Education After Independence-
A Social Analysis

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EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE : A SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Lecture I

I am deeply conscious of the honour your institution has done me by inviting me to deliver the Lala Lapjat Rai Memorial Lectures. My only misgiving in accepting your invitation is whether what I say here this evening and on the subsequent evenings will measure up to the expectations aroused by the memory of that great fighter for freedom. I belong to the generation whose childhood was nurtured on the valiant exploits of the Lal-Bal-Pal trinity in the selfless service of our motherland. We had the good fortune of being young adolescents during the many battles of freedom fought beginning with the massive protest movement against the all-white Simon-Commission. That was the formative period of our life. It will be remembered that it was at the huge protest rally led by Lalaji at Lahore junction that he suffered a grievous lathi blow on the chest at the hands of a British sergeant. He died three weeks later on the 18th November, 1928. His death raised a storm of wrath and indignation through the length and breadth of the country. And it did not go unavenged. Exactly a month later, on the 17th December 1928, Sardar Bhagat Singh and his comrades struck down the police constable Sanders who had allegedly dealt the lathi blow to the great patriot. Overnight they became the idols of all young Indians. You are no doubt familiar with the famous slogan *Inquilab Zindabad;* it is to these young men that we owe this slogan which soon because a part of our patriotic heritage, By this act of courage, they vindicated what Lalaji himself had said; "every blow aimed at us is one more nail in the coffin of the British imperialism in India". Following the poet I may say that we were blessed to live in that dawn of freedom when to be young was very heaven. I am sorry if I have become sentimental and anecdotish. But our generation cannot but cherish these hallowed memories. The name of Lalaji is inextricably woven with the history of those glorious days of struggle for freedom.

But Lalaji was not only a revolutionary and a patriot. His was a many-splendoured life which combined a number of nation-building activities and of which the cause of education was a shining facet. He not only founded and nurtured for long years a number of educational institutions but also gave much thought to the problems of education. His book *The Problem of National Education in India,* published in 1920, contains a number of seminal ideas which have not lost their validity even after a lapse of half a century and more. I, therefore, thought it will not be inappropriate if I pay my humble tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai by sharing with you in these lectures my thoughts on the present state of our educa-

tion. I am grateful to the authorities of your institution and in particular to Principal Rairikar for giving me this opportunity to elaborate some of my ideas on this theme.

In the first lecture this evening I shall take a brief overall review of the development of education in India after Independence and towards the end I shall formulate a few propositions about our achievements and failures. This will be followed tomorrow by an attempt at a social, that is, a politico-economical analysis of these educational developments. The final lecture will deal with the resulting social change that has taken place during the last quarter of a century. In this context, let me clarify the scope of the subject at the outset. These lectures will not deal with the educational technology, the technical or pedagogical problems of education. Although like everybody else, I have my views about them, the main area of my interest in education is the social analysis of educational developments. These lectures will make an attempt towards such an analysis.

Let me take you back to the situation in education at the time of independence, our legacy of the imperial rule. Since the available facts and figures for 1947 relate to undivided British India minus the princely States they do not provide a valid basis for comparison. So we shall take the figures for 1950-51 for comparison. You will agree that does not make a great deal of difference. With a population of about 360 million in 1950-51 there were 2,09,671 primary schools (standards I to V) with 19.75 million pupils, 13,596 middle schools (standards VI to VIII) with 3.12 million pupils and 7,288 high schools with 1.22 million pupils. We had then 27 universities and 516 colleges of arts, science and commerce; and the total enrolment in higher education was about 330,000 students. This means that roughly one in three of the primary school age-group (6 to 11), one in ten of the middle school age-group (11 to 14) and one in twenty of the high-school age-group (14 to 17) were enrolled in schools. At the college level less than one per cent of the corresponding age-group were studying in the institutions of higher education. In 1951 the percentage of literacy was 16.6 and the total expenditure was Rs. 1140 million or roughly 1.2 per cent of the national income.

Besides the extreme inadequacy of the total educational effort which these figures reflect at the time of the transfer of power there were serious defects and imbalances in the very structure of education. The colonial rulers were in general not interested in educating Indians beyond a certain minimum which was necessary for the continuance of their colonial rule; the rest was happening at its own pace and through a momentum of its own. The result was a situation where there were glaring educational disparities as, between regions, between men and women, between urban and rural areas, and between advanced castes and social groups and other backward sections of society like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Technical and vocational education were neglected both at the high school and University level, the whole emphasis being on liberal general education, leading to matriculation or general bachelor's degree. Facilities for science

and technology and facilities for research whether in science or in the humanities were extremely meagre and the training of high-level scientific manpower was nobody's business. Educational standards whether in schools or colleges were far from satisfactory. The English language dominated as the sole medium of instruction not only in university education but in secondary education as well. This retarded the natural development of Indian languages and alienated the new English-educated intelligensia from the mass of common people.

This was the situation in education which India had to face at the time of the transfer of power. No wonder almost everybody who was concerned with education in some way or the other came to the conclusion that the educational system, like everything else in the country, needed a radical overhaul, a revolutionary transformation. For instance Jawaharlal Nehru in his address to the National Educational Conference in 1948 had said: "Whenever conferences were called in the past .... the tendency, as a rule, was to maintain the existing system with slight modifications. This must not happen now ... The entire basis of education must be revolutionised".

You will remember, the demand for a national system of education to replace the existing colonial system, was voiced as early as in 1905 and formed a part of the fourfold programme, the other three being Swaraj, Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods. The concepts and contents of national education developed and enriched themselves further during the freedom struggle, particularly after the twenties. At the time of the advent of independence the national objective in education was to develop rapidly a system of national education responsive to the mass awakening in the country, befitting an independent nation and in tune with the modern age of science and technology. It meant, among other things, universal free elementary education, removal of adult illiteracy, adopting Indian languages as media of instruction at all stages, a rational policy on languages to be taught for facilitating inter-state communication in India and international communication, restructuring of secondary and higher education by providing vocationalization and diversification, modernization of the contents of education at every level and of methods of teaching and examinations, development of research facilities and devoting special attention to the backward sections of society like women, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other backward sections of society. Some of these tenets like the universal primary education and the promotion of the interests of the backward classes were enshrined as directives in the Constitution as well.

What is the position now after a quarter of a century? The following figures for 1973-74 will illustrate the expansion in education. With over 570 million population there are over 500,000 primary schools with 63.8 million pupils, over 100,000 middle schools with 15.0 million pupils, and about 50,000 high schools with about 7 million pupils. For higher education there are over 100 universities and 4000 colleges and the total enrol-

ment therein in 1973-74 was 3.4 million. Altogether about 9 crores of our population were enrolled in some educational institution or the other in 1973-74. (The latest figure announced a few days back — in October, 1975 — had crossed the 10 crores mark.) This means that four out of every five children of the primary age-group, one in three of the middle school age-group, one in five of the high school age-group are now enrolled in school. At the university level almost 5 to 6 per cent of the relevant age-group joins a college for receiving higher education. The literacy percentage has increased to 29.3 in 1971 and the total educational expenditure in 1973-74 to over Rs. 18,000 million or a little over 3 per cent of the national income.

Let us now take stock of the educational situation as it has developed over the last twenty-five years and observe critically the achievements and failures. As a general observation one can see that the system has undergone a large expansion; enrolment has increased more than three times at the primary stage, almost five times at the middle stage, seven times at the higher secondary and more than ten times at the university stage. Needless to say there is a corresponding increase in the number of teachers and institutions and also in expenditure at all these stages of education. Even allowing for the increase in population the extent of educational expansion is quite considerable. The higher secondary and college-level education in particular seem to be two of the few sectors in our five-year plans that have overfulfilled their 'targets'! The implications of this development will be examined later in our discussion.

A great deal of thinking has also gone into the theory and practice of education as will be seen from the deliberation and reports of several committees and commissions : We had the Radhakrishnan Commission on University Education (1948-49), Kher Committee (1951) which considered aspects of primary education, the Mudaliar Commission on Secondary Education (1953), and the last and the most comprehensive effort in this respect was the Kothari Commission (1964-66) which has considered almost everything of importance in education in India in its voluminous report.

Several new agencies and institutions were also established during this period of look after specialized areas in education such as the University Grants Commission, the National Council of Educational Research and Training and the National Institute of Educational Administration, the ICMR and the ICAR, the ICSSR, the ICHR and such other Councils on the one hand, and prestigious institutions like the IIT's, the Institutes of Management, National Laboratories in different fields of science and technology, the IARI, etc. etc. and several other advanced centres of training and research in the universities and elsewhere. These developments go to show that there is a general awareness that a proper development of education is of basic importance to the economic advance and social transformation of the country. Almost every Five-Year Plan document has reiterated its faith in education. While the Third Plan describes education as "the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values

of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity," the Fifth Plan is more prosaic in its preamble on education but it still ascribes to education "crucial role in economic development and social modernization".

In spite of this overall expansion of education, building of new institutions and establishment of new organizations, and deliberations and discussions on education the present position in education after a quarter of century of Independence can hardly be said to be satisfactory. There are serious shortcomings and failures in almost every sector of education.

Let us consider the three or four major sectors, starting with literacy and elementary education. The constitution had directed the State to enforce universal free elementary education for all children in the age-group 6 to 14 by 1960. In 1975 we are still far from realising this objective; the percentage of enrolment in 1975 in the much smaller age-group 6 to 11 is about 90. This however is likely to give a misleading indication of near fulfilment to those who are not familar with educational data. The enrolment in classes I to V corresponding to the age-group 6-11 always contains some below 6 and even more above 11. Thus when there is full enrolment of the age-group the percentage tends to be of the order of 135. Consequently it may be concluded that at present approximately two-thirds of the age-group 6 to 11 are enrolled. Further, it should be borne in mind the enrolment does not mean regular attendance which is usually less by an order of 20 per cent ! We may therefore conclude that a little over half the children of the age-group 6 to 11 attend school. This shows how very far we still are in the year 1975 from fulfilling this constitutional obligation.

During the twenty years from 1951 to 1971 literacy percentage crawled from 16.6 to 29.3, not even at the rate of one point per year. Moreover, much of this paltry rise is due to the increasing enrolment in schools rather than efforts in adult literacy. Making adults literate is an inexpensive process relatively to formal schooling. All it requires is mass enthusiasm and voluntary organization. And yet efforts for adult literacy were sporadic in character, only in certain pockets, during the fifties and early sixties. But a widespread movement for literacy was almost non-existent. So while on the one hand our country has the largest learning population (ten crores) in the world, next to China, we have also the dubious distinction of having almost half the illiterates in the world (38 to 40 crores). Moreover our illiterate population is growing year by year, because we have not succeeded in bringing all the young generation into schools.

Progress in primary education and hence literacy in the long run depends on how far we succeed in attaining three things : Universal provision of schools, universal enrolment of the age-group and universal retention until the age of 14, at least upto 11, that is upto class IV. We have now primary schools within easy walking distance in most parts of the country. We have already discussed the not very satisfactory position as regards enrolment. One of our serious failures is our inaibility to retain the enrolled children until they reach standard IV or V, that is, the terminal stage

of the lower elementary stage. It is observed over the last many years that not more than 40 per cent of the children enrolled in class I reach class V; and more than half of them drop-out in class I itself. Hardly 25 per cent of the initial enrolment clears class VII, the terminal stage of elemnetary education (6 to 14 age-group). It is hardly necessary to comment on the low efficiency at which the system is working and the appalling waste of resources involved. This is a feature of not only our elementary education but almost all our education.

Further, whatever progress we have achieved in literacy and primary education is extremely uneven as between States, regions, as between men and women, between urban and rural population and between different social strata. We shall have occasion to refer to this in greater detail later in the second lecture. Suffice it to mention at the moment that the States and the regions which are most backward in literacy, school enrolment and school retention are precisely those which are backward in economic growth and land reforms, viz. Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, eastern U.P., Rajasthan and Orissa. All aspects of backwardness thus have a tendency to cluster together.

When we consider high school and higher education in colleges and universities what strikes us, as mentioned earlier, is the tremendous expansion in the number of institutions and in enrolment, expansion which can only be characterised as unplanned, indiscriminate and uncalled for. But before we deal with this point let us note our achievements in these sectors. There is no doubt that for the training and research in science and technology the post-independence period has witnessed the establishment of some really first-rate institutions: national laboratories, research institutes, the IIT's, regional engineering colleges etc. The work and the products of some of these institutions compare well with similar institutes in the advanced countries. Science departments of many universities have also been cosiderably strengthened (as well as those in the humanities and social sciences). In agriculture and medicine also India has made considerable progress: we have now competent agricultural experts and the outturn of doctors has increased tenfold. Although even these successes are not without blemishes (e.g. can we say that the IIT's are working at reasonable efficiency relative to the resources made available to them? Are they producing a technology which is best suited to our circumstances?) We should unhesitatingly count them as the main achievements of the post-independence period.

If, however, we take an overall view of the development of secondary and higher education one finds that the overwhelming part (almost ninety per cent) of the enrolment, is enrolled for general education. Our secondary education system has failed to diversify and provide for professional and vocational training of a terminal character leading to middle level skilled workers. Out of the 8.5 million students in high schools the proportion of those undergoing vocational training is as low as 9 per cent, perhaps the lowest in the world. The story of the rise and fall and the ultimate

demise of basic education is too well-known, and its resurrection in the form of work-experience is still to materialise. Secondly, the overdue restructuring of secondary education providing a terminal stage for many, and dovetailing into a purposeful university education for a selected smaller proportion, is still on paper. Secondary education was described years ago as the weakest link in Indian education; it still continues to be so. Perhaps this will be contested by those who have recently succeeded in persuading the authorities in the States to accept the 10+2+3 pattern. From the experience of the juggling of 2+2 and 1+3 in universities for all these years all that one can say at the moment is: "good luck to you; we shall wait and see".

In higher education the failure of the system principally lies in the uncontrolled and uncontrollable enrolment which is disproportionately large in terms of educability, manageability and employability. Although the proportion of the age-group which joins college in India is relatively low compared to many advanced or developing countries they form an inordinately large proportion, almost 50 per cent or more, of the high school leavers. The main reason is the weakness, described above, in our secondary education which makes a student fit for nothing else except entry into a college. Most of them flock to the colleges of arts, science and commerce, that is for acquiring somehow a degree in general education that will qualify them for some kind of white-collar employment, (or in the case of a large number of girls, for a suitable match). This enormous demand for places have brought into being all sorts of institutions which go by the name of college. While some few at the top have maintained and even improved their standards and content of teaching, the large majority are such where teachers teach mechanically and listlessly and students learn with growing apathy and frustration. This sort of atmosphere breeds a growing corruption in examinations and student-riots and misbehaviour at the time of the examinations.

But the story of higher education does not end here. After the acquisition of a degree certificate as a passport for employment, the average student has to wait for an indefinite period before he can get some job, which does not necessarily correspond to his specialization. Ten years ago it was estimated that about 15 per cent of the matriculates and 10 per cent of the graduates were unemployed at any given moment of time, and the average waiting period was 1½ years and half a year respectively. For ought we know there is much further deterioration in the situation during the last ten years as is indicated by the news item in a Poona daily which reported that for a few class IV jobs advertised by the Corporation there were thousands of applications from which some 25 were graduates. The situation of a general degree-holder is of course a lot more difficult than a professional degree-holder. But even here one should not forget that in 1968 thousands of fresh engineers could not get employment. It is believed, the plight of the fresh engineering graduates is at the moment probably equally serious.

One of the central issues of post-independence reconstruction of education was to evolve a satisfactory language policy. Can anyone say what exactly is our national language policy in education now, after some twenty-five years of fiddling with it? What is the policy as regards the place of English in our education? The three-language formula which once seemed to be a fair solution was never given a fair trial in the Hindi-speaking north and it was unceremoniously rejected in the South, particularly by Tamilnadu. It is now for all practical purposes dead without being buried. In Maharashtra after 28 years of peregrination we are back *to square one; English is now a* compulsory language for the secondary school certificate examination. In the meanwhile the medium of instruction in colleges, through the sheer pressure of new enrolment, is shifting in a *haphazard manner to the regional language, with students being served by* low-quality indifferently written text-books.

Lest you are carried away with the incorrect impression that the educational scene after independence is just one unmitigated area of darkness let me also point out the positive achievements. I have already mentioned the commendable progress in science and technology including some high-quality training and research. Secondly, the very spread of education at all levels, although limited at lower levels and defective in middle and higher levels compared to the national expectations, has brought education to the strata of society which are seeing the light of learning for the first time. In several states, universities and other educational institutions have updated their syllabi, have modernized their contents. In many States the quality of textbooks at school level has considerably improved. When compared to the textbooks of our generation they look brighter and crisper in appearance and content. The effort is also being extended to the university level where e.g. in Maharashtra State I recently came across a list of about 200 college-level texts in Marathi prepared and published by the joint text-book bureau of all the Universities in the State.

In many States the quality of teachers has improved both at the elementary and secondary level: at the former level for instance the new recruitment is invariably from the matriculates instead of the elementary school leavers (the vernacular final certificate level) before independence. The proportion of qualified (trained) teachers has also considerably increased and many more women are taking to the teaching profession. There was substantial improvement in their emoluments as well, but most of it has been wiped out by the rising price level except in the case of college and university level where the recent increase, particularly at the senior level, can only be described as outrageous having no relationship with the general wage level.

There is also considerable increase in the number and amount of research fellowships, scholarships, and stipends and concessions to students. Following the constitutional directives the Central and State Governments have provided substantial facilities, in the form of scholarships, concessions and hostel facilities to the students coming from the weaker sections of

society, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. Some State Governments (e.g. Maharashtra, Karnatak, etc.) have also introduced the EBC concessions which cover fees of students from low-income groups. All this has helped to spread education at various levels further to sections of population that were hitherto totally deprived of education.

Finally, let me consider the finances for education which have as pointed out earlier, increased from 1.2 per cent of the national income in 1950-51 to over 3 per cent now. The government share in this expenditure has steadily increased until it is now estimated that roughly 80 per cent of the finances come from government sources. Elementary education is now free; and secondary and higher education are highly subsidised; the extent of subsidy is very much more in the more prestigious courses like engineering, technology, medicine and management studies than in general educational courses (Arts, science and commerce). Level-wise, the share in the expenditure on primary education (Standard I to V) has decreased considerably over the years and that on the middle, secondary and higher education has appreciably increased, the most significant increase having occurred in the share allocated to higher education.

I think I have given you enough of details of the educational developments during the post-independence period. Instead of boring you with further details like examination reforms, new teaching methods and techniques including radio and TV, many of which, many of you already know, I shall now try to place before you a few conclusions for the day. They will be formulated in the form of a few propositions, with comments and elucidations wherever necessary, under five broad heads: Systemic change (change in the pre-Independence structure). Spread (or quantity or expansion), Improvement (or quality or if you like, excellence), Relevance to Socio-economic conditions and goals; and Equality of Opportunity (or Social Justice).

The first proposition which I should like to make is that in the post-independence period we have essentially continued the same old system and structure of education which was inherited from the former imperialist rulers. The British rulers introduced the Western system of education in this country more than a century ago in order to have English-educated Indians, preferably from the upper strata of Indian society, to assist them in subordinate posts in bureaucracy to rule their vast and diverse subcontinental empire. You have no doubt heard of the downward filtration or percolation theory under which the system operated almost till the Montford reforms of 1920 when education was transferred to elected Indian ministers in the provinces and when for the first time the educational base began to widen. Education was provided for a few at the top, that is, high schools and colleges and this was supposed to percolate downwards. Even at the top, that is, secondary and college education, which was imparted in English language, the government effort was minimal. We are all aware of the early private educational effort, the pioneering efforts

in starting English schools and colleges (e.g. the D.E. Society, the Students Literary and Scientific Society, Lalaji's efforts in Punjab, etc.) with the aims of the cheapening and spread of education. Literacy and primary education suffered from neglect. The government conducted a small number of primary schools and they were mostly in urban areas or in villages which had sizable population or were otherwise important. The educational structure was lopsided and unbalanced in the sense that the whole emphasis was on literary and liberal education; there was very little attempt at vocationalization or diversification at the secondary level and there were only a few colleges in science, engineering and medicine. In the stagnant arrested economy under the British rule there was neither much scope nor demand for technically qualified personnel either at the middle or at the higher levels. This situation more or less continued except for a gradual spreading process at slow momentum upto 1920.

After education was transferred to Indian ministers in the provinces, and particularly after the national movement assumed a mass character and militancy in the twenties and thirties, the pace of expansion of education increased, especially after popular ministries, in many provinces led by the Congress, assumed office in 1937. This period from 1920 to 1947 is marked by some salient characteristics: First, as mentioned above, the base of the educational pyramid began to widen; Secondly, the defects in the educational system and structure became more and more evident; the problems of education arising from the extremely retarded and unbalanced educational development under the long period of colonial rule, were widely discussed together with its glaring deficiencies and distortions. This churning of ideas and action gave rise to such seminal ideas as basic education on the one hand and national schools like the T.M.V. and Gujarat Vidyapeeth, voluntary mass literacy campaigns in the cities and rural educational movements like Bhaurao Patil's Rayat Shikshan Sanstha for the spread of elementary and secondary education in the rural community. Finally, the ideas of national education which had originated at the beginning of the century now acquired a new, richer content. We have already mentioned in the beginning, this evening that now the reconstruction of the educational system meant its complete overhaul and we have already enumerated what the new system of education was expected to achieve. If we compare those expectations with our actual performance in the last 25 years and more it is clear that except for some modifications at the top and on the margin, because of the imperatives of the politics and economics of the post-independence period, by and large, the same old structure and system has been carried forward.

Our second formulation is that, despite the preservation of the colonial educational system with most of its obsolete defective features, a further and wider spread of education has taken place. This has had two main consequences, one positive and the other negative. First, education has now reached wider social strata, hitherto uncovered strata of society; it has now almost fully covered the middle sections of society and is approaching the

lower ones. This is a positive achievement. On the other hand, this rapid expansion of education in the old framework has accentuated the same old problems and contradictions inherent in the system in yet more intensified forms. For instance, in a largely illiterate society adult literacy efforts are almost absent and primary education suffers from a slow inefficient growth pattern, while there is much greater expansion in secondary education which, however, does not provide useful terminal outlets thus pushing its product to colleges. And the growth of higher education is utterly indiscriminate and highly subsidised. Both these developments will be analysed in greater detail in the next two lectures.

My third proposition is that there is little improvement in quality or standards, and whatever the standards they are extremely uneven as between institutions in almost all sectors. We have already mentioned for instance that in higher education at one end of the spectrum we have quality institutions like the IIT's and the IIM's. But at the other end there is the miserable spectacle of institutions which are higher only in name: arts and commerce colleges with libraries having a few hundred volumes and low-paid low-qualification teachers, and science colleges with extremely ill-equipped laboratories. I do not know whether you are aware that in some parts of the country there are agricultural colleges without farms, engineering colleges without workshops and medical colleges without hospitals. Perhaps these are few isolated cases. But what is more pertinent is that the average standard of the product of secondary and higher education has not improved and in the opinion of many it has gone down. That this is a general malaise is also clear from the large number of drop-outs at all levels of education. We have already mentioned the alarmingly large extent of wastage and stagnation at the primary level. As everybody knows the situation is no better at the secondary and higher stages either. This is clearly seen in the large number of failures at the SSC and university examinations. Years ago we had ourselves estimated that not more than 40 per cent of the arts college entrants and not more than 50 per cent of the science entrants succeed in getting the first degree. There is reason to believe that in spite of the universally admitted fact of dilution of the examination standards the siuation has further deteriorated.

My fourth proposition is about the social relevance of our education, its character and contents: my contention is that except in a few numerically insignificant sectors at the top and on the margin most of our education is largely devoid of social relevance. This is implied in the long-standing criticism of the literary and bookish character of our general education from primary through secondary to higher education. If we follow the course of education from the elementary to the university level what strikes one is that the world of learning does its best to isolate and wean away the learner from the world of work. We have not even attempted in the post-independence period to bring the two worlds closer. Can we say for instance that we are teaching the theory and applications of social sciences like economics, sociology, political science to our college students

in a manner which is relevant to our society? For the central problem of India today is the question of radical social transformation. If this is accepted then my plea is that it ought to be central to all our teaching of social science. So far as I can see our syllabus-makers and teachers have simply ignored this central issue.

The situation in science and technology in this respect is no better either. We forget that while science is universal, technology is not; the latter depends very much on how relevant it is to the socio-economic situation of the country and its society where it is used. But this simple fact was hitherto ignored and it is only recently that we find some few top scientific and technological experts turning their attention to it.

This absence of relevance is an important contributory factor — I say contributory because in my opinion the real reason lies elsewhere and will be pointed out tomorrow — for much of the lack of correspondence between the actual manpower requirements and the sort of out-turn from our educational institutions; for the large scale misemployment and unemployment.

I was recently going through the selected writing of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the famous liberal leader of the pre-independence days. Sapru was well-known for his abiding interest in education and he was often invited to deliver convocation addresses. From the ten or more addresses delivered between 1923 and 1941 I found him stressing these very problems of education: literacy, mass education, vocational and professional education, indiscriminate rush to colleges of liberal education, educated unemployment etc. etc. which we are facing today after 50 years. In fact the problem of poor examination results, relevance and educated unemployment can be traced back to reports of committees and commissions right upto Curzon's tenure of viceroyalty and even earlier. In a letter written by a college-trained young man in the last quater of the last century he expressed identical sentiments of which the gist is आम्ही कसेबसें एकदाचें परीक्षा (कॉलिजची) पार पडलो : यापुढें चिन्ता व विवंचना नोकरीची ! "I have somehow managed to pass the college examination : now I have to worry about getting employment". Thus many of these problems are almost century-old; the point is: after almost 30 years of independence can we say we are nearer towards their solution?

Finally, the problem of unequal distribution in education; the problem of social justice or equalization of educational opportunity. Here we have to conclude, that in spite of further and wider spread of education, our educational system has not moved far towards equalization of educational opportunity. We have already described that about a third of the children of the primary school-age-group are just not in schools; they belong to the socially and economically most deprived sections of society. From those who drop into school, every three out of five drop out before they reach the fifth standard; another 15 per cent fail to reach the high school stage; and more than fifty per cent of those who somehow still manage to persist

in the educational caravan are left by the wayside before they complete the SSC. Then there is a further process of sifting in higher education, which is even more rigorous than the earlier sieves through which they have survived. Altogether those who can finally make it mostly, with some few exceptions thanks to the scholarship and other relieving schemes, belong to the top two deciles or even yet smaller segment of our population. The lower down you are in the socio-economic pyramid the slimmer are your chances of climbing the educational ladder. This is the process of social selection in our society (corresponding to the law of natural selection in the biological world), or the law of human jungle which is our present-day society, if that phrase does not offend your sensibility. It is true this sort of inequity in education operates in other societies as well including the most developed ones e.g. the UK and the USA. But as you are well aware in our society poverty, low social status, cultural backwardness all cluster together much more than many other societies. This is the basic, and perhaps the most ruthless feature, of unequal opportunity in education in our country.

Along with it there is another built--in inequality in our educational system. As you are well aware a small minority can purchase high-quality, high-fees, English-medium, education right from the kindergarten stage through convent or similar type of schools to elite colleges (e.g. St. Stephens College and Miranda House) and manage to achieve their goals in education and later reach the top positions in life. The vast majority has to struggle its way through common corporation or government primary schools via low-standard high schools. By the time they reach the university stage, if at all they do so, they find that they are no match to the top-seeded minority which has come from the elite institutions. So, along with the natural selection mentioned above there is this highly inequitous dual system in education. (We shall have something more to say about this in the next two lectures). Suffice it to say this evening that this elitist trend, despite the meagre ameliorative measures like scholarships, free-studentships and other concessions, instead of weakening, has strengthened itself in the post-independence period.

EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE : A SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Lecture II

In the first lecture we had a brief review of the educational development in India after the coming of independence. Towards the end a few broad conclusions were drawn summarizing our achievements and failures. In this second lecture the theme is developed further. In the first part of the lecture this evening I shall attempt at a socio-economic analysis of the different aspects of the educational advance during this period. In the latter part I shall try to show how the politico-economic forces inherent in our developing social structure have been influencing and shaping our educational policies together with their successes and failures.

It was noted yesterday that in spite of our failure to make a radical break with the former educational structure, to which our educational thinkers and political leaders had pledged themselves before and at the time of the transfer of power, education has spread considerably at all levels all over the country. A number of investigations, surveys etc. are available relating both to urban and rural populations as well as to different stages of education; from them it is possible to construct a broad socio-economic profile of this spread of education. As an illustration let us consider the progress of literacy and school education in the rural areas. From the analysis of the survey material we can draw the following conclusions. The progress in literacy and education is much more in evidence in large central villages than in small peripheral villages. They have progressed much more among the socio-economically advanced sections of population than in the poorer and socially backward sections of population. We are all aware of the great gulf between men and women in terms of education; this is even greater in rural areas; and the downward one goes the social ladder the less is the literacy and education of the fairer sex. In some areas girls' education has hardly started in this IWY! In terms of caste which is a dominant stratificatory characteristic of our rural society, the upper castes, the Brahmans, Kayasthas, the trading castes etc. are almost all literate and have progressed further in secondary and higher education. Then follow the middle castes whose main occupation is farming they also made considerable advance both in literacy and primary education and are trying to push forward to higher levels. But the Scheduled Castes, other backward castes and most of the tribal population (except in some pockets like the north-eastern parts of the country) are woefully lagging behind; and this in spite of the special provisions stipulated in the Constitution. In terms of land-ownership it is the richer and middle groups who are pushing ahead in education while the poor peasants and landless labourers

are still largely illiterate, uneducated. The same pattern is repeated when one considers income and assets.

As we move from the rural areas, through small towns and cities, to large metropolitan centres there is greater and greater advance in education. But the socio-economic profile described above persists throughout although at the corresponding level of advance; there is of course a difference. In urban areas in this social stratification of educational achievement, particularly at the upper levels, it is parental income, education and profession rather than caste which now tend to play a greater role.

These facts are well known to everyone who has any hand in policy formulation or its implementation in education. In fact while announcing objectives emphasis is always laid on the education of the lagging sectors: adult literacy, universal elementary education, women's education, education of the Scheduled Castes, tribal population etc. etc. While allocating funds recourse is taken to an easy way out viz. allocating them according to the secular trend in each sector. As regards actual end results one finds them as we have presented them yesterday: a far greater advance in secondary and higher education, men's education, urban schooling and, in general, the education of the more affluent and socially powerful sections of society. In fact in education as in every other socio-economic sector the progress is by and large taking place in a *laissez faire* style without purposeful intervention, except when either the prevailing circumstances make it imperative and/or when political considerations dictate otherwise. Having made the necessary modifications the process again starts moving undisturbed by its own inertia and acquires a momentum of its own.

If we carefully examine our education process in terms of the end results together with the social sifting or screening mechanism at various stages of education, which was described yesterday, one cannot help coming to the conclusion that the society by and large, reproduces almost the same social structure with which it starts. Each new generation going through the channel of education does not appear to make a great deal of difference to the state of our socio-economic hierarchy. As we have seen yesterday a large number, even now by-pass altogether any kind of education (or it will be more appropriate to say that education bypasses them), and those who enter the educational system are subjected to a relentless process of 'natural social selection'. As a result those who ultimately occupy the upper portion of the social pyramid in the newer generation are largely those who originally belonged to it in the older generation; and the same holds good for the middle, the lower and the lowest strata. Thus in spite of the spread of education our social structure more or less replicates itself from generation to generation.

Let me hasten to make an observation before I proceed further with this analysis so that the proposition I have stated just now is not misunderstood. I do not want to suggest that no social change has occurred or is occurring as a result of the spread of education during the post-1947 period. In fact the entire lecture tomorrow will be devoted to this theme. I also

do not want to suggest that nothing has changed in the socio-economic structure, which has been evolving by its own logic during the last quarter of the century, the logic of capitalist economy in an under-developed country having the legacy of a colonial past. What is maintained here is that no revolutionary or even what you could call a radical break, has occurred in either the economy or the social structure, whether as a consequence of the spread of education or otherwise.

To continue our analysis further, not only is the educational system largely replicating the basic socio-economic structure with its social hierarchy and flagrant inequalities. It can be demonstrated in fact, as we have said elsewhere two years back, that there is an amazingly close parallel between what is happening in education and what is happening in national economy. The large mass of 70 per cent of illiterates (400 million as mentioned yesterday) in our population and the sluggish substandard spread of elementary education are matched by the slow economic growth, where 40 per cent of the people still live below the bare subsistence level and another 30 per cent hover just above it. The abnormal growth of high-school and higher education in a largely illiterate society is not very different from our economic priorities where the manufacture of terylene, cosmetics, TV sets and private cars have a priority over the production of cheap coarse cloth, cheap housing for the poor and means of mass transport. The high subsidization of high-school and higher education helps, in the present socio-economic order, the same relatively well-off sections of society, as are helped by most public investments in the cities and in the country-side, in industry and in agriculture. Along with high-cost public sector investments essential for the development of private capital, the State is also running high-cost elite institutions like the IITs and the IIMs to meet their demand of highly qualified technical and management personnel. Then there is similar use of foreign aid and foreign know-how in starting and running these elite educational institutions. And there is also the export of dividends on these 'foreign investment' in the form of a massive export of underpriced finished product, made in India, consisting of well-trained scientists, engineers, technologists and doctors! Even the *garibi hatao* slogan finds itself echoed in education, our renewed resolve in successive educational plans for the removal of illiteracy and for the enforcement of universal primary education.

As illustrations of the built-in bias in our educational system consider the distribution of resources among various levels of education. We have referrred to this question yesterday. In the fifteen years from 1950-51 to 1965-66 the share of primary education dwindled from 32 per cent to 20 per cent while the share of higher education rose from 15 to a little over 20 per cent. It is believed that during the last decade this trend has certainly not been reversed; probably it has increased further. It is true that in the post-war period the expenditure on higher education has considerably increased in most countries, particularly the developed ones. It is true that this pattern of distribution of the financing of education, where

a large and increasing share of the cake with a high public subsidy goes to higher levels of education is to be observed in other countries as well, and for the same reasons: spirally rising expansion in enrolment at these levels and relatively much higher costs of higher education and research, particularly in science and technology. But in those countries this is taking place against the background of adequate provision for and near-full enrolment in elementary education. What makes it galling in our country is that here, it is happening in a largely illiterate country where we have not been able to draw in and retain even half the age-group 6 to 11, let alone fulfilling the constitutional obligation of providing universal education for children of 6 to 14. One may pertinently ask: To whom do these benefits go? We have seen yesterday that the successive screening process enables largely the children of the top deciles of population to arrive at the higher reaches of education. This is what makes this policy socially so highly iniquitous.

The scale of subsidy to higher education increases as one goes from the general courses in arts, commerce and science to more and more prestigious courses such as engieering, medicine, technology and management. It was estimated, for instance, some years ago that in Maharashtra the government spends about Rs. 80,000 towards producing a young MBBS while the average student expenditure during that period was of the order of Rs. 10 to 12 thousand After such high subsidization what is the end result? At one end a significant proportion of the product of these prestigious courses just leave the country and settle down in the West. The high subsidy spent on these drained brains is pure waste with no return to the society which largely paid for their education. At the other end the inordinate rush to higher education particularly general higher education which is also subsidized for which this state subsidy is a contributory factor, as accentuated the grave problem of educated unemployment.

No discussion about our performance in education during the post-47 period can be complete without considering the problem of the educated unemployment as a result of the surfeit of highschool and higher education. As was pointed out yesterday the problem is not new; it has been with us, along with low quality general education and the near-absence of vocationalization and diversification at secondary level, from the beginning of this century. People of our generation have experienced acute pangs of unemployment during the depression period in the thirties which was partially relieved only by the creation of a large number of war-time jobs in the early forties. After being relatively quiescent for the first decade and half of Independence, the spectre of growing educated unemployment has again raised its ugly head, and has now reached a new high and is ever-increasing over the last ten years.

While considering this question let us first squarely face the fact that unemployment in India is not merely confined to the educated. In fact it is general and embraces all people, educated or otherwise, and the main

underlying cause of this widespread unemployment is the inability of our national economic development to absorb productively all persons of working age. In the case of the high-school and college turnout the problem becomes acute because the rate of expansion at these two levels considerably exceeds the requirements of the economy. This creates a large number of surplus in relation to the number of suitable available jobs. Absence of diversification and vocationalization, and lack of provision of terminal courses leading to middle level jobs, are additional factors together with the sort of the wage-structure which we have, which is heavily biased towards higher education.

You will find that almost the same analysis was made during the pre-Independence days. But then it was possible and also correct to blame the imperial rulers for the plight of the educated unemployed. The fact that we are facing the same problem after almost three decades of self-rule implies, that no basic change has taken place in this respect, either in the pace of economic growth or in the imbalance in the educational structure. It is becoming clear day by day that India cannot provide full or near-full employment, unless she adopts a radically different strategy of economic growth, and is prepared to bring about the necessary far-reaching changes in the socio-economic structure. But these issues are better left to the expert economists. As analysts of educational developments, however, let us not turn a blind eye to the economic realities and delude ourselves that a vocational diversification, with or without 10+2+3 and with terminal courses, will act like a magic wand. Even if we succeed in channelising a large portion of the college entrants to these courses in high-schools or higher secondary institutions, (I am very doubtful about this for the reason which I shall point out presently,) this will not make a real dent in the problem of educated unemployment unless economy really begins to hum and creates an ever-increasing number of jobs at those levels. If this does not happen, unemployment will be merely transferred from one level to another, as is clear from what happened at another level, to engineers, a few years ago.

As I mentioned earlier I am also doubtful, whether it will be possible to persuade the high school leavers not to take a mad rush to colleges, by merely providing diversified vocational courses of a terminal character. Everybody knows the significant difference in terms of earning potential and social prestige of the high school leaver and the college-trained in the present social or rather socio-economic structure. There is evidence to show that social prestige is gradually losing against income, which is itself becoming a source of, and therefore a substitutable social commodity, for status. But unless the great gulf between earning potentials of the two sections of the educated, as well as that between the educated as a whole on the one hand and the uneducated and low-educated on the other, is considerably narrowed, it is very problematic whether this much-advocated channelisation can be realised in practice. We should recall in this context

the fate in the past of such innovations as basic education, multipurpose schools, technical secondary courses etc. which were failed so much by educationists and others, when they were first started but which all had to be ultimately discontinued after short intervals. Everybody proclaimed them as good but in practice, they were good not for one's own children but for other people's children! So most educational problems related to educated unemployment are ultimately related to the economic policies, to politico-economic policy decisions.

As a final item in social analysis of our education, let me once again go back to the spread of primary education. It has been observed earlier that we are progressing rather slowly in this vital sector, vital from the point of view of social transformation, because literacy and hence a successful completion of at least the primary course, makes all the difference between ignorance and even a rudimentary knowledge of things. Although the progress of enrolment is uneven in different States and regions, it is my belief for the last few years, that in States (like Maharashtra) which have done a lot better than others, we have reached a sort of a plateau in this respect although about a quarter of the age-group still do not enrol and another quarter drops out soon after entry. Futher progress looks well-nigh difficult, if not impossible, in the present scheme of things. Many surveys have been made to probe into the situation and they all point out that the principal inhibiting factors are: the unsuitability of the present full-time, single-entry, formal system of education on the one hand and the stark poverty, and the irrelevance of education to the economic situation of the lowest strata of society on the other. Some children do not attend school simply because they have little to eat, and little to wear. They are required by their parents to help them in their chores in their fierce struggle for existence. Moreover, the parents, and hence the children lack enough motivation because they do not see how this few years' schooling (which means keeping them away from work) is going to help them in their economic survival let alone economic improvement. Proposals have been put forward making an urgent plea for providing multiple-entry, part-time, non-formal facilities side by side with the present formal schools. I am afraid, in the present socio-economic situation, this is likely to meet with the same fate which basic education met. This proposed alternative strategy is purely an educational strategy, and for the lack of a corresponding economic strategy, the former alone cannot help many who remain out of the pale of schooling because the basic questions of poverty and motivation will persist and will remain untended.

It is not my intention to analyse every educational development in this manner; it is also hardly possible to be exhaustive in the space of a lecture. But the discussion so far lends ample support to my initial contention that in the post-47 era we have failed to make a radical break in our educational system. As one eminent educationist has recently put it, the system helps to 'strengthen and perpetuate the *status quo* with

some marginal modifications as may be necessitated from time to time, merely in the interest of the survival of the *status quo* itself". I know to this I may receive an appropriate rejoinder from the social scientists, particularly the sociologists of education, viz. "well, this has always been the role of education, the role of socialisation, which makes members in a social group adjust themselves and conform to their social milieu. Educationists and policy-makers should have known it".

All I need say in my defence are two things. First, this fact has been unfortunately ignored by most of our educationists, and policy-makers and planners all these years, and particularly by the 'pure-education-wallahs'. The latter were busy, many of them still are, with merely making fresh plans every few years, and suggesting what they consider to be suitable educational technologies to accomplish them. For instance, you will hardly find any of this analysis in the great report of the Kothari Education published only nine years ago. It is only now that some of them are taking the turn, some of them still haltingly, calling it a drift. It should be, however, mentioned here that veteran educationist who was the principal author of that report, and for whose sincerity, abilities and knowledge I have the greatest regard, has now inevitably come to this realization during the last few years. The above quotes are from his book published towards the end of 1974.

Secondly, and more importantly, the educational developments described yesterday, are not the developments which we had bargained for, when we pleadge our selves to bringing about a national system of education at the time of Independence. True, we have had similar failures in other spheres, for instance, in our socio-economic performance. The two are not unrelated, in fact are very much related. During the post-47 period there has been no revolutionary or even a radical break with the past. There is undoubtedly significant growth of the socio-economic system and its sub-system of education. But the growth has also intensified their internal contradictions as well as the contradictions due to their interaction. The crisis of education is in fact an organic, inseparable part of the crisis in our economy, the crisis of our out-dated socio-economic structure.

In the remaining part of the lecture I shall discuss how politico-economic factors have been shaping our post-47 educational policies. Actually, after the social analysis which I placed before you so far, it is not really necessary to assert that political factors have operated in education, because, after all, socio-economic processes have a necessary political dimension, and all government policies and decisions, even the decision of 'drifting', including those in education, are in the last analysis rooted in politics. But this is specifically attempted here separately, in order to emphasize the inherent political character of the important educational developments. Again, this discussion, like the earlier one, will be illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Let me clarify at the outset that the phrases 'politics' or political' used here are not used in the pejorative sense, to imply their sordid or dirty aspects, but in the sense of pressures and interests of various social groups, particularly the dominant social groups, and the manner in which they wield power at different levels. And they do not imply academic politics at all. But if occasionally they are used in any other than in their pristine sense, the meaning will be clear from the context.

Let me first state some generalisations on the influence of politics on education. In a modern nation-state the educational system largely depends on the polity of the country. The state is the main source of funds; as such and even otherwise, it exercises considerable direct influence on how the educational system is organized, run, expanded and developed. The relative importance given to different stages, and to different branches at each stage, the type of administration both governmental and institutional, and even the contents of education can be ultimately traced to the decisions taken at the State level.

Again, the emerging newly independent nation-state in the developing world is necessarily faced with two tasks, essentially political in character, which lead to corresponding educational developments. This nation-state must have a reasonably efficient State apparatus: the armed forces and the police, civilian administration, a judicial system, a reasonably running system of transport and mass communications. All this implies a minimum of education, science, technology, etc. in short, a corresponding educational system. The second task which the newly independent developing country faces is that of development, rapid economic growth and a rising standard of living for its people. Economic development implies the development of science and technology, and minimum spread of education. Moreover, in this era the concept of development has to carry with it for its very legitimacy a people-oriented content which often goes under the label of some kind of socialism. Its manifestations in the educational sphere are literacy, universal elementary education and equalization of educational opportunity at other levels. The compulsive political requirements of a developing modern state have therefore to devise an appropriate programme of education. Political factors thus inevitably have their imprints on the educational system.

India inherited both: a political apparatus and an educational system in working conditions from her former rulers at the time of its emergence as an independent nation-state. The national programme in education was therefore that of the adaptation, transformation, and ultimately replacement of the system. The contents of this national system of education visualised on the eve of Independence were mentioned yesterday. They reflected the vastness and diverse character of the country, the existence of many relatively advanced sectors in the economy and administration including education, and the aspirations of the people aroused by the national struggle for independence. The radical (socialist) content in this national programme

owed itself largely to the powerful mass character of the national movement, but this radical trend was organizationally rather weak. Because of this deficiency it could not decisively assert itself, either at the time of or after the realisation of Independence, either through the ruling or oppositional leadership. This can be observed in the educational provisions in the Indian Constitution as well, which are a sort of compromise between radical objectives in national education and the realities of class power in class society. As the India State started developing along the non-revolutionary path, the path of capitalist development, the educational policies also started sliding further and further away from the pre-Independence objective of radical transformation. Thus what shaped the educational policies, as well as all other policies of independent India, were mostly the political forces which assumed power, the vested interests in the urban and rural areas, that is the upper and middle classes in society. The composition of these forces in class terms can be made more specific but that is not necessary for my present argument.

The rest of the ensuing analysis is devoted to illustrate with the help of specific examples, how political factors intervene in the formulation of educational policies and their implementation. Consider, first the need for controlling the large uncontrolled enrolment at the high-school and higher education. A mild gradualist proposal of selective admission made by the Education Commission was promoptly turned down by the Parliamentary Committee on Education in 1967. The Committee finally recommended that "every effort should be made to provide admissions to institutions of higher education to all eligible students who desire to study further," a recommendation which is exactly the opposite of control. In fact efforts have been made for all these years to do exactly the reverse of control, that is to facilitate starting of new high schools and colleges; grant-in-aid codes are suitably modified for this purpose and the Economically Backward Class concessions have gone a long way to support these institutions in rural areas. In spite of the high rise in the cost of living the increase in fees is relatively much less. In fact there will be a tremendous political opposition both by the ruling and opposition parties to any proposal of substantial fee-rise and/or restrictions on admsision. It is well known in this context that the EBC concessions are misused, that miserably equipped substandard colleges and high schools sanctioned because of local political pressures are struggling for just bare existence on account of poor enrolment there is consequent maltreatment of staff. (I heard once a minister remarking "there is often a Yadav high school on one side of the village street and a Jadhav high school on the other, both leading a miserable existence with low enrolment"). And still this policy continues; why?

Apart from the local politics of power and prestige, it is clear that this policy of unrestricted admission and high subsidy serves the interests of politically influential sections of society. As mentioned earlier this policy benefits the top stratum of the population from which most of these students

come, and they are the most influential as well as the most vocal sections of society. Again, the new rural educated elite which have come from the farming communities and the middle sections of society now dominate positions of strength in politics at all levels including the State level. They use their political strength to advance their interests in education as in all other spheres, and they are fully conscious of the utiilty of education in reinforcing their positions in various walks of social and economic life and in politics in particular. This accounts for their opposition to restrictive selective admissions, and the various measures adopted by the State for *subsidising this education.* Moreover, these policies, though mainly benefiting the upper and middle strata, are bound to command a wide support among the vast lower strata of society as well. For, even if a large number of them simply cannot reach those higher stages in education, for those few who can make it, this is their only chance of quitting poverty and climbing the social ladder. The advocates of the present policy can also quote history in its defence. They say in effect: If the national leaders of the early British period made active efforts for the cheapening and spread of English education, we are now carrying forward the same tradition and we are doing this in the interests of the lowliest and the poor. The former had to do it in spirit of service and self-sacrifics because of the adverse conditions of the colonial rule; now we, their present counterparts, are using the power and resources of state for this purpose and thus taking it to people further down the social ladder. So what is wrong? Thus the present policy of unresrticted entry and high subsidy, liberal grant-in-aid, all command a powerful political support from overwhelmingly large sections of population. And because of this it is not likely that this process of 'democratising' education can be curbed to any appreciable extent unless the present power-structure itself suffers a radical change.

Consider another issue: the special concessions and facilities for the education of the backward sections viz. the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities. The constitutional provisions in this respect, and their implementation thereafter, are the result of two principal factors which are essentially political. First, such a programme was an important element of the agenda of national reconstruction proclaimed by the developing national movement for almost two decades. It was a necessary response to the great awakening among these sections of society, particularly among the Scheduled Castes under the leadership of stalwarts like Ambedkar. Under the benign lead of Gandhiji their cause had become an integral part of the Congress programme. Secondly, the existence of these sections in Indian society offended the sensibility of the bourgeoise liberal ideology of the national leadership, and such measures were therefore called for if India had to build its image and justify itself as a modern progressive state in the outside world. Even so their actual implementation is not always satisfactory as the annual reports of the Commissioner for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes very often point out. There is often a whispering and not-so-whispering campaign against these concessions on grounds

of fairness, equity and standards. If the State leaderships have not so far succumbed to these presures for the withdrawal or reducing these concessions, it is due to two factors. Any whittling down of these facilities will be frowned upon by the Central leadership which is a more far-sighted with its more liberal learnings. But more importantly, it will cost them the political support of sizable chunks of population. This will be paticularly disastrous for the politics of election.

Some interesting developments in the first two decades of independence in this context are worth noting, if only to illustrate how political factors shape educational policies. Taking the advantage of the mention of other backward communities among the weaker seactions as defined in the Constitution, the newly emerged State leadership belonging to the dominant middle castes in rural areas, legislated in some States reservation of seats for their communities, in colleges of engineering and medicine and other institutions of higher learning. At one stage this went to such a length in some States that the number of open seats got reduced to an iniquitously small proportion. At this stage the judiciary had to intervene to restore the balance! I have not checked the recent position but it is not unlikely that this kind of reservation for the so called other backward classes may still be in existence, in a less offensive form, in some parts of the country.

As another illustration of political influences working in education let me take the question of elite exclusive institutions like public schools, covent schools etc. This type of institutions, particularly at the secondary level, has increased during the post-independence period. These expensive English-medium schools, run on the public-school pattern in England, cater to the children of the affluent and near-affluent. They provide them the channel through which their pupils enter select institutions of higher education, and later on occupy the leading positions in bureaucracy, defence services, entrepreneurship, technocracy and managerial positions in industry and business. In spite of our egalitarian protestations in education this trend has considerably strengthened during the last two decades until we have now the proto-type of these institutions even in rural areas, and what is even more surprising, with State aid. On the other hand the common school concept, the idea of a neighbourhood school so strongly advocated by the Education Commission, has gone by default. This development is not just drift or inertia; it is clear it has its roots in the politico-economic forces.

This is the elitist channel of the dual system, mentioned in the first lecture, and it provides the education which the topmost layer of our society desires to have for their children. It has a strong support in the ruling class and the bureaucracy. Ministers and politicians who loudly proclaim the ideal of equalization of educational opportunity, who declare themselves against the continuation of English and are eloquent champions of Hindi, are careful enough to send their wards to these exclusive English-medium schools. Regional leadership, conscious of its own present and future interests, has followed suit. They wish to have a date with destiny (of wealth,

status and power) if not in this generation, at least in the next. It is not therefore surprising, that there has been next to no effort by those who are supposed to direct and control the educational system, to reverse this process which is in such glaring contradiction with principle of equalization of educational opportunity. Some mild measures aimed at checking this trend and giving a dominant status to regional languages in the universities were promptly rejected by the judiciary under the relevant clause of the Constitution, the clause which protects the right of the minorities or other groups to have the type of schools they desire. In fact this clause is playing a role in education, similar to the one played in economic reforms by the clause on the right of property.

Here I am reminded of Report of the Education Commission which has said. "The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classroom". When a large number from the younger generations does not enter any sort of class room at all, and many of those who enter are soon obliged to leave them, such a statement sounds like an empty rhetoric. But we can endorse it with appropriate modification and say with full justification that "the destiny of affluent India is now being shaped in her public school class-rooms".

The sort of politico-economic analysis of our educational developments which I have presented before you so far can be extended to several other issues like vocationalization of secondary education including basic education and the principle of work-experience, the language policy including the place of English, adult literacy programmes, the condition of rural schools, syllabi, so on and so forth. But one has to stop somewhere to honour the time limit and also the patience of the listeners. I shall therefore do the summing up in the form of a few conclusions.

The developments in education in India cannot be considered in isolation of the socio-economic structure. They can be better analysed and understood in their essence, only when they are related to the prevailing socio-economic interests. The policy decisions in education, or even the so-called absence of policy or drift in education, have their roots in the politico-economic forces in the country, and they are essentially political decisions. In the post-Independence period education and economy are growing in the framework of the old structures and this growth has intensified not only contradictions in their specific fields but this has also brought them into mutual conflict. For a real radical break in the educational system, for the realization of real national system of education, there has to be a simultaneous corresponding break in the socio-economic structure. These are essentially political tasks and therefore the question of political power, who wields it and how they wield it, assumes a central position in all considerations of far-reaching changes in education.

Having said this I concede that whether you agree with them or not they certainly provoke a few pertinent questions: What does one do about it? When does one go from here? And how does one go there? These

are certainly valid questions. Perhaps you expect me to discuss them tomorrow. I am afraid, however, I shall not do so for the simple reason that I should like to add another vitally important dimension to this analysis viz. the demension of social change. But let me indicate my line of thinking on the question of finding answers to these crucial questions. This is best done by quoting from Alice in Wonderland with an interpolation of my own. Alice had asked a similar question of the cheshire cat; "Will you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here? And the reply was, "That depends a good deal on where you want to go", and I shall add "and on whether you want to walk out of here at all!"

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Lecture III

In this final lecture of the series I propose to speak on Education and Social Change. In the first lecture I gave you a brief critical review of the educational advance during the post-Independence period and in the second I tried to place before you a social analysis of this progress. My main conclusion was : There has been no radical break in the educational system taken over from the British; but it has considerably expanded within the framework of the old structure and this has accentuated the problems and difficulties which were inherent to the old structure. In the course of the discussion I mentioned that this does not mean that nothing has changed; in fact the very spread of education during the last 25 years has brought about considerable social change. It is my intention this evening to deal with some important aspects of social change that has taken place as a result of the spread of education. Although the conclusions in their generality with be applicable to India as a whole I have often drawn for illustrations from what has happened or is happening in Maharashtra.

The initial difficulty in this connection is that of definition. The word social has such an all-embracing connotation that it can include almost every aspect of human life. For, man can only be viewed as man in society; hence everything human is at the same time social and nothing can be human unless it is at the same time social.

Now some consequences of education which have great social significance are of a fairly general character: that is they hold for all sections of society. Consider, for example, the effect of education in one generation on the educational aspirations (and also the efforts for their realisation) in the next generation. It is well known that a father ordinarily desires that his sons should be educated at least to, if not further than, the state upto which he was himself educated. Similar is the desire of a mother in respect of her daughters. The importance of these social tendencies, prevailing in almost every section of society in India, is obvious for, the spread of education and its reaching higher and higher levels from generation to generation. It has, in particular, great significance for the spread of literacy in weaker sections which I have elsewhere described as the law of compound interest in the case of women's literacy.

Another important consequence in the case of spread of education amongst women, especially if she reaches secondary or higher level, is that it invariably results in her adopting a small family norm. This is due both to appreciable increase in their age of marriage as well as a strong motivation for limiting the number of children and their spacing. This has been

particularly noticed in Kerala State as a whole where women's education has made considerable progress and also in our urban population where there is relatively more of education among girls. There are of course other concomitant factors involved in this, one of great importance is independent (white-collar) employment of women, which again is a function of education.

To take another example and in yet another field, it has been found in a number of village surveys that farmers who have completed elementary education tend to be more conversant with modern agricultural practices. The higher the educational level the greater is the adoption of these modern methods. Thus in general there is a fairly marked association between educational level and agricultural productivity.

So you will see that a wide variety of changes in the work and life of the people can be at least partially traced back to the spread of education.

Let me assure you, however, that it is not my intention to open the theme that wide open and I am deeply conscious of my limitations to be able to do so. For the purpose of this discussion social change will be so interpreted as to cover mainly the changes that are taking place in the relative positions of different socio-economic strata in our society and their mutual relationships; other aspects, if and when they are touched, will be mentioned only incidentally. I am aware, the scope of social change thus delimited, is also quite wide and also bound to be controversial in its given connotation. The only escape for me then, is to say, that what I mean by social change this evening is largely what I shall say in this lecture, this evening!

Again, in order to avoid a needless controversy because of the title of the theme viz: Education and Social Change, let me clarify at the outset that education is not the only factor, nor always the main factor, which brings about social change.

Undoubtedly changes in the economic structure, in the political power structure, etc. vitally affect the social hierarchy, the relationships between different sections in society. All these including education are inter-related and interact, and it is difficult to separate the effects and say that this is the change attributable to education. But the history of the last century and half of the socio-economic development of Indian society clearly shows that the spread of education has played a crucial role in this development. It is only truism to say that education raises the earning potential, that is income, it increases occupational and regional mobility, and it enhances social status. Education has also helped to strengthen economic and political power. This not only holds for individuals but also for social groups. And for those who belong to the lower and poorer sections of society like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward communities, education has been perhaps the only means of getting out of the vicious grip of indigence and backwardness and of elevating themselves along the social ladder. The spread of education to wider and wider

sections of population has thus brought about in its fake changes in social stratification.

This has been a continuous process and in order to appreciate better the developments of the post-47 period, it is worthwhile having a brief retrospective look at the past. The extremely limited facilities for Western education of the early British rule, say upto the nineties of the last century, were availed of mainly by the upper castes and advanced social groups in society. This was even more so in the case of higher education which became the preserve of the more affluent amongst them. The clase of this newly educated elite occupied all available professional and white-collar positions, particularly in the civil services at its various levels which was by far the main avenue for employment. True, under the British rule, the doors of education opened for the first time, at least formally, to all sections of society and because of this a small number from the middle castes in the social hierarchy, and a still smaller number from the lowest castes including the untouchables, could elevate themselves and take up literate occupations or could get into government service.

The new English-educated intelligentsia naturally had to face the difficult problem of ideological adjustment between the old heritage and new learning, discovering in that process a new national indentity. The problem was that of the old cultural thought currents coming to terms with the new currents of modern Western learning and the political realities of the dependent colonial status. The transition from a status-bound caste society to one consisting of free and equal individuals, from a backward village-based economy to monetised colonial capitalist economy, from feudal rule to bourgeoise rule of law, from traditional religious culture to a culture based in rationality, science and technology is long and difficult, and full of conflicts and contradictions. The old society very often accepts the form and immediate benefits of modern learning but finds it difficult to assimilate its core of thought and values. In other words it particularly opts for modernism without accepting modernity. Consequently it comes to some sort of compromise and adhoc adjustments with the modern value system. Indian society was faced with this problem at its first confrontation with Western learning a century ago and the process of adjustment together with the social schizophrenia which it involves still continues with us.

Moreover, divided as we were into separated social groups of communities by religion and castes, each one of them had to go through this process of adjustment, to discover itself anew, as a result of the spread of education. This process accelerated in the period between the two world wars when education spread further and because of the militancy and mass character of the national struggle. And it continues even now after Independence with a much greater spread of education.

For instance, in Maharashtra one can discern three distinct, though not unconnected, strands in this process of the spread of education and the resulting social change, in the social and political awakening among the different sections of society. First, there was the predominantly urban

strand of the upper castes represented by Ranade, Tilak, Gokhale and others. Second, there was the predominantly rural strand (but led by an urban leadership) of the middle and lower castes represented by Phule and Satya Shodhak Samaj, and the later non-Brahman movement. The third strand in this process was that of the untouchable castes led largely by Ambedkar. Education and the consequent discovery and realisation of self-identity came to these three broad caste-groups in three successive stages, although one has to remember that at any given time there was always some education and therefore some sort of social awakening in all the three groups. The first, starting about 1870, matured during the next 4/50 years; the second started from about 1900, made significant advance in the period between the wars and is actually coming to fruition in the post-Independence period, particularly after the formation of the State of all Marathi-speaking people; the third had its beginning in the twenties, made some headway in the thirties and forties and it is still grappling with the problem of finding a place of its own under the sun. This is the broad outline of social advance in Maharashtra which started with the beginning of the British rule. It should be possible to think of simliar analysis of develepoments in other parts of India, although of course the chronology and the social composition of various strands will be different.

Let me now consider the most important facet of this social change viz. the formation of the educated elite. As I mentioned in the earlier lectures, education aquired a more rapid pace in its spread during the twenties and thirties giving it a mass character for the first time. It now reached new social strata lower down in the social hierarchy. They avidly took to education because for them as individuals or for their communities, education appeared to be the sure, and perhaps the only means of improving their economic condition and acquiring social prestige. The spread of education created a small but sifinificant core of a new educated elite amongst the socially middle castes and an identical process was operating, but on a much smaller scale, among the castes on the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, the untouchable. Simultaneously, the widening of franchise during this period had also made them aware how political pressures could be built up towards realising socio-economic advantages for their communities. They became more and more conscious of the importance of bringing educational facilities to their communities for achieving their objectives. The prospect of imminent transfer of power and adult farnchise strengthened this process.

But as mentioned before the real push forward towards 'democratization' of education could come only after Independence, after the democratization of the political set up in the country. This has brought about fundemental changes in the composition of the educated personnel and hence in the composition of the rural and urban elite formations. The wider spread of education and the exercise of power, political power at different levels, have combined to produce far-reaching social changes in our social set-up. Many shrewd observers of the developing social situation

like the late Professor D. R. Gadgil had foreseen this process of change from the forties onwards.

Let us first see what has taken place in the rural areas. In the old days education, particularly beyond mere literacy, was mostly confined to the advanced castes e.g. the Brahmans and Kayasthas, to whom therefore the village population naturally looked up as the leaders and spokesmen of the village community. Now the situation is entirely different. Now the rural elite consists primarily of the educated youth of the middle castes and land-owning communities. The educated new generation of the landlords and rich peasants now makes up the new elite which dominates the political, social and cultural life in villages and small towns, and they have rapidly extended their influences to district places and are now trying to extend it further to the metropolitan centres. Adult franchise has helped these middle strata of the old social hierarchy to occupy strategic positions in political and social life from the village level, through taluka and district levels, to the State level. We have already described how they strengthen themselves in these spheres with the help of education and how they utilize their positions of strength to advance their educational interests in the secondary and higher education, which further enhances their earning potential, occupational opportunity, political strength and social status. The other affluent sections in rural society like the trading communities have become close collaborators of this land-owning rural leadership.

What about the sections of society further down the traditional social hierarchy in rural population — the Scheduled Castes, the tribal population and other backward classes? The benefits of the 'democratization' of education has undoubtedly filtered down to them also, although to a much lesser extent. A new educated elite is taking shape also amongst them but it is not sizable enough except in States like Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu. On the other hand they are unable to join the main rural elite on equal terms. Moreover, because of their smaller numerical strength, adult franchise does not help them much but for the constitutional provisions giving them separate representation. Thus they can only play the role of a very junior or act as pressure group at the political level and can participate even less in the rural social life.

What about the old elite belonging to the advanced castes (e.g. the Brahmans etc.) which were occupying most important positions in rural and urban society during the pre-Independence days? Both in rural and urban areas they were an insignificant minority so far as numbers were concerned. With the rise of new rural elite in much greater strength they have lost most of their former prestige and influence in rural politics and also in rural social life. This process was accentuated by their migration in sizable numbers to cities and towns in virtue of their occupations, and also because of the tenancy enactments in the case of non-cultivating landowners amongst them. Thus in rural areas they have now very little role and influence which are dwindling also in small taluka-level towns. Where they still exist in rural areas and small towns a new alliance often springs up with the Scheduled

Castes. Because of their tradition of education and entrenched positions in the former period, however, they manage to find for themselves professional and other literate occupations and white-collar jobs in government service and more so in the expanding private sector, jobs and situations which are mostly urban and semi-urban. But even here, that is, in urban and semi-urban employment their former near-monopoly no longer exists: it is being systematically eroded by the emergence of the new educated elite of rural origin of the middle castes mentioned above and because of decisive shifts in political power.

We mentioned earlier the vertical dichotomy, the dualism in our educational system, and also the fact that the erstwhile small elitist sector in education has considerably expanded during the post-47 period. This is having a decisive consequence in the formation of the educated class in the present period as well as in the continuation and shifts in the old elite. The more affluent and the more ambitious amongst the old elite now use the elitist educational channel, expensive English-medium schools and select institutions of higher learning, (the IITs and IIMs etc.) in India and abroad. After Independence and the considerable industrial development during the three five-year's plans, new opportunities of highly paid situations became available in significant numbers in the form of senior positions in technology, industrial and business management, trade, the professions, defence services and also in the civil service which has considerably expanded during the last three decades. Thus there has formed, for want of a better name, the 'super' elite of the present era, a sort of continuation of the microscopic anglicised section of the former educated top elite, but qualitatively different. Although they do not directly wield political power because of their strategic positions in the economy and in the State apparatus, they exercise considerable inffluence on the actual exercise of political and economic power. Consequently they set the norm in social and political thinking as well as for social life and behaviour, for themselves and also for the lesser educated elite below them. The advanced elements of the middle castes which are relatively educationally backward and which have their base in the affluent peasantry have not been slow to recognize these new job-opportunities and the elitist channel of education. The recently started 'public schools' under government and private sponsorship (like the sugar factories in Maharashtra) illustrate this trend. Thus the elitist education and the political influence at the State level facilitates their entry into the 'super' elite. They are trying to join the 'super' elite in increasing numbers.

The major part of the old educated elite, however, being less affluent and less influential, has to inevitably to go through the cheaper educational channel of the indigenous variety, average secondary schools imparting instruction in the regional language media, and ordinary colleges. Their lot is to man the middle and lower-salaried jobs, from professional, technical and skilled to junior administrative and clerical and semi-skilled positions. Large sections of this old elite at the lower levels feel frustrated and

resentful as they have lost much of their former social prestige since they are no longer socially related to those in positions of political power and governmental authority. Moreover, they have to jostle for securing these ordinary jobs with the newly emerged sections of the educated from the middle and lower strata of society, often of rural origin, since the latter are socially well-connected with the new ruling class. They find that the preference in selection for high and low governmental and semi-governmental positions which was tilted in their favour in the major part of the pre-47 period is now tilted against them in the post-47 period.

The new formations in the composition of the educated elite in India in the post-47 period are an important element of social change that has occurred during this period and therefore deserves further discussion. The pre-47 elite, belonging largely to the few advanced social strata, was more or less homogeneous. Although there were undoubtedly differences amongst them because of high and low positions, except for the very small anglicised section at the top, they formed a sort of a continuous spectrum. There was social distance between the different layers, unbridgable in many respects and also between them and the rest of the common people. But the traditional social bonds and the prevailing strong anti-British national sentiment — loud and ineffective except at the peak periods of the political movement — bound this educated elite together and also acted as a link between them and the common people.

The situation today is entirely different. The 'super' elite of today is even more alienated from and indifferent to the lot of the common people than its counterpart of the pre-47 days. There is hardly any feeling of social commitment and their only interests are their professional or service prospects and their social life which is a life of affluence with pseudo-Westernized norms of high society. A large section of them, coming from the now politically less influential but culturally dominant higher castes and groups, carry on in resentful reconcilement with their bosses. It harbours contempt or a sort of patronizing attitude towards them (the bosses) who lack the knowledge and skills as well as social finesse which the 'super' elite possesses in ample measure. Although the 'super' elite is now learning to make the necessary adjustments with the emerged situation these feelings and attitudes still continue.

Below them is the common or 'regional' elite educated in the regional-language or the commoner channel of education. Within it is the vast lower salaried class which finds it difficult to maintain, in the face of rising prices and rising unemployment, its middle-class style of life; it has therefore to live a life of relative misery and frustration. Moreover, there is also the contradiction between those coming from the traditionally-literate minority castes, now having few social links with these wielding political power at different levels, and the newly emerged educated coming from the middle and lower castes which have such connections.

These changes in the composition of the educated elite over the years is reflected in the composition of personnel at different levels in different

sectors. Consider the political leadership at different levels. At the taluka and even district levels, for instance in Maharashtra, the positions of power and vantage like the Panchayats, the co-operative banks, the co-operative marketing societies etc. are mostly dominated by the middle castes together with a small number of the Scheduled Castes who have a statutory representation. *The advanced castes do not carry much influence at these levels. It is interesting to see the change that has come over the leadership* at the State level e.g. in the composition of the State council of ministers after Independence. Here also there was a rapid change of a similar nature in the space of just a decade after 1947, although some representatives from the advanced castes continue to find a place to meet the requirements of the urban interests. It is very unlikely that the chief ministership of Maharashtra will go to them (or to the Scheduled Castes) in the foreseeable future. The main factor responsible for this change in the political field is of course political, that is, democratization of politics, but the 'democratization' of education has hastened and strengthened the process of change.

In Maharashtra this process of change is clear enough, and so is it in Tamilnadu, but other States also show the same trend although not in such a sharply linear manner. This direction of change is also perceptible at the all-India level of politics. The social analysis of the composition of the Central council of ministers from 1947 should support our contention.

A similar analysis of the existing position and new recruitment in *Central and State government civil services before Independence and now* will also demonstrate this process of 'democratization', more pronounced at the State level than at the Central level and even more so at the Panchayat level recruitment. Here, two things stand out. First, the advanced castes still numerically dominate the civil services particularly at the Class I and II level, both in the existing composition as well as in the new recruitment. But the composition at the Class III level is changing rapidly where the middle castes and the educated youth of rural origin are finding employment in large numbers. The Class IV level jobs were all along manned by the middle and lower castes, and this continues except that now, the Scheduled Castes and the tribals and other backward class population, also claim a significant share at this level. In fact it is repeatedly pointed out in the reports of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Commissioner that these weaker section of population are extremely under-represented in the Class I and Class II services and their share in the Class III services is relatively greater but much below their percentage in the population. On the other hand, they are 'over represented' in the class IV services! The respective *percentages a few years back were of the order of 2, 3, 7 and 18 in the* class hierarchy as against their strength of 15 to 16 per cent in the population, and there is no reason to believe that the situation has changed very much over the last few years.

The situation in the public sector and autonomous corporations like the banks, the LIC and public sector industries is not very different

but it is my impression that the 'democratization' trend is operating there at a much slower pace. At the higher levels in public sector undertakings, however, there is much regional mixing in new recruitment as in the case of the Central services. This (that is, regional mixing,) is even much more in evidence in the case of private sector establishments in industry, business and trade particularly in the higher reaches of technology and management. Lower down, the composition of the staff is in this case much affected by the biases and preferences which inevitably operate, and have been traditionally operating, in individual enterprises.

It will be interesting to analyse the situation in the staffing of educational institutions. This is a fairly large sector of employment, of the order of 3 million, if one takes together all stages of education from elementary school education to higher education in colleges and universities. In the elementary schools which are mostly run by the State Government, either directly or through the district Panchayats, the middle, lower and even the lowest sections of the caste hierarchy are now well represented and their share in the new recruitment is increasing. In Maharashtra, for instance, this is one sector (along with class IV jobs in government and local government offices) where the Scheduled Castes candidates find employment relatively easily, particularly those who have had high school education with or without the SSC. This fact is significant because it well illustrates how the process of social selection operates through education as was mentioned yesterday.

At the secondary and higher-level most of the educational effort is in the hands of private managements. The social pattern of staffing and new recruitment thus naturally varies from management to management with their traditional and/or built-in biases and preferences. For instance, in Maharashtra, in colleges of long standing in Poona, Nagpur, Nasik and elsewhere, the social composition of teachers will be overwhelmingly in favour of the advanced castes, mostly Brahmans and allied castes, with an occasional sprinkling of the middle castes. On the other hand, in the newly started colleges in smaller cities and towns there is an increasing complement of the middle and lower castes, the strategic post of the principal often being reserved for some one belonging to them. But as a general proposition one may say that the proposition of the members of the middle and lower castes in the collegiate staff is still rather modest, and that of the Scheduled Castes is negligibly small (except of course in the institutions started by the followers of Ambedkar). The reasons are: the number of qualified university-trained persons from the middle and lower sections is still not very large and the preference of those who are thus qualified is always for the more comfortable and better-aid jobs in government and such-like services.

The situation at the university level is still predominantly elitist in terms of its social composition. This is largely due to the prevailing dearth of highly qualified persons except in the advanced castes and urbanized sections of population. But there is no lack of effort on the part of the authorities of some universities, particularly in the non-metropolitan areas,

to push in their own, often low-qualification candidates, sometimes in a blatant unseemly manner. And the choice for the highest post, the vice-chancellorship, appears to the be made in a manner where political considerations seem to weigh; and the choice is often deliberately tilted towards the middle social strata.

To avoid repetition it is not proposed to go into the social change in the staffing pattern of secondary schools except to say that the process of democratization' is much more in evidence here than in the institutions of higher education, but less so than in elementary education. We shall not also dwell much on the personnel in professions — lawyers, doctors etc. Here you will find the same trend; e.g. before Independence, the lawyers' profession everywhere was mostly monopolized by the advanced castes, by the Brahmans. Now the situation is different in taluka and district places where they are being increasingly displaced by lawyers from the peasant and land-owning stock.

As an important element of the weaker sections of population it is worth studying the position of women in the literate professions. Although a few educated women had been taking up white-collar employment even earlier, particularly in schools in urban centres, their entry into office employment on an appreciable scale really started from the period of the Second World War. This was an index of the spread of secondary and higher education among women as well as of the extent of economic hardship due to the rising cost of living which made it difficult for the (lower) middle class to maintain their living standards. In the post-Independence period women have entered in large numbers in the clerical jobs in government, public-sector and private-sector offices, and also in the teaching profession in elementary and secondary schools. Their entry in jobs at higher levels is still insignificant and is mostly confined to those who have passed through the elitist channel of education. About the general recruitment of women in white-collar employments the following generalization appear to be justified. First, it is more in evidence in big cities and towns than in smaller towns and the rural areas, and is in that descending order. Secondly, the social composition is still predominantly in favour of the advanced castes, which is a direct reflection of the corresponding character of the spread of women's education at the secondary and higher levels. Thirdly, the share of women in the teaching profession at higher, secondary and elementary level has considerably increased; for instance in Maharashtra they account for approximately 18 per cent, 27 per cent and 29 per cent of teachers at these levels respectively. Finally, their occupation of some few very high positions both in the political sphere (e.g. MLSs; MPs; ministers and even the highest office in the land) and administrative sphere (e.g. IAS, IFS etc.) should not mislead us into the belief that this has borught about the corresponding change in women's social status in general whether in the home or in society.

Let me now consider another dimension of social change which also has a long past and in which the spread of education has played an im-

portant part together with other factors viz. the development of modern industrial sector, the spread of monetised economy, modern rule of law, modern system of government, etc. These have given rise to a new mode of division of society, the division along class lines.

There are several dividing factors in modern society, factors which result in social inequality, create corresponding social hierarchies, the most important being education, income, occupation, and to these may be added property and (political) power. The social status of a person, or the esteem he commands in society depends on all these together with his other achievements. In traditional Indian society all these, particuraly education and occupation, were closely associated with the overriding hierarchy of caste, althrough the role of income, political power, and property (mostly in the form of landholding) was well-recognized in determining the social status.

With the establishment of British rule this old hierarchical structure started changing under the impact of several factors mentioned earlier, including the introduction of modern education. Under the new dispensation several new occupations were added to the old occupational structure, and this changed considerably the occupational hierarchy, especially in its middle and higher reaches. The hierarchy in occupation and income now became much more associated with education than before, moreover, education was no longer determined by caste. Thus the role of caste in determining occupation and income, and consequently the social status, began to weaken. Education also increased occupational mobility of the individual and raised his earning capacity. In other words a new dividing process began to operate resulting in a new kind of social stratification based on education, occupation and income. For want of a better name, we shall call it the division of society along class lines: the upper, middle and lower classes or their further sub-divisions. (Lest there is misunderstanding, the term class is used here loosely and not in the Marxian sense, according to which classes are determined by the relations of production. The stratification in the Marxian sense became more clearly identifiable with the advance of monetised capitalist economy and industry.)

This new division of society along class lines first began to take shape in urban areas, particularly in the big cities and it slowly began to spread to smaller towns. Under its influence the older adage of wisdom ordering occupations, "the best is agriculture, then comes the trade and service is the last", (उत्तम शेती, मध्यम व्यापार, कनिष्ठ नोकरी) came to be turned into its reverse order for retaining its validity! As regards its impact on caste the process was (and is still) indeed very slow and the new hierarchy of class did not replace the caste structure, rather this new stratification superimposed itself on it and was taking place within the castes as well as across the castes.

By the time of the transfer of power this process of stratification had developed to an extent where class became a more, if not an equally important attribute, for classifying urban population, while for rural population

the dominant stratification was on caste lines. In the post-47 period, with further spread of education and much greater industrial and economic development, the stratification along class lines has strengthened and widened and is penetrating into the rural population.

As a result there is increasing differentiation, within each caste depending on education, occupation, income and rural-urban place of residence. The process of differentiation varies from caste to caste, but the castes which have changed most are those which are more open to modernization, (e.g. Brahmans, Kayasthas, Nairs), that is those which have taken modern education and middle class occupation and are urban in character. To quote an eminent sociologist:

"One reason why the old divisions have lost their traditional significance is that new ones have begun to emerge. These are based on education, occupation and income, and have their own status symbols. Their nature and gradations are most clearly visible in the higher occupational strata, particularly among civil servants, army officers and business executives. How far the two ends of gradation — old and new — coincide, and how far they cut across is a matter of considerable social interest".*

At the top of this new hierarchy, caste barriers now appear to give way, (regional differences also are overcome to a lesser extent,) in respect of marriage. Among them the differences had almost completely disappeared for commensality even earlier, now they are disappearing for consanguinity as well. In cities and towns, commensality, (having food together) has almost completely cut across the caste hierarchy except on ritual occasions. And consanguinity is trickling down from the top layer downwards. Education and white-collar employment among young girls has helped this process. (One characteristic of inter-caste marriages is worth noting; the female partner very often belongs to the higher caste and the socially more advanced stratum, the sociological explanation of which is quite evident.) This kind of social change, the division of population along classes or new gradations is also gradually reaching the rural society, but it still retains in a large measure the old division along castes.

The sort of social change which has been described and analysed so far this evening has inevitable impact in the cultural sector, the ideological life of the people. For instance, it has very clear echoes in literature, particularly in *belles letters*: the novel, the short story, the drama and poetry. It is neither my intention to inflict on you a discourse on the social change reflected in the literature (the Marathi literature) of the post-47 period, nor is there the time to do so. So as an illustration let me just mention a most significant development on it, the so-called *dalit* literature, (the literature of the oppressed). An altogether new generation of the educated Scheduled Caste youth has emerged, a product of the further spread of education in Maharashtra and Ambedkar's pioneering efforts in starting collegiate institutions at Bombay, Aurangabad and elsewhere. From the inherent contradiction

*(Andre Beteille: Cactes Old and New, p. 231, Asia, 1969).

between their desire for self-fulfilment, that is to take their rightful place in society on the footing of equality, and the actual near-stangnant socio-economic condition of their kinsmen in urban and the rural areas, have emerged the new voices of revolt; the radical *dalith Panther* movement on the one hand and the literature of the oppressed on the other. The former is now, at least for the time being, in shambles. But if you read their literature the first things that strike you are its freshness, its crispness, its tremendous power, and its new idiom.

What it its social content ? Naturally it depicts in full measure, the unfathomable misery, the innumerable indignities, and the extreme inequities in the socio-economic life of their communities, particularly in the rural areas. And inevitably it is a voice of protest and revolt. But what I find sociaffy most significant is their attempt to identify themselves in general with all the deprived sections of Indian society, to discover in their own sufferings the sufferings of all the downtrodden people. One of their oft-used symbolisms is the long and difficult struggle from darkness to light. This has to my mnid a dual significance for the long and labyrinthine path of social change. On the one had it symbolises the process of education, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of learning; the ancient cry: तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय On the other hand it symbolises the process of the social change that all of us so much desire in this country; from the darkness of poverty, hunger and bondage to the light of *happiness, freedom and social justice. This is the present counterpart of* another slogan: Cry the beloved country, the country whose majority of people are deprived of all the good things of life including education. Let us hope and work for the day, not too distant, when this dream turns into a living reality.