything rests is built in the primary schools.
- Where the foundation is strong, children would acquire the basic tenets of functional literacy and numeracy essential to the rest of their education and their adult lives and would evolve as complete women and men- mature, sensible and sensitive.
- The foundation can be strong when we have introduced the National Curriculum and its associated testing arrangements on the one hand and have been able to recruit and train a band of model teachers who like the lead role in film 'Jagruti' (1954) played by Abhi Bhattacharya or like E.R. Braithwaite in 'To Sir with love' (1959), have totally identified themselves with their role as a teacher to mould the character of their pupils, who focus all their time, energy and resources to bring out the best of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in their pupils and help in making them complete women and men of tomorrow.
- There are two dimensions of the role of teachers.
- One is emotional and the second is discipline related.
- An emotive bond between the teacher and the pupil is possible only when the teacher is able to perceive and internalise that
 - their relationship with their pupils is not a subject-object relationship;
 - both need to question, reflect and analyse;
 - both need to learn from each other through dialogue, discussion and analysis which leads to meaningful participation;

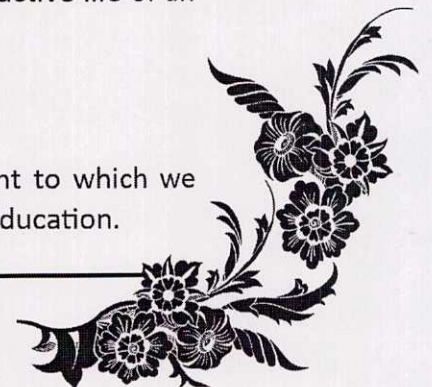


- such dialogue between the two becomes a civilising and humanizing agency of beneficial social consciousness.
- This strategy and approach was advocated by Pulo Freire in his classic work, 'Pedagogy of the oppressed (1967).
- Such an emotive bond can be built between the two only if the teachers:
 - deconstruct their authoritative role;
 - encourage students to be a little more inquisitive and exploratory;
 - encourage students to acquire affectiveskills needed to think, reflect, question and reason independently;
 - both teachers and students need to patiently listen to what each one has to say and simultaneously question the relevance of a host of issues raised by each;
- This aspect has been succinctly brought out in hymn thirty-four of canto IV of Sreemad Bhagabat Geeta and I quote:-

'Tat biddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
Upadekshyanti te gyanam
Gyanina: tatwadarshina:'

'You may learn this by discipleship, by inquisitiveness, by questioning, by devotion and by service. The wise, the seers of essence of things will instruct you in wisdom.'
I un-quote.

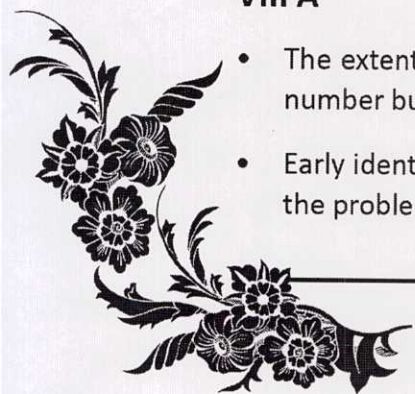
- The second dimension of the teacher student relationship relates to discipline.
- Discipline implies the following:
 - punctuality in attendance;
 - whole hearted participation in the activities which are conducted in the classroom and outside (through SPUW).
 - conforming to the curriculum, course-content and textual materials within a prescribed duration;
 - acquiring the desired levels of proficiency in arithmetic, mother tongue, physical and social sciences and environmental studies in a manner which prepares every student as a citizen to lead a meaningful and fully productive life of an adult later which also is responsible and responsive.
- The third component entails an evaluation of learning outcome.
- Such evaluation has to be comprehensive and continuous.
- Such evaluation would provide a credible feedback on the extent to which we have been successful in imparting a life-giving and life-breathing education.



- The central objective of CCE as provided in S.29(2)(h) of RTE, 2009 is two-fold, such as:
 - Child's understanding of knowledge;
 - His/her ability to apply the same.
- Every teacher who is an integral part of RTE framework needs to design both a child centered pedagogy as well as tools of evaluation of learning outcome within the frame work of S.29(2)(h) of RTE, 2009.
- He/she needs simultaneously to design and implement a host of activities, such as:
 - Recitation;
 - Interactive teaching learning;
 - Giving and taking down dictations;
 - Communicating to the pupil on the strength of CCE as to where the latter has gone wrong and providing constructive guidance as to how the same can be corrected;
 - Organizing debates, word games, story telling, role play and simulation exercises.
- In all these activities which are expected to be child centred, primacy has to be given to children's experiences, their voices and their wholehearted involvement.
- Considering the disparity in endowment of pupils, the teacher is required to do the following:
 - secure compliance by every student with the discipline of teaching learning through patient counselling and not through coercion;
 - corporal punishment by way of physical and verbal violence stands banned by law and is not to be taken recourse to under any circumstances;
 - equally abhorrent are physical and sexual abuse of students which has a deleterious effect on the pupil's health, psyche and total development;
 - all pupils are to be treated equally without any comparison and labelling which are un-warranted;
 - a teacher is expected to be a leveler and not a labeler.

VIII A

- The extent of learning disability in every classroom may vary in PC and absolute number but it is a tragic reality.
 - Early identification of learning disability may reduce the time required to remedy the problem.
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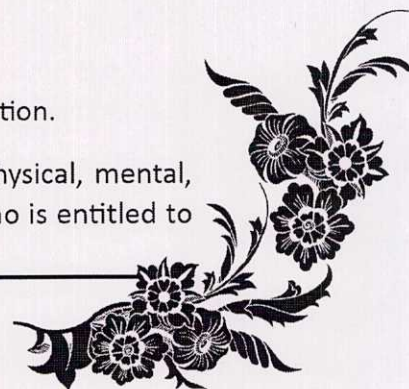


- It may help to prevent the development of mal-adaptive behavioural patterns or the in-efficient motoric responses which are called splinter skills.
- These are highly specific isolated physical skills which children develop to satisfy academic demands that is beyond their regular skill development (Chaney and Kephart).
- Children with specific learning disabilities refer to children who have difficulty in
 - understanding or using a language, spoken or written;
 - ability to listen, think, speak, read and write, spell or do mathematical calculations.
- Such disorders include conditions, such as:
 - perceptual handicaps;
 - brain injury,
 - minimal brain dys-function;
 - dyslexia;
 - developmental aphasia.
- Any delay in meeting children's special needs or failure to recognise the real cause of their problems would lead to the following:
 - perilous spiral of learning retardation;
 - mal-adjustment.
- Such children who are victims of learning disability would find life outside school less frustrating; they may, therefore, drop-out of school as soon as they find it difficult to cope with the curriculum and school environment.
- Without remedial assistance they have to face a life of despair and un-fulfilment as adults.
- Such children deserve humane attention and empathetic treatment in the hands of teachers trained in the art of handling special needs children.

IX

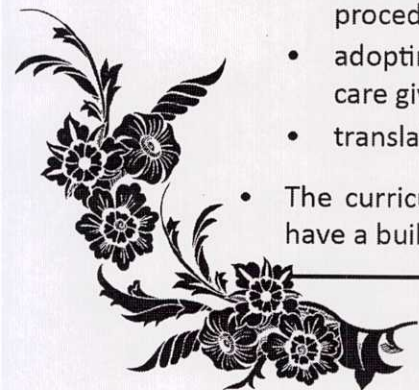
At the hospitals/private clinics/dispensaries

- Health is an integral part of right to life as in Art.21 of the Constitution.
 - Health is not mere absence of disease but promotion of total physical, mental, psychological and emotional well being of every human being who is entitled to
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enjoyment of the highest attainable standard in health and medical care conducive to a life of dignity characterized by:

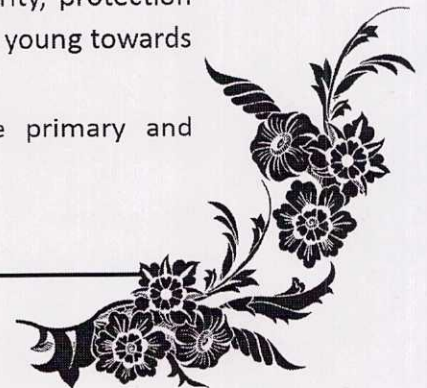
- accessibility;
 - quality;
 - affordability
- A medical doctor has a seminal role to play in both prevention and correction of diseases – both communicable and non-communicable.
 - Regretfully, today we have a number of negative indicators in the arena of health, such as:
 - poor ratio between population and no of serving doctors (1:2000);
 - grossly in-adequate allocation of funds;
 - grossly in-adequate infrastructure in primary and tertiary health care;
 - Seventy per cent Indians spending a high pc of their income on health care;
 - Thirty-nine million Indians are being pushed to poverty annually due to ill health;
 - Thirty per cent Indians did not go for any treatment due to financial constraints;
 - Forty-seven per cent and thirty-one per cent of hospital admissions (rural and urban) financed by loan and sale of assets.
 - What a responsible and responsive medical doctor should do so that the above deficiencies are not compounded further by a casual, indifferent and insensitive approach to human issues are:
 - ensuring timeliness in attendance;
 - making professional expertise easily accessible to the needy;
 - devoting ten to fifteen minutes of time per patient at OPD to explain to the patients implications of the ailment, line of treatment, possible side effects, follow-up, ensuring continuous medication and preventing relapse;
 - establishing a humane relationship with the patient through a humane, empathetic and sensitive handling of each and every case;
 - carrying hope, faith and conviction to every patient that his/her problem will be best taken care of and there is nothing to worry.
 - recommending all genuine cases which require IPD treatment without much procedural hassle;
 - adopting the same humane interactive relationship with patients and their care givers while taking rounds of patients in IPD wards;
 - translating the concept of therapeutic dimension of health in a full measure.
 - The curriculum, course-content and textual materials for medical education must have a built-in component for adoption of such a humane approach.
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X

Elderly vs. Younger Persons

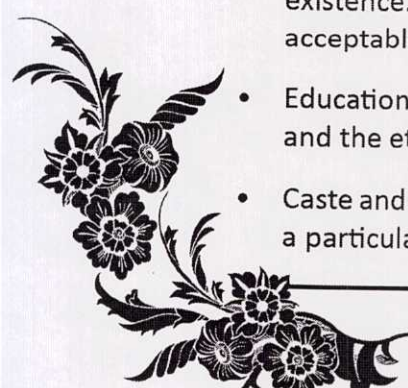
- The population of the elderly persons (60+) is about 100 million which is likely to go up to 200 million by 2030.
- Fifty-one per cent of the elderly are women.
- Old age is an inevitable phase in a man or woman's life.
- It is painful on account of social isolation, loneliness, loss of faculties, skills, memory, reflexes and productive engagement.
- The pain gets accentuated due to age related ailments like Parkinson's disease, dementia, Alzheimers, depression and various other disorders.
- The scenario is worse in case of mental illness.
- Gradual dis-integration of the joint family system, im-patience, restlessness and in-sensitivity of the youth, who are more wedded to their career and ambition than anything else have immensely contributed to the misery and suffering of the elderly.
- In such a not-far-too happy scenario what should be the humane dimension in treatment of the old in the hands of the young?
- The latter should think, reflect and ponder over the following
 - when the old were young they made all possible sacrifices to bring up their siblings;
 - they enabled and facilitated the young to climb up the steps in the ladder of life;
 - the young will also become old one day;
 - if they ignore or neglect their old parents today, their children may do the same to them sooner or later.
- The reciprocal obligation to provide comfort, convenience, security, protection and treatment in case of illness, should, therefore, come from the young towards the old in a normal, natural, spontaneous & un-inhibited manner.
- The curriculum, course-content and textual materials at the primary and elementary level should make this possible.



XI

Central message to be incorporated in education for liberation and empowerment of members of SC and ST communities:-

- Members of both the communities who are sizeable in number (200 million in case of SC and 100+ million in case of ST) have often fatalistically resigned themselves to the structures of social and economic domination in which they are immersed.
 - Being victims of social discrimination and economic exploitation for generations as also being victims of the culture of silence and dependence they are severely handicapped in waging a struggle for their emancipation.
 - Besides, they are torn between two conflicting loyalties i.e. between following prescriptions/dictates of the upper-castes and exercising discrete, informed and well-reasoned-out choices as to what to do and what not to do in a given situation which is often to their disadvantage.
 - Education must recognise this tragic dilemma of the two communities and must enable them to formulate the instrument of their own liberation.
 - This can be done by infusing through curriculum, course-content and textual materials the culture of self-confidence, self-assertion and self-efficacy.
 - Simultaneously education should empower them to perceive their own strength and weakness vis-a-vis those of their adversaries and impart them the tools (legal literacy, programme literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy) and techniques (formation of organisations through trade unions, cooperatives etc.) to grapple with and overcome the handicaps.
 - Education must remove the aura of false consciousness that members of SC and ST may be poor economically but certainly not poor in spirits or experience or native wit and wisdom. Instead, many of them are mature, sensible, agile, alert and are adept i.e. managing their assets with dexterity, resourcefulness and skill. We have no moral or ethical right to write them off as poor manager of assets.
 - Practice of un-touchability is synonymous with hurling social indignities. An un-touchability-based system intensifies social discrimination of members of SC apart from contributing to their de-humanization. It is anathema to civilised human existence. It is negation of human rights. It is highly objectionable and totally unacceptable.
 - Education must send a clear signal that un-touchability is abhorrent to democracy and the ethos and culture of equality which goes with democracy.
 - Caste and caste-based discrimination are equally abhorrent to democracy. Birth in a particular community is not according to one's choice but entirely independent
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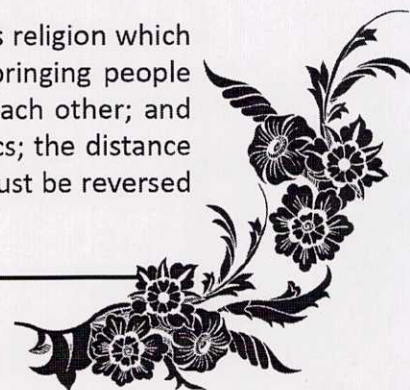
of it. It is worth rather than birth which should be the determining factor in admission to all educational institutions, selection to all civil appointments and career progression.

- The rationale in reservation of SC/ST/OBC in matters of public employment lies in the fact that these communities, despite decades of efforts since 1949 50 have been lagging behind socially and economically on account of years of social isolation or exclusion and neglect in the matter of realization of their just and fair entitlements. This is also despite existence of Constitutional bodies like National Commission for SC and ST, National Backward Classes Commission etc.
- It is necessary and desirable to offer opportunities to them through reservation to enable and facilitate them to come up in life to positions which they would not in normal circumstances be able to reach.
- As far as members of ST are concerned, they live, grow and evolve in accordance with their native habitat, ethos and genius. These will have to be respected. Any attempt to super-impose a model of development, which is alien and inimical to their native ethos and genius will be counter-productive.
- This central message must also be disseminated through education.

XII

Religious, cultural and linguistic minorities

- Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis have been declared as minority communities by Gol, MOW notification No.576 dated 23.10.1993.
- Despite Constitutional provisions (Art. 16,21,25,29 and 30), legal provisions (National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, Protection of Human Right Act, 1993 and institutional mechanisms (National Minorities Commission, National Human Rights Commission, National Women's Commission), the religious, cultural and linguistic minorities continue to suffer from a series of handicaps and disadvantages such as in-security of life, lack of dignity, honour, self confidence, economic in-security, lack of freedom to enjoy and develop their faith, belief, culture and tradition.
- These handicaps and disabilities flow from the politics and culture of hatred and mindless violence, causing destruction of life and property of minorities.
- We must take cognizance of the tragedy of modern times vis-à-vis religion which is two-fold namely (a) while economic and political forces are bringing people closer together, religions divide and antagonize people against each other; and (b) religion becomes a branch of State craft, a plaything of politics; the distance between State and religion is not maintained. This tragic trend must be reversed and repulsed.



- The State as an agent of a pluralistic society must recognise the importance of such pluralism and must create conditions which will be conducive to diverse faiths and beliefs so that they can co-exist and flourish in a multi-coloured garden of greenery and fragrance.
- Listening to yet another point of view, howsoever disagreeable, with patience, tolerance and respect must be an integral part of our culture to be practised at home, at school, at the work place and in all public places. This is because respect for dissent is yet another attribute of a mature and responsive mind.
- Tolerance of dissent makes peaceful co-existence of numerous human beings known for differences in origin, faith, life-styles, attitude, approach and ideology a reality.
- Tolerance does not compromise with fundamentals but re-inforces respect for and recognition of the essence of the other person's point of view.
- The State should recognise that differences in thoughts, ideas, faiths and beliefs cannot be wiped out but only harmonised.
- The State must create conditions which will be conducive to such a process of harmonization.
- Communal harmony which is the dire need of the hour today will be possible only with (a) in-depth and un-biased understanding of all faiths; and (b) respect for the inner tenets of all faiths, notwithstanding superficial differences between them.

XIII

Physically, orthopedically and visually challenged persons as also mentally ill persons

- A Survey conducted in early 80s (International year of the disabled) covering three types of disabilities (visual, communicative and locomotor disability) had estimated that twelve million people in India had at least one disability.
 - The survey specifically excluded mental and communicative disabilities in children of four years of age and younger.
 - If they are included, the extent of disability will be far more.
 - Laws such as Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, 1995 have been enacted with a view to sensitizing and involving public and private authorities to end the stigmatization, exclusion, discrimination and denial (DSD) which pose serious challenges for physically and mentally challenged persons.
 - Regretfully, the Constitutional and legal provisions and institutional mechanisms have not ensured that the physically challenged persons receive equal opportunities for their development.
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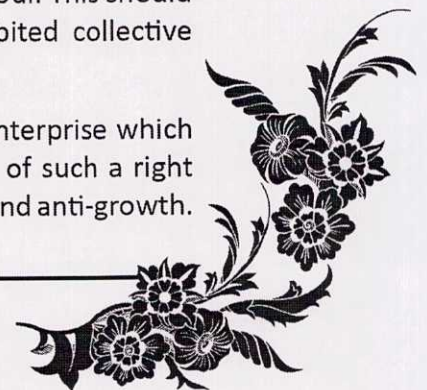


- They have not ensured their full and equal participation in social, economic and cultural activities.
- The core values which must be incorporated in a central message to be transmitted through education vis-à-vis these disadvantaged individuals and social groups are:
 - Disability is not the result of one's bad deeds committed in one's previous birth;
 - Those who are physically and mentally challenged are not responsible for what they are today;
 - They are neither to be pitied nor should they be discriminated against nor segregated as un-touchables or out-castes;
 - Instead, they deserve to be cared for, treated with dignity and respect and rehabilitated socially, economically and emotionally;
 - Such rehabilitation calls for a lot of love, kindness and compassion apart from a sound infrastructure where their physical, mental and emotional needs, hopes and aspirations can be taken care of.

XIV

Core values of Labour

- Labour is one of the four factors of production but is just not merely a statistical unit of production.
- Labour is primarily a human being as also a citizen, a living entity.
- Labour has hopes, aspirations, basic needs, preferences, human emotions, behavioral, aspirational strengths as also aberrations.
- These will have to be understood and internalised on a human plane with the desired level of empathy and sensitivity.
- Late VV Giri, former President of India and veteran trade union activist had said years ago and I quote:
- 'It is in the power to combine that labour has the most effective safeguard against exploitation and the only lasting security against in human conditions.'
- The right to form unions/associations is a fundamental right of labour. This should be supplemented and complemented by free, fair and un-inhibited collective bargaining.
- Conditions will have to be created both within and outside the enterprise which will be conducive to exercise of the said right by labour Exercise of such a right should not be perceived as anti-trade, anti-industry, anti-business and anti-growth.

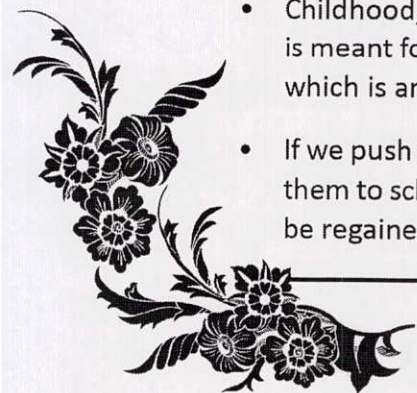


- Recognition of such a right would help in un-folding workers' imagination, ingenuity, creativity and capacity for innovation.
- This will contribute to what is known as 'representational security'.
- On no account, the employer of an enterprise will say or do something which will amount to suppression of this right.
- The climate to be created for exercise of this right must be one of trust, goodwill, understanding, co-operation and collaboration in accomplishing individual as well as common pursuits oriented to the prosperity of the enterprise and health, safety, security and total well-being of the workers.
- Bipartism should be recognised as an important strategy for resolution of all disputes between the employer and the employees, failing which recourse may be taken to voluntary arbitration, failing which adjudication of the dispute through Labour Court/Industrial Tribunal as the last resort.
- Simultaneously, it should be the endeavor of employers of all enterprises to respect and resolve, all just, fair and legitimate entitlements of labour in a normal, natural, un-obtrusive and friendly manner.
- Conceding just, fair and legitimate claims of labour under external pressure or compulsions would often convert what is ought and sought to be given into a grace-less gift which is not desirable.
- Nothing should be done which gives rise to a climate of distrust, suspicion and misunderstanding and which eventually will upset the apple-cart of industrial relations, apart from causing dislocation to production and productivity of the enterprise.

XV

Core-values for promotion, protection and preservation of childhood

- The child of today cannot become a free, responsible, responsive and productive member of the society tomorrow if we do not create for him/her a healthy, social, economic, cultural and spiritual environment.
 - Childhood, the most tender, formative and impressionable stage in the cycle of life is meant for singing, dancing, playing and learning and not for hard manual labour which is arduous, drudgerous and hazardous.
 - If we push children involuntarily to work at the school going age instead of sending them to school, that would tantamount to loss of childhood and once lost it cannot be regained; the excitement joy associated with childhood are lost forever.
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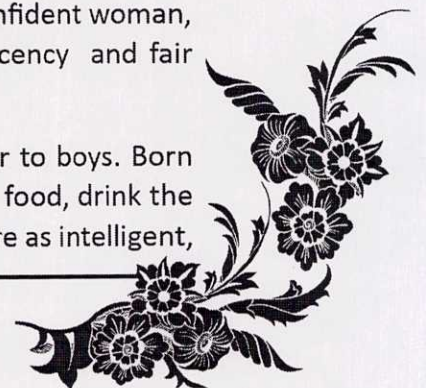


- Neither the parents, nor the employers nor the civil society as a whole have any moral and ethical right to do to children what they have been doing for generations.
- Children have a fundamental and inalienable right to free/compulsory and universal education.
- Deprivation thereof is co-terminus with child labour, child labour with destruction of childhood and crippling of human resource and destruction of childhood with death of humanity.
- Children who are out-of-school cannot be faulted for not being in the school. The pull-out, push-out and drop-out phenomena need to be understood, internalised, grappled with and overcome by all sections of the civil society including parents, teachers and the community with empathy and sensitivity as also with grit, courage and determination.
- Severance of children from their childhood means the end of all social and economic development, peace and stability and human resource development in its totality.
- Constitutional and legal provisions as also institutional mechanisms being in place are necessary but not sufficient for putting an end to all individual and collective aberrations responsible for loss of childhood, and all that is good, gracious and promising associated with childhood.

XVI

Core values for girl children

- The parents, employers and all sections of the civil society should ask this question to themselves: 'Are we morally and ethically justified in worshipping mother goddesses at home and outside on the one hand and treating our girl children as lesser mortals on the other?'
- Are we morally and ethically justified in being obsessed with an irrational desire for male off-springs and achieving this objective through female foeticide and infanticide.
- It is forgotten that to be able to grow into an active, skilled and confident woman, a girl child should be nurtured in an environment of dignity, decency and fair opportunity.
- Girl children judged by any stretch of imagination are not inferior to boys. Born of same mother's womb, they breathe the same air, eat the same food, drink the same water and wear the apparel made of the same fibre. They are as intelligent,



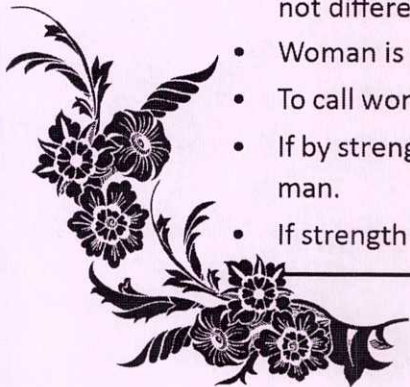
ingenuous, creative, innovative and resourceful as boys. They share the same dreams, same hopes and aspirations as boys. Their lives cannot be circumscribed around care of siblings, fetching fodder, fuel and water, marriage and motherhood.

- A girl child is not an economic liability and burden as in the ordinary perception but as strong an asset as her male counterpart.
- Regretfully, for the average girl child in India, the privations of poverty are significantly compounded by the traditional value system, discriminatory social norms and strange cultural moorings which inhibit girls to play their normal and legitimate role in society.
- The right of children as set forth in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are for all children regardless of their sex. Like their male counterparts, the girl children are fully entitled to the right of survival, protection, participation and development.
- The parents, employers and all sections of the civil society need to ponder over the disastrous consequences of discrimination of the girl child. There is urgent and imperative need to launch a nationwide movement like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' to put an end to all traditional beliefs, attitudes, aberrations and irrational and unscientific practices responsible for the vicious cycle of negligence, deprivation, wanton cruelty and indifference towards the girl child characterized by under-nourishment, mal-nutrition and eventual decay and death of girl children.
- Girl children who are placed in the most disadvantaged situation (working and street children, destitutes, juvenile delinquents, children with disabilities, child prostitutes, children of prostitutes/prisoners/slum and migrant children, drug addicts and children afflicted with HIV/AIDS.) are also the most vulnerable to exploitation. They deserve special and constant care and attention to ensure their survival, protection and development.

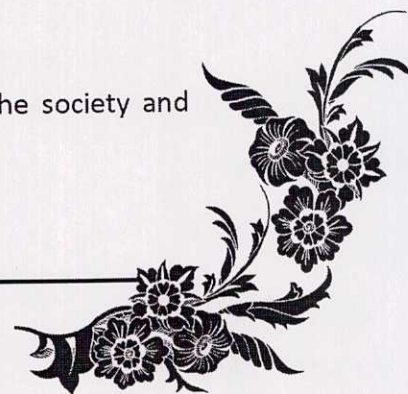
XVII

Core values for women

- The differences in sex and physical form denotes only difference in functions and not difference in status.
 - Woman is the complement of man and not inferior.
 - To call women as belonging to weaker sex is a libel. It is man's injustice to woman.
 - If by strength, we mean brute strength, then the woman is indeed less brutal than man.
 - If strength means moral power, then the woman is immeasurably man's superior.
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- Difference between man and woman should not take the form of discrimination.
- The State and civil society should make sure that despite differences- both genetic and acquired, there is need for a free and informed choice in access to literacy, education, primary health-care, selection of occupation, place of work etc.
- Discrimination – based on caste or gender – is a negation of basic human rights, anathema to civilised human conscience and repulsive to a rational and scientific outlook. It has to be resisted and eventually eliminated.
- Discrimination and exploitation of women have to be fought both at home, at school and at the workplace.
- At home, the fight has to be against the monotony of the domesticated role of the mother coupled with domestic violence.
- At the workplace, it has to be against all the indignities, sexual harassment and denial of decent work and equal remuneration for work of equal value, the quint-essential spirit of ILO Convention No.100 of 1951 which India has ratified in 1958.
- Simultaneously the fight has to be against the prejudices of human mind that women are less imaginative, less ingenuous and less hardworking than men.
- We must re-assert or re-inforce the positive assertion that women are equally or even more imaginative, ingenuous and hard working than men.
- Education is the most effective agent of change to liberate women from the culture of silence and dependence.
- Education plays the most effective, positive and interventionist role in the empowerment of women which in concrete operational terms means:
 - Women develop the ability to think independently and critically and articulate fearlessly;
 - Women build up group cohesion for decision making and group action to bring about the desired change;
 - Women participate freely and equally in the process of bringing about social change;
 - Women provide the wherewithal for economic independence;
 - Empowerment of women would lead to empowerment of the society and nation.



XVIII

In retrospect and prospect

Four words came to my mind in conceptualising this memorial lecture. They are:

1. Human
2. Humane
3. Inhuman
4. Inhumane

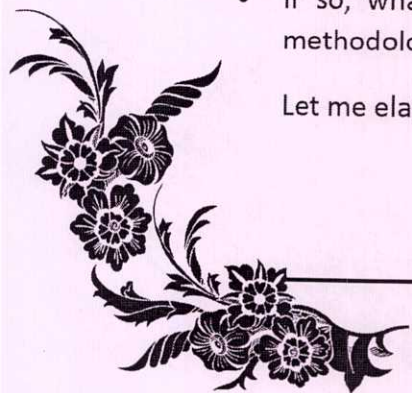
One and two, three and four may be clubbed as pairs of opposites.

- The first pair connotes the following values or qualities such as
 - Tender, compassionate, sympathetic to men and animals, benevolent.
- The second pair connotes the following attributes of human nature such as:
 - Lacking kindness, compassion and warmth, being cruel and brutal.
- The second would in essence imply causing pain and distress to others.
- It would also imply causing injury through violence which means un-just or un warranted exertion of physical force.
- When, therefore, I raise the question 'Can education now or of future make us more humane', I have before me a scenario where there are two sets of alternatives such as:
 - Kindness, compassion, commiseration, tenderness, warmth, empathy and sensitivity, or
 - Cruelty, barbarity and violence cumulatively termed as inhumanity.

The fundamental question is:

- Can education enable, equip and empower human beings to exercise a clear, rational, well-informed and judicious choice between these two alternatives?
- If so, what should be the content and quality of that education and what methodology is to be adopted to impart it?

Let me elaborate my question with reference to seven illustrations.

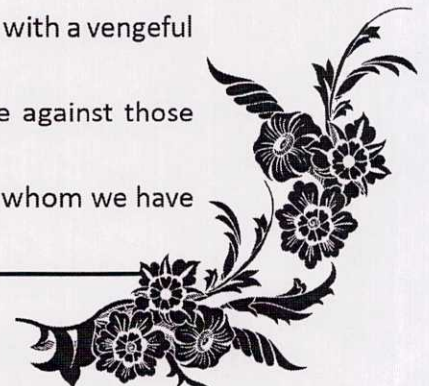


The first

- We are human beings, the finest and best in creation.
- We are endowed with reason, intellect, conscience and rationality.
- We have also the imagination, ingenuity, creativity, capacity for innovation and resourcefulness.
- We are fully entitled to harness them in right time in an appropriate manner so that we may grow, evolve, expand, diversify, rise and prosper.
- The probing question which needs to be put and answered is:
 - Are we entitled to do so by robbing somebody else's freedom?
 - Are we entitled to do so by hurting or injuring somebody else- physically, emotionally and psychologically?
 - Are we entitled to reap un-merited benefits at the cost of or to the exclusion of somebody else who is more meritorious and, therefore, more deserving which is the other name for discrimination?

The Second

- All human beings are not and cannot be alike;
- They are born differently (because of different parental genes);
- They live, grow and think differently;
- They act and react differently to different issues at different times;
- Their attitude and approach to life are shaped differently by divergent situations and characteristics in the midst of which they are placed;
- Such differences cannot be eliminated by force; they can only be harmonized;
- Against this backdrop, the following questions need to be raised and answered:
 - I. Merely because there are differences – genetic, physical, cultural, intellectual, ideological, behavioral and attitudinal, does it mean that dissenting voices are stifled?
 - II. Does it mean that one who has a note of dissent is to be treated with a vengeful approach?
 - III. Does it mean that we should develop hatred and intolerance against those with whom we have differences?
 - IV. Does it mean that we should snuff life out of that person with whom we have such differences?



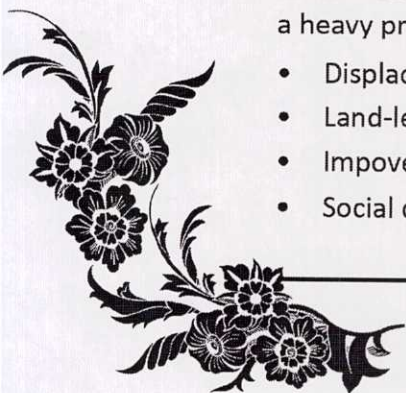
V. Given the two situations enumerated above, what should be the central message which should be disseminated through education?

Should the central message be the following?

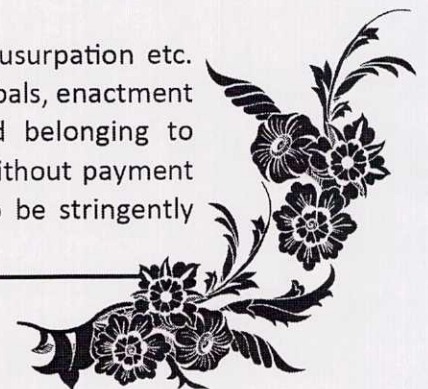
- God (Nature) has provided everything for our need. Why should we rob somebody else out of greed and rapacity? How is that temporary acquisition, which is forceful, immoral and un-ethical going to enrich us? Instead, if I have knowledge, information and skill and I willingly part with a portion of it in favour of those who donot have it and yet who are in dire need of the same, would that not make me infinitely richer (and not poorer by any standard);
- The positive outcome of tolerance of dissent is immense, such as:
- it will pave the way for creation of a new,egalitarian social order in which each living human being will feel important, valuable and cared for;
- it will generate a new feeling of rapport and bonhomie;
- it will bring out the magnanimity and catholicity of human character at its best and raise the same to loftier heights.

The Third

- The paradigm of development is a dis-quieting facet of mis-governance or lack of governance.
- It reflects the aspirations of dominant social and economic groups and serves their interests admirably well.
- As far as the poor, deprived and disadvantaged dalits and tribals are concerned, development programmes have not made much of a dent on their social and economic conditions.
- This is borne out by major human development indicators namely poverty, literacy, health, medical care, nutrition, immunisation, sanitation etc.
- The institutional mechanisms have failed to bridge the gap.
- The economic growth model which we have adopted relies heavily on the indiscriminate exploitation of existing natural resources.
- Land which is acquired by government for mega infra-structural projects results in a heavy price for the poor, such as:
 - Displacement;
 - Land-lessness;
 - Impoverishment;
 - Social disruption/disintegration;



- Reverse transfer of assets from the poor to the corporates;
 - Devaluation of culture (relevant for ST Communities);
 - Loss of political autonomy and identity;
 - Sub-human level of existence.
- What is the central message which should be disseminated through education in such contingencies of lop-sided development?
 - Development to be true and meaningful must fulfill the following norms (a) it must be pro-people, pro-poor, pro-Nature, pro-gender and pro-children; (b) it must promote development of human spirit in a climate of freedom and spontaneity; (c) it must ensure a replacement of the culture of acquiescence, blind conformism, obscurantism, and serf-like submissiveness; (d) it must ensure a replacement of the culture of silence and help-less dependence; (e) it must ensure a replacement of the culture of intolerance, mindless hatred, cruelty and violence by a culture of self-abnegation, moderation and restraint; and (f) it must ensure fulfilment of the culture of equality of law, equality before law, and equal protection of laws, equal opportunities of access to education, health care, full, freely chosen and productive employment, equal wages for women and men for work of equal value and equal treatment of all citizens.
- Elimination of parasitic intermediaries, removal of inequality in distribution of land-holdings and ensuring allotment of land to the actual tiller are the three primary objectives of land reforms;
 - Total abolition of all forms of tenancy (oral, informal) as has been achieved in Kerala is the most desirable course of action in land reforms;
 - Land-less agricultural labourers, share-croppers and contract workers (...wherever land has been given on contract) deserve the highest form of just, fair and equitable treatment in terms of apportionment of produce, payment of notified minimum wage principally in cash and protection against ejection from land;
 - Every case of acquisition of land for public purpose must be tested on the anvil of social justice with reference to (a) reasonableness of extent of actual land required; (b) adequacy of compensation; (c) adequacy of rehabilitation of persons displaced so that they donot get into the vice of indebtedness and bondage;
 - A complete ban on alienation of tribal land by sale, lease, usurpation etc. complete ban on all transactions in land from tribals to non-tribals, enactment of a statutory provision for restoration of alienated land belonging to members of ST irrespective of the period of limitation and without payment of compensation are some of the measures which need to be stringently enforced;



- In pursuance of announcement of govt. that all title deeds in respect of occupation of forest land shall be distributed by 2009 (which has not happened so far), instances of eviction of tribals from their existing occupation, relocation from wild sanctuaries and national parks without consent, forcible plantation on land under cultivation of tribals, ignoring community rights etc. will have to be put a stop to.

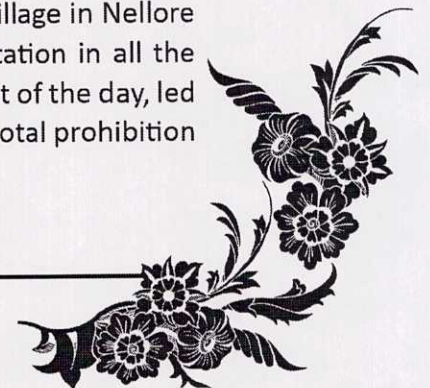
The Fourth

Structural violence against members of SC and ST

- This is one area which is most wearisome.
 - Social conditions of dalits and tribes are conditioned by agrarian and social structures.
 - The agrarian structure is determined by the pattern of land holding, access to land and other productive assets.
 - The social structure is embedded in the caste based social order in the case of dalits.
 - In case of tribals, they are victims of deceit, fraud, chicanery and manipulation of their lives by mal-functional and dys-functional middle-men and other vested interests in the worst possible manner.
 - Over a period of time, they have recorded the fastest pace of land-lessness among different social groups.
 - Bereft of alternative avenues of employment and livelihood, land-less dalits are vulnerable to oppressive conditions of employment under landholders characterized by low wages, long hours of work, debt bondage, humiliating treatment and severe reprisal by way of physical assault.
 - The tenants have no security and can be evicted any time.
 - The land-holders take the lion's share of the produce without contributing anything to production and do not bear any risk of crop failures.
 - The violence becomes even more in-tolerable on account of the deep in-justice of the official machinery – police, forest and excise.
 - Any attempt to secure justice from the said machinery which is often in collusion with the vested interests is a far cry.
 - Very often the victims end up in jails being implicated in false cases.
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- No action is taken against refusal by a potential encroacher to deliver possession of land allotted to a dalit or tribal by government, denial of minimum wage, forced labour, insistence of repayment of bonded debt which stands extinguished by law and is not re-payable, alienation of tribal land etc.
- What should be the central message to be disseminated through education to deal with and put an end to such structural violence?
- Structural violence often goes un-noticed. It is invisible in public discourse and is silently borne by the victims.
- Education through curriculum, course-content, textual materials and other means of communication can make such violence visible.
- Secondly, for ensuring protection from violence, first Protection of Civil Right Act, 1955 followed by SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 amended in 2015 have been enacted. In the curriculum of training of functionaries responsible for enforcement, this could be tellingly incorporated and effectively administered by the trainers.
- Thirdly, provisions of Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 could be similarly tellingly incorporated and effectively administered in the curriculum, course-content and textual materials.
- Fourthly, empirical studies go to show that incorporation of abolition of devdashi and yogin system in the curriculum of adult literacy primer used in course of campaigns for total literacy under NLM helped in conscientising victims of the system attending the adult literacy centres so much so that it eventually put a stop to this perverse and superstitious practice in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra where the practice stands banned by law but was clandestinely in practice for several years. The literacy learners (ex-yogins and devdashi) came out to speak with courage and confidence, 'We will not allow this to happen to our daughters what you have done to us for generations'.
- Fifthly, similar empirical studies go to show that incorporation of the devastating impact of male addiction to alcohol on the total economic ruination of the family of a land-less agricultural labourer in the literacy primers and its rendering in a telling manner by the instructor in a literacy centre in Dobigutta village in Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh gave rise to a massive anti-arrack agitation in all the twenty-three of the State so much so that it forced the government of the day, led by Shri Vijay Bhaskar Reddy, then CM Andhra Pradesh to go in for total prohibition in the State with effect from 02.10.1992.



The Fifth

Climate change is the burning issue of the day. What Greta Thunberg, the sixteen year old Swiss Girl told at the UN Summit Climate Conference on 24th Sept., 2019 and the dressing down that she gave to the world leaders was a re-iteration of what is being told and retold for several years at several a national and international without any perceptible effect. Here is an extract of what she said, and I quote: 'You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with empty words. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. All you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. We have started understanding your betrayal. We will never forgive you'. I un-quote.

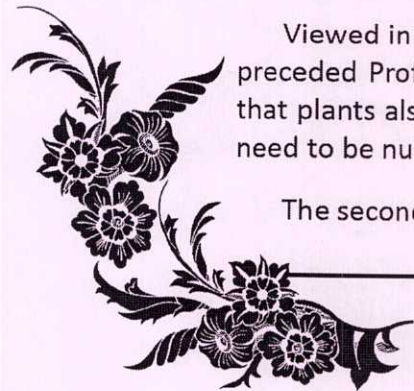
What role needs to be assigned to education in arresting climate change and preventing environmental degradation. The first role of education is to restore the soulful communion between man and Nature which has not only led to some of the finest specimens of creativity but has imparted a lofty character to human imagination and sensitivity. Some of these specimens are contained in some of the finest works of celebrated poets like Kalidasa but they can create a lasting impact on the young mind of learners only if they are tellingly presented in the classroom and outside which has not been the case so far. I re-produce the original in Sanskrit and the English translation of two such inimitable gems, I quote:

'Patum Na Prathamam
Vyavasyati Jalam
Jusmasu Apitesu Ja
Na Dutte Priya Mandanapi
Bhabata Snehen Ja Pallavam
Adyeba Kusuma Prasuti Samaye
Jasya Bhabati Utsaba
Seyam Jati Shakuntala
Patigruham Sarveyei Anugnyayatam'

'Shakuntala was not only the product of Nature but was the very personification of all that Nature stands for i.e. serenity and grace, simplicity and purity, give and not take. She did not drink a drop of watertill all the plants have been watered. She did not pluck a single flower lest it may hurt the tender sapling. Her heart danced with joy at the time of flowering of plants as if they were her children'. I un-quote.

Viewed in the context of what Kalidasa has said in these lines, he seems to have preceded Prof. J.C. Bose, the distinguished plant scientist, in propounding a theory that plants also pulsate with the same life as that of animals and human beings and need to be nursed, nurtured and cared for as we do to our children.

The second couplet is also from the same Abhigyan Shankuntalam and I quote the



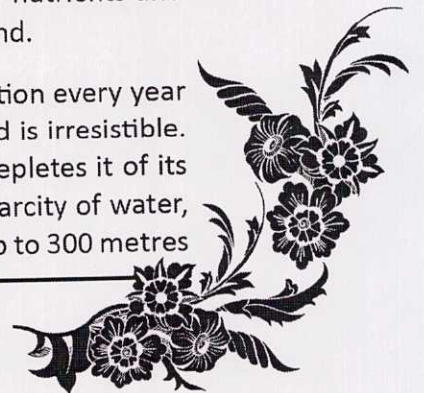
original text in Sanskrit, with its English translation:

'Ramyantara Kamaliani
Hariteyei Sarodbhi
Chaya Drumei Niyamitarka
Mayukha Tapa:
Bhuyat Kusesaya Rajorenu: Asya
Santanukula Pavanasch Sivancha Pantha'

'Let this journey be a source of joy for you. All over the path (to be treaded) there are pools full of blue lotuses, shadowy trees full of foliages to protect the travellers from the intense heat of the sun. Even the dust of the road is as soft as the pollens of the lotus. The wind which blows all over is cool and bracing.' I un-quote.

The second important role of education is to drive home the depth and immensity of the sad truth as to how the greed of man has caused colossal damage to the plant kingdom and the dangerous implications thereof.

- The third important role of education is that it must bring out more objectively the nexus between environment and development and how any distortion in this nexus could be suicidal. If in the name of economic development of an economically backward region, we harness the natural resources in such an indiscriminate manner as would destroy the natural habitat, this would alienate the people and that would be the very negation of environment and development.
- To this extent, development becomes the enemy of environment and such development has to be resisted with all might.
- The importance of this nexus and the dangers of distortion of the nexus become much clearer as we drive ourselves crazy in our un-abated march to:
 - Industrialization;
 - Commersalistic;
 - Urbanisation;
- Over cultivation, over grazing and de-forestation have been major factors of man-made desertification process.
- These practices strip vegetation from the top soil and deprive it of nutrients and organic matter, thereby exposing it to erosion from the sun and wind.
- Consequently vast areas of semi-arid land are going out of production every year at a time when the pressure of increasing population on such land is irresistible. Similarly, excess charging of underground for irrigation purpose depletes it of its water resources (aquifer) which gives rise to problems of acute scarcity of water, necessitating sinking of tube-wells beyond normal depths (going up to 300 metres



or even beyond) with enormous cost, failure to strike water (which makes it a total wasteful expenditure) and if successful, problems of maintenance.

- Excess migration (much of which is distress driven) which is mostly unregulated from rural to urban areas causes over urbanisation with all attendant complications in the area of services and amenities, such as housing, traffic, water supply, drainage and sewerage. It is shocking to civilised human conscience to know that more than fifty billion tons of green-house gases (CO₂) are being spilled into the atmosphere as a result of un-planned industrialisation and urbanisation. It is a pathetic sight to come across men and women up-rooted from their natural habitat and thrown into the vertex of an all pervading misery stemming from un-employment, sub-standard housing (many of which are collapsing due to weak foundation and defective structures) over-crowding, pollution, and crime together with deteriorating public services.
- Legal literacy is an important component of education for protection of environment. Provision of laws like Conservation of Forest Act, 1980, Mines Act, 1952, Factories Act 1948, Building and other Construction workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1996, laws meant for prevention of air and water pollution enacted at the Central and State level have to be understood in their totality and applied in right time in the right manner.

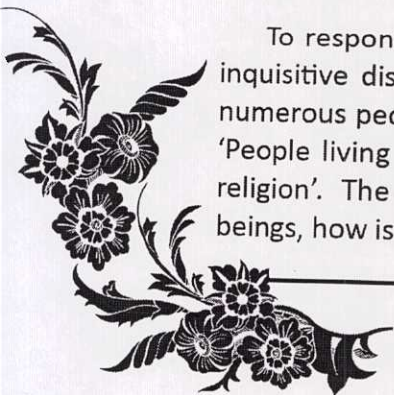
Such application would mean encountering powerful vested interests exactly in the same manner as it happened in 70s which led to Chipko movement (the movement to hug trees) launched under the leadership of Sri Sundarlal Bahuguna and Sri Chandi Prasad Bhatt. The State must come forward to resist such opposition failing which as Greta Thunberg has warned that the extinction of earth is a distinct possibility.

There was a time when we used to say that everyone will depart but the earth will not go with them 'Naikenapi Saha gata Vasumati Nanya twaya Jasyati' but not anymore. The manner in which degradation of environment is taking place we will be not be able to protect the earth from such extinction unless planned, coordinated and concerted efforts are made to pre-empt that possibility.

The Sixth

Can education be the harbinger of secularism, communal harmony and national integration.

To respond to this question, I start with the Prithvi Shukta of Atharva Veda. The inquisitive disciples ask the sage, 'O Reshibar! What is the creative form in which numerous people on earth manifest themselves. The Rishi gives the following reply, 'People living on this planet belong to different caste, creed, colour, language and religion'. The disciples ask again out of curiosity 'If such is the scale of difference of beings, how is unity possible?' 'The Rishi gives the reply, 'Our earth is our mother and



we all are the children of Mother Earth.' The disciples ask further, 'Is that enough for unity?' The Rishi gives the reply, 'No there is one more thing which has got to be observed.' When women and men converse with each other, they must speak sweet words'. The above dialogue supposed to have taken place thousands of years ago means a number of things. It means that in essence we are one. We have one common source and origin. We all survive because of one energy i.e. solar energy. All of us are entitled to live and grow with fulfillment of our barest physical, emotional and psychological needs. It means that despite differences – physical, biological and cultural which separates one being from another, we can still live with understanding, love, trust and goodwill, care and consideration for each other. We can live, grow, evolve and flourish like thousand flowers in a variegated and beautiful garden each with its own uniqueness and variety but all blooming freely, joyously and peacefully.

Love of mankind in a more direct and intense form runs through the following lines of Maulana Rum, the jewel of sufi poets and I quote:

'O love, you are my greatest stimulator. You are the medicine for all my ailments. You are the true friend, philosopher and guide of my soul and are like Hakin Jalinus. You are the surest remedy for my vanity and pride.

My being has adored the Vedas and temples of the Hindus, the Zindavesta of Parsees, the Qurans of the Muslims and the Bible of the Christians. There is no second God for me other than love'. I un-quote.

Look at the striking similarity of this philosophy in the message of Guru Govind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, and I quote:

'Someone is a bald-headed Sanyasi, some a Yogi, someone a Brahmachari, someone a Hindu, someone a Turk, someone an Imam and yet all are members of the human fraternity. There is no difference whatsoever between Karim and Rahim. All worship the same form, all have one Guru, one light and one radiance.

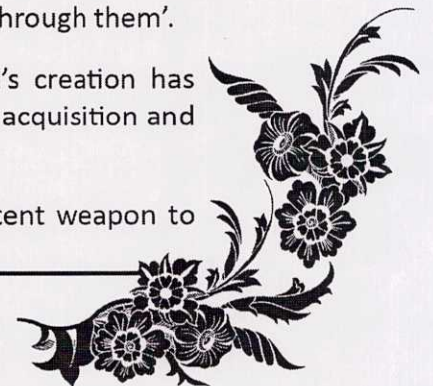
There is no difference between the temple and the mosque, between Puja and Namaj.

All men are equal but we, the human beings have created a lot of confusion.

The God has the same body, same eyes and same ears. The earth, the water, the air and fire are all one. The soul is one and indivisible, reflected in different forms or shapes in Purana and Quran but with one essential message flowing through them'.

Today, man, expected to represent the finest and best in God's creation has come to represent the three primordial instincts of seeking pleasure, acquisition and violence as opposed to self control, sharing and compassion.

Education of the future must be shaped and fashioned as a potent weapon to



wean human beings away from seeking pleasure, acquisition and violence to self-control, sharing and compassion.

This will be possible only if education can impart and inculcate that issue of discrimination and ratiocination between the good and the pleasant, between one which gives temporary pleasure and one which gives peace, bliss, harmony and happiness.

This is what has been said in the Kathaopnishad and I quote the original in Sanskrit as also the English translation

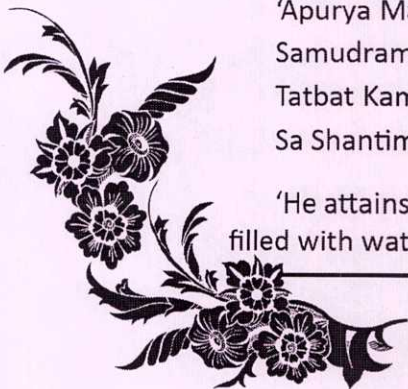
'Sreyascha Preyascha
Manusyam Etat
Tau Samparitya
Vivinakti Dhira:
Sreyo hi Dhiro Abhi
Preyaso Brunite
Preyo Mando
Yogakshemat Brunite.'

'Both the good and the pleasant approach man. The wise one discriminates the two having examined them well. The wise man prefers the good to the pleasant but the fool chooses the pleasant through avarice and attachment'.

The story of Nachiketa as depicted in the Kathopnishad, has a deep philosophical meaning. It shows that every being is in a state of perpetual conflict and tension within himself/herself. Such conflict and tension emanates from the basic inability of every being to remain content within the limits of self. The instinctive desire to transcend the limits and acquire more and more leads to craving for the excess which in turn gives rise to conflict and consequential destruction of the being. If untrained selves swing backwards and forwards like a pendulum being unaware of the limitations amidst which they are placed, education must impart that training which can restore the self to its natural balance or equilibrium so that it is neither attracted by the attractive nor repelled by the repellent but remains in a state of moderation, harmony, peace and bliss. I quote from original in Sanskrit from second canto of sloka 70 of Srimad Bhagabat Geeta. I quote:

'Apurya Manam Achala Pratistham
Samudram Apa: Prabisanti Jatbat
Tatbat Kama Jang Prabisanti Sarve
Sa Shantim Apnoti Na Kamakami'

'He attains peace into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water but remains unmoved, not he who desires desires'.



The Seventh

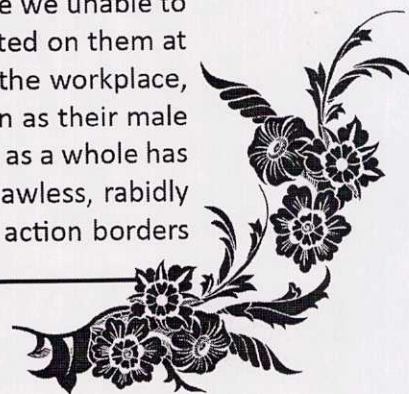
Can education promote good governance?

Governance is neither govt. nor administration nor even the apparatus of the State.

Governance in its simplest definition is a process or system or both to ensure that govt, corporate enterprises, NGOs or any other institution – social, economic, political or cultural are carried out, managed, directed and controlled within the parameters of legitimacy, accountability and transparency as would be in the best interests of all stake holders – internal as well as external.

- Some of the main attributes of good governance are
 - accountability – both financial and political;
 - transparency;
 - easy access to information;
 - people's participation in decision making and programme implementation;
 - responsiveness;
 - an efficient delivery system of goods and services;
 - enforcement of the rule of law;
 - an overall caring and humane ambience promoting an equalitarian and equitable social and economic order.
- Good governance should basically aim at providing an environment in society where every person can have an equal opportunity to allow his/her genius to flourish, to promote a good quality of life based on the recognition of dignity, decency, equality, equity, justice and freedom of all individuals and simultaneously promote order and stability.
- Good governance is also to promote and sustain holistic and integrated human development which is a process of enlarging peoples' choices.

Education can generate the ability to address certain vital questions such as whether good governance? Why are we unable to protect childhood & children? Why are we not able to dismantle the artificial walls dividing humanity on the basis of caste, class, clan, sect, sex, social origin and political ideology? Why are we unable to protect our girl children from the indignities and violent acts perpetrated on them at home, at the school and college, at the clinic/dispensary/hospital, at the workplace, etc? Why have we failed to ensure payment of same wages to women as their male counter-parts for work of equal value? Why the criminal justice system as a whole has failed to respond to and effectively deal with the blatantly criminal, lawless, rabidly communal and lumpen elements of the society whose behavior and action borders



on bigotry and jingoism, who harbour malice and hatred against others, who indulge in violence, commit heinous crimes and yet escape with impunity? Why have we failed to restore normal relationship among communities living with each other and yet displaying hatred and bad neighborly relations?

Through education, any free citizen of a free country can raise such questions but much will depend on how responsive, sensitive and accountable the machinery of governance is and how it will act and react to these questions. If the delivery mechanism fails to respond with empathy and sensitivity by holding and maintaining a position of status-quo and non-accountability, it will lead to chaos and anarchy.

Similarly if interest articulation, interest intermediation and interest aggregation are tilted in a particular direction benefitting a chosen few and ignoring or neglecting those who are more deserving, the entire process of governance will be counter-productive.

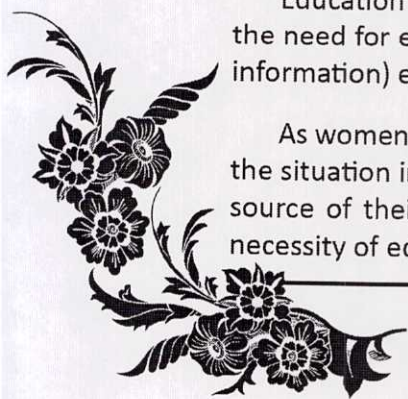
Good governance must aim at collective self-empowerment, not centralisation of authority by rendering people voice-less. That will amount to democratic deceit which will compromise the content and quality of our democracy.

At the end of this 'Saptapadee' or seven steps analysis, I would like to refer to a very refreshing experience in women's collective self-empowerment through education under the auspices of a project called "MahilaSamakshya" sought, on the models of Women's Development programme of Rajasthan, to establish 'Women's Activity Centres' in 2000 villages of ten districts in the three States of Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. It envisaged training of women in each village to work as an activist and to catalyse discussion on problems faced by women related to health, water, fodder, fuel, education and above all the problems of women's self-image in society. These discussions led to the following positive outcomes:

- Women develop an ability to think independently and critically and articulate (raise questions) fearlessly;
- They build up group cohesion for decision making and collective action for bringing about change;
- They participate freely and equally in the process of bringing about social change through demand for better supply and services;
- They provide the wherewithal for social and-economic independence.

Education may or may not be the starting point in such a collective process but the need for education and literacy (which provides the basic access to the world of information) eventually gets reinforced.

As women begin to think, question, analyse and reflect on the existential reality of the situation in which they have been helplessly placed, they perceive the generative source of their predicament on account of functional illiteracy and internalize the necessity of educating themselves.



Once the demand for education is generated, it has to be provided by women themselves but in a manner which is fully in tune with the native environment, ethos and culture. The curriculum has to be totally need based. It does not have to glorify the status-quo i.e. all that exists on earth is good and beautiful and there is no need for any change. The curriculum has to be fully conscientisation oriented.

The methodology for imparting literacy has been through a process of dialogue through which knowledge, information, skills and experience are shared in the larger interest of all concerned participants. This is to be combined with imparting training in productive skills i.e. training in a whole range of arts and crafts including how to have easy access to raw materials, credit, technology and market. This would empower women to exercise eventual control over the production process, apart from being beneficiaries thereof.

I would like to conclude that this is the type of conscientisation oriented literacy and adult education which Dr. S.C. Dutta in his lifetime wanted to propagate & promote. Such an approach promotes a spirit of scientific enquiry, promotes an easy and effortless, natural and spontaneous two-way communication between the sender and the receiver and leaves an indelible impact on the mind of the receiver; he/she becomes self-propelled and self-driven to demand education and get the education of his/her choice. Such an education would make human mind free and un-trammelled and such a mind – individually and collectively – will awaken the nation.

About the Author

Former Director General, National Literacy Mission (1987-1993)

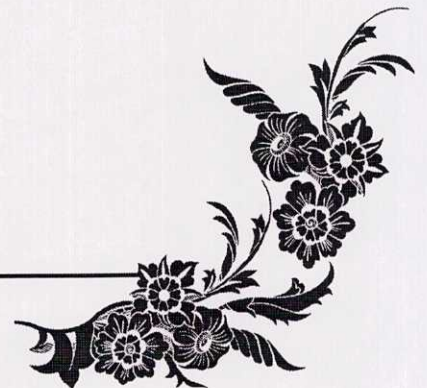
Former Union Labour & Parliamentary Affairs Secretary (1996-2000)

Former Senior Advisor, ILO (2000-2003)

Former Spl. Rapporteur, NHRC (2006-2011)

Former Spl. Advisor, NCPCR (2011-2012)

Former Chief Advisor (Literacy), MHRD (Deptt. of School Education & Literacy)
(2012-2013)



"The incompleteness of education arises not only from lack of opportunity, but from the changing frame in which we exist, which renders what we learnt yesterday irrelevant in the world of tomorrow."

-S.C. Dutta