

ADAPTING EDUCATIONAL MODELS—INDIA & BRITAIN

Sunil Behari Mohanty, *M. S. University, Baroda.*

Our educational system has often been criticised as a British system of education. A more sensible educationist terms it as a second rate education devised by colonial administrators, so as to exploit the native population. While all these opinions are still to be debated out, one may discuss some of the present day educational practices in Britain and find out their relevance to our situation. Before going to discuss their programmes of relevance to us, let us discuss our programmes that have been put into practice in that country.

BRITISH ADAPTATION OF INDIAN EDUCATIONAL MODEL

1. *Peer Teaching:*

Madras College of U.K. stands to-day as a monument of British adoption of Indian system of education. Madras College is the name of the only Higher Secondary School situated in the University town of St. Andrews, Scotland. The experiment of teaching with the help of pupil leaders (class monitors), which was in practice in then Madras presidency of British controlled India, had been first tried out in this institution by the Christian Missionary, Sir Andrew Bell (1753-1832). Later this system was put into practice in a few more schools of Scotland, which, at that time was not as prosperous as we find it to-day. Although, the system is no more in vogue, the name of the school reminds us of adoption of our system by the educationists of Britain.

2. *Teaching of Yoga:*

Teaching of yoga in schools of Britain is the example of continuing adoption of Indian system of education. Yoga education was part of the formal schooling provided in ancient India. It is no more found to the same extent as found in schools of U.K. and other western countries. They are so anxious to have yoga teaching in schools that the author found that yoga teacher training class being conducted by his friend in U.K. was perhaps of a lower standard in comparison to the strict Indian standard of doing yoga. The trainees, in this particular lesson, were asked by the teacher to look inwardly and see the *Kundalini* power in the form of a fire etc. However, in that country one also finds a British lady teacher like Mrs. Margaret Smithwhite, who teaches art through meditation. She, in a London school, asks the children, who are mostly from slum areas, to meditate with her, and do painting of the images that they see in their meditation.

Recently the Central Schools Organisation have taken steps to have yoga teachers in their schools. Perhaps, we got this idea not as a continuation of our system but as a contribution of other systems. Therefore, if there is any fault in our system, there is no use in blaming others, but we should try to build our own system and at the same time see objectively what ideas we can draw from other systems. In that context let us examine some of the British systems.

SOME BRITISH MODELS RELEVANT FOR INDIA

1. *Community Schools:*

Community Schools have come into existence in U.K. in early parts of this century. They borrowed this ideal from the system of Folk schools of Denmark and Poland. Deans Community School of Livingstone town is one of such types of schools. The school is open on all days of the week from early hours to late evening hours for the use of the members of the community-young and old. The school provides educational, cultural and recreational facilities. There is no age limit for admission into a class, which prepares students for a formal examination. While the young ones do not pay any fees, the old ones pay tuition fees for the purpose. There is no restriction on studying any one or a group of subjects, as seen in Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry of our country. The teachers are free to

prepare their own curricula and try out any method of teaching suitable to them. The author found team teaching in science classes, where one of the staff members devotes his time for slow learners. The Community education department of the school looks after community development programmes of the people living in areas surrounding the school. It takes stock of material and human resources available in the locality, time in which various members of the community are free and types of activities in which they are interested so as to ascertain the role of the school. The school believes that the school is a part of the community and has to be a centre of community activities for its progress. The teachers of this school undertake visits to homes of the school children, regularly, as a part of their duty.

Such types of community schools are necessary for our country, which do not have sufficient resources. In many cases, one does not find the old *Bhagabat tungis* or village libraries, where people can sit and have a dialogue about their problems. Our schools are public institutions. They should have a concern for the welfare of the people, living in its surrounding.

2. *Teacher as Village Librarian:*

In the United Kingdom, there are many villages, which do not have a library. The authorities provide library books to the schools. The school teachers work as librarian in their off hours. The author, while visiting a single teacher primary school at Skirling village of Scotland came to know that the teacher devotes half an hour, after school time, on each Mondays for issue and return of library books. We do not have adequate libraries in our country. It is difficult to find funds for constructing library houses, leaving aside the cost of employing a person to manage the library. Can we not adopt this system of village school cum library?

3. *Community Participation, in Instructional Programmes*

The schools in Britain are free in preparing their own curricula the author, had a chance to visit a Primary School in Linlithgo, where the Headmaster had managed to involve the members of community in the instructional programmes of the school. On the day of the author's visit, some parents were found participating in morning assembly session of the school. In the afternoon, the school had club activities and parents and other members of the community took charge of different clubs like-Scottish country dance, Stamp collection, etc. In our country, there are housewives, unemployed youth, retired personnel, who can be easily involved in our school programmes. These types of involvement will help the teacher by decreasing his burden and also increasing the quality of the programmes.

4. *One Teacher for many Schools:*

Teachers in that country are paid according to the hours they teach. There are part time and full time teachers. The author had come across a physical education teacher in a single teacher primary school at Carrington village of Scotland. She is posted in a high school, but teaches also in nearby primary schools. She is paid for travelling expenses. In our country there are physical education teachers, music teachers and craft teachers etc., who do not have sufficient work load in comparison to that of their counterparts teaching subjects like languages, mathematics etc. If the system of payment of salary is related to the hours of work, these teachers, who do not have sufficient workloads, will go to neighbouring schools, without any grumbling. We have tried to introduce school complex system. By introducing the aforesaid system, we can link different types of schools, at least, in relation to some aspects of education. Such types of travelling teachers are necessary for proper utilisation of resources.

SCHOOL WISE TEACHER SELECTION

In Britain, the teachers are selected for specific schools. When one is working in a school, if he wants to work in another school, has to wait for a vacancy in that school. He will also have to be accepted by the authorities, as suitable for the said school. In our system, teachers are generally recruited on mass. When someone is posted in a school not of his choice, he goes on trying throughout his life, to get transfer to a school of his choice. This has been one of the serious causes of ineffective teaching in tribal areas. Most of

the teachers hail from non-tribal areas. Once appointed, they go on trying for a transfer from that area to a suitable area. Again, the talents expected from a teacher to work in a rural school is different from that of an urban school. For instance, a school having projectors and films should have a teacher who can handle these. Therefore, at the time of selection a teacher who is proficient in handling projector and teach through film shows has to be given preference. Similarly, a teacher, who knows tribal dialect being spoken in area, has to get preference for appointment, as a teacher in a school, situated in such an area. In the present age of large scale unemployment, if these types of teacher selection policies are adopted, many, would be teachers will go for learning of tribal dialects, on their own accord. This can reduce the communication gap that exists between the teacher and the community. This will also put an end to corruptions in educational systems on account of such transfers and make the schools more effective, with its more or less permanent staff members.

CONCLUSION

While suggesting above steps, the author would like to place before the readers that we had introduced teaching of physics, chemistry, and biology at middle school stages, as per the Soviet pattern of education. After experimentation in Delhi schools, it was introduced throughout the country. Later the educationists again reintroduced general science replacing these disciplinary subjects. It was a huge wastage of expenditure. Therefore, the author humbly suggests that these ideas are only loud thinking. They need to be debated and Indianised.