

BĀLA BHĀRATAM



VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PATRIKA



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PARENT EDUCATION

Dr. G. Pankajam

The growth and development of a child depend upon his tradition as well as the environment, his parents and his society create for him, enabling him to know the world better. Growth and maturity are mutually dependent. The parents teach the child his traditional values; They also function as his friends, philosophers and guides so that he can get acquainted with the world around.

The parents teach a child moral and ethical values, help him grow physically, shape his tastes and endow him with a general philosophy of life. The characteristics of a child and its traits depend upon its family traditions. Further, in its formative years, a child learns most from its parents. The parents also should know of the child's nature, talents and gifts, flair, so that they can help the teacher in nurturing the child.

A child does not like to come away from its mother. The mother also may feel that the child may suffer in her absence. Both should be weaned away from such notions. Therefore parent - education is an important component of Pre -Primary Education. (p.p.e) And the consent and cooperation of parents are essential in educating the child properly. In fact, child rearing is the primary duty of the parents. Nowadays parents too want to learn the modern methods in bringing up children.

In this background a *balasevika* has to train not only the children. She has to train the parents also.

A child should be made to feel that a p.p.e. centre is an extension of its home.

In rural areas, only parents can persuade the children to go to school or the p.p.e. centre. Gandhiji rightly said that the first stage in child's education is parent - education.

Through group - discussion and personal conversation, frequent personal interactions and meetings, the *balasevika* should apprise the parents about what goes on in the classroom. The topics for discussion could be, a) the parent - child relationships, b) health and nutrition for the child, c) care of the pregnant women and neo - natal child, d) infant care, f) psychological problems of children, g) family welfare, family planning and spacing of children, and h) baby's body weight, an important factor in child - health.

The *balasevika* should invite the parents to see for themselves the progress their children are making in the school.

(Extracted and translated from "Palli - mun - paruvakkalvi" (Tamil) Lakshmi Seva Sangham, Gandhigram - 1992)



CULTURING THE YOUNG- *SAMSKARAS*

Raj Bali Pandey

1. Introduction: *Samskaras* or purificatory, sacramental religious acts are used extensively in *Sanatana Dharma*. *Samskaras* are used for educating and cultivating the individual. The other meanings of the word *Samskara* are training, refinement, perfection, grammatic purity, making perfect, refining, impression, form, mould, operation, influence the faculty of recollection, impression on the memory, a purificatory rite, a sacred rite or ceremony, consecration, sanctification and hallowing, idea, motion and conception, effect of work, merit of action etc.

2. The purpose of the *Samskaras*: The *samskaras* are supported by popular approval, unquestioned faith and sometimes naïve simplicity. Priestly and cultural traditions also uphold them. Their origin is due to conscious forces governing the development and evolution of society, when human beings try to improve upon nature. *Samskaras* remove hostile influences and attract beneficial ones, so that man may grow and prosper without external hindrances and receive timely direction and help from gods and spirits. The material aims of the *samskaras* were the gain of cattle, progeny, long life, wealth, property, strength and intellect. *Samskaras* are performed to help man express his own joys, felicitations, and even sorrows at various events of life.

Samskaras also introduce higher religion and sanctity of life. The whole body is consecrated to make it a fit dwelling - place for the soul. Social privileges and rights were also connected with the *samskaras*.

Another purpose of *samskaras* was the attainment of heaven and even *Moksha* a liberation.

A moralizing feature emerged from the material body of the *samskaras* in course of time. Gautama refers to eight good qualities of the soul viz, mercy, forbearance, freedom from envy, purity, calmness, right - behaviour, and freedom from greed and covetousness. These qualities are needed for the soul to enter into union with *Brahman*. The cultural purpose that evolved from the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Hindus, was the formation and development of personality. Just as a picture is painted with various colours, so the character of an individual is formed by undergoing various *samskaras* properly. The Hindu sages realized the necessity of consciously moulding the character of the individuals instead of letting them grow in a haphazard way. They utilized the *samskaras* already prevalent in the society for this purpose.

The general outlook of the Hindus transformed the *samskaras* into a spiritual sadhana. To a Hindu, the *samskaras* were an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace. The *samskaras* were a gradual training in spiritualism.

Though the *samskaras* performed extend from conception to funeral rites, spanning the entire life of an individual, we shall examine here, only the *samskaras* related to a Hindu child. The constituents of *samskaras* comprise of a) kindling of fire, prayers, appeals and blessings, b) sacrifice c) lustration or baptismal sprinkling of water d) orientation towards a particular direction (North, South, East, West) e) symbolism and taboos d) magic elements h) spiritual atmosphere etc.

Pre - Natal and Post – Natal *samskaras*: They include (i) Conception of the child (ii) *Pumsavana*, (quickenning of a malechild) (iii) *Simantonnayana* (Hair parting) (iv) *Jatakarma* (birth ceremonies) (v) *Namakarana* (Name giving) The child is named according to *Nakshatra*, after the month - deity, after the family deity, given a popular name etc.

The unfortunate parents who had lost their previous issues gave the child an awkward name, repulsive and disgusting to frighten away demons, diseases and death.

(vi) *Nishkramana* or taking the child out (first outing) (vii) *Anna prasana* (First feeding) (viii) *Chudakarana* (Tonsure) (ix) *Karnavedha* (boring the ears)

These are strictly speaking the *samskaras* performed before and immediately after the birth of the child.

Educational Samskaras: (i) *Vidyarambha*, *Akshararambha* or *Aksharasvikarana* are rituals for teaching the alphabet. *Upanayana* (initiation) makes a person fir to receive scriptural knowledge, *Gayatri*, *Brahma Jnana* etc. *Vedarambha* or the beginning of the *Vedic* study can be said to mark an important stage in the life of the young person.

Adapted from the Book (Hindu Samskaras – Motilal Banarsidass Delhi 1987)



HOLY MOTHER {SHARADA DEVI} "ON CHILDREN"

by a Devotee

After finishing her worship of the Master, the Mother was sitting quietly in the shrine, when one of my fellow disciples suddenly asked, "Mother, how do you look upon the Master?" The Mother remained silent for a while, and then said solemnly, "I look upon him as my child."

I asked her one day, "Mother, sometimes when I see certain persons on the road, I feel that they are well - known to me. Later, on enquiry, I learn that they are either devotees of the Master or of you. Why do they appear so familiar even when seen suddenly for the first time?" The Mother replied, "The Master used to say, 'suppose there is a clump of weed, if one pulls at a weed, the whole clump is affected. The weeds are related to one another like the branches of a plant.'"

Another day I asked her, "Mother, all other Incarnations survived their spiritual consorts (Sakti), but why this time did the Master pass away leaving you behind?" The Mother said, "Do you know, my son, that the Master looked upon all in this world as Mother? He left me behind this time for demonstrating that Motherhood to the world."

HOME-SCHOOL RECIPROCITY

S.Thiruvengkatachari



Learning and teaching are not confined to school. Learning is often narrowed down in scope to mean only a vast amount of book study. In its truest sense, it is the accompaniment of every step in education. Learning to walk is part of one's education, quite as important as the later course, called Physical Training. Such fundamental experiences do belong to education. The home is clearly responsible for such foundations, such practices in learning and such resulting achievement. Again, the word 'teaching' has likewise, been far too localized. Yet parents are constantly teaching the children, when the later ask questions on a variety of topics.

Therefore, the home is the foundation of the school. The school can never make good the deficiencies in the home, much less usurp the functions of the home.

As the first teachers of the children, parents are doing the most difficult part of the work. They lay the foundations for everything. Let us take memory. The baby, while kicking on the mat, with wide eyes, is receiving unconsciously those first impressions, which form his earliest memories. Therefore, parents have to see that the sights that he sees are sights of neatness, beauty and order, the sounds that his ear drinks are musical and soft, tender and joyous, that the baby's nostrils inhale only delicate purity and sweetness. Memories have certain powers of accretion. Where there are some, others of a like kind gather and all life is ordered on the lines of the first pure and tender memories.



As the child grows, habits of neatness, punctuality and moderation may also be inculcated at home in an indirect way. Similarly, ideas of altruism may be taught. The home environment manifests itself in various skills which the children show in later life.

With regard to children, it rests with parents not only to infuse life into the world of intelligence and moral power but also to sustain the higher life with noble ideas, just as they sustain their bodies with food. The child is an eclectic. He may choose this or that. The child has affinities with evil as well as with good; therefore the parents must hedge him about with good influences on

all sides. It is good and necessary that children get the right ideas on the great relations and duties of life from the very beginning.

Often, parents depend on the schoolmaster to make the child sit up after a good deal of mental and moral sprawling at home. The schoolmaster's real and proud successes are with the children who have been trained to sit up at home. The pleasure of the teacher in such children is unbounded; the pains he takes with them are unlimited. The successful careers he is able to launch them upto exceed the ambition of those most ambitious of human beings i.e. 'fond parents'.

Inculcating discipline not punishment

Exercising discipline is one of the functions of parenthood. Discipline is often confused with punishment, but punishment can at best be an occasional aid. The incessant watchfulness and endeavour, which go to form and maintain good habits, are what we mean by discipline, and not mere spurts of punishment. From this point of view, never were there such disciplinarians as parents who could labour on these lines. Every habit of courtesy, consideration, order, neatness, punctuality, truthfulness is itself more a schoolmaster, and orders life with unflinching diligence.

Disposition and genius come more naturally, but character is an achievement, the one practical achievement possible to us (i.e.; ourselves and our children) and all advances in family or individual is along the lines of character. The parent must see that the inherited tendencies of the child are modified for the better, by his own surroundings. It is the parent's part to distinguish the first faint budding of family traits; to treat every fine trait as the highest sort of possession to be nourished and tended with care. What can the parents do when the child appears to leave out the best of hereditary gifts and take the unworthy? The parent has to transform the child, not reform. He can drive out the bad habit by a good habit; and use being second nature, the good habit takes the place of the bad.

**STORY OF EVOLUTION SUMMARISED IN INDIVIDUAL LIFE
By Swami Vivekananda (CW.VOL.II)**

I shall tell you a theory, which I will not argue now, but simply place before you the conclusion. Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man—and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten this process, if we be true to ourselves.

Moral ailments need prompt attention. Neither punishing the child nor letting him have his own way can ever cure a child of moral evil. The parent must set up a new chain of thought in the child's mind and so influence the child that the new should have become automatic to run on its own accord while the undesirable part will be gradually annihilated. The training of the will, the instruction of the conscience, and so far as it lies with us, the development of the divine life in the child are carried on simultaneously with this training in the habits of good life and these last will carry the child safely over the season of infirm will, and immature conscience, until he is able to take the moulding of character into his own hands

A few guide posts for parents:

- i.** Gain rapport with the child; respect him/her as an individual.
- ii.** Capitalise your role as a friend, philosopher and guide to your child.
- iii.** Mental honesty is essential with the parent and the child.
- iv.** Do not laugh at a child's mistake or failures; keep promises; ignore little things.
- v.** Cooperate with the school teacher; know the child's assets and liabilities.
- vi.** Draw out the child. Train him/her to obey authority (internal-instinctive emotional life) and external (conventions, customs etc).
- vii.** Lead the child; don't drive him/her.
- viii.** Be tolerant of the adolescent child with problems.

ix. Parental harmony is a great source of joy to the child. His/her emotional well being depends upon various signs of parental harmony, loyalty, reliability and mutually exercised sense of justice and decency.

x. Parental example is the chief factor in child rearing.

xi. Embrace opportunities to become better informed as to the needs and responsibilities of parenthood. Instinct by itself is a poor guide.

xii. The traits which the child should develop should be made attractive so that the child wishes, desires or needs to develop them.

Schools socialize the individuals without sacrificing the individual. The body of citizenship will be stronger and better as the units comprising it are improved. Schools and homes should work together to make the child respect others.

(From The Hindu)

DUTY TOWARDS THE SOCIETY **Swami Vivekananda [CW VOL.III]**

What is the mission with which every Hindu child is born?

Have you not read the proud declaration of Manu regarding the Brahmin where he says that the birth of the Brahmin is "for the protection of the treasury of religion"? I should say that is the mission not only of the Brahmin, but of every child, whether boy or girl, who is born in this blessed land "for the protection of the treasury of religion". And every other problem in life must be subordinated to that one principal theme.



RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE: CHILDREN IN JOINT AND NUCLEAR FAMILIES: A DISCUSSION

ANURADHA, PAWAN ETAL



Discussion

Although innumerable studies have been conducted to explore factors responsible for school dropouts, surprisingly none (to our knowledge) have tried to explore the relationship between dropouts and family structures in the rural context. It is very important to validate this finding by a large sample study because it has significant implications, especially for the girl child. **The most significant finding was that children from nuclear families are more likely to drop out of schools than children from joint families.**

As stated earlier children from joint families were more articulate and informed better in school. This could be because most children from joint families had grandparents who spoke in the local dialect. It is a well-known fact that familiarity with the local dialect enriches vocabulary and helps in creative expression and thinking, which facilitates articulation and language skills. Some children said during focus group discussions, "We really like it when our grandmother or grandfather talks to us in 'our language' (the local dialect)." Grandparents in joint families are a perennial source of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge increases the self-esteem of the child. Enhanced self-esteem results in a positive personality. This can be gauged from the different ways in which the children from the joint and nuclear family speak.



In our study the importance of *sanskars* and the role of grandparents in developing positive personality traits came across strongly. *Sanskars* form the basis of values which leads to higher self esteem and confidence. Behaviour of a child is a

good indicator of the level of confidence. One cannot be honest unless there is self- confidence which is demonstrated by check behaviour and lack of hypocrisy.

In an earlier study (A Matter of Quality. SIDH 1999) it was pointed out by women from rural areas that schools were responsible for putting more emphasis on “appearance’ rather than on ‘being’ and in their opinion, education should be putting more stress on how to ‘be’. This study reveals that it is not only the schools but also nuclear families from where children learn not to ‘be’ but to ‘appear’.

Relationships are important for the emotional and social growth of the child and in a joint family there are more people to relate to. The joint family provides children with many people and a conducive environment which makes them more secure. Love and support give the necessary confidence to the child to be herself/himself. This leads to higher self-esteem and social responsibility which manifests in the capacity and will to care for others.

For quite some time now, psychologists have been talking of the importance of emotional quotient or EQ. They feel that the aim of education should also be to enhance a child’s EQ. The present study showed that the children from joint families are likely to grow up to be more stable, secure, honest, tolerant and cooperative than the children from nuclear families. This present study also showed that joint families were more conducive for the social concern, of a 10-year-old child from a joint family when he asks: ‘If all joint families break up, then from where will we get so many houses?’

Extracted from “Child and the Family” Society for integrated Development of Himalayas”-Mussorie 2002



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN (Adopted from 'The Hindu')

- 1) India is the 40th Nation in the world and second in Asia after the Philippines to set up a National Commission for children.
- 2) This commission generally locates the authority to enforce decisions and punish errants. Their roles have just remained recommendatory.
- 3) Children account for roughly 38% of the total population of our country
- 4) Of them 53% suffer form severe malnutrition.
- 5) 47% of the children are stunted in growth.
- 6) 3% of the children work for wages and 2.6% without wages.
- 7) There are 11.3 million child labourers in the country.
- 8) In this background, the recently passed law, making basic education as a fundamental right, is difficult to enforce in practice.
- 9) According to our constitution, we have to protect children from moral and material exploitation.
- 10) Child trafficking in various parts of the country, and the vulnerability of the girl-child are other problems.



HEREDITARY THEORY NOT TENEBLE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The simple hereditary theory takes for granted the most astonishing proposition without any proof, that mental experience can be recorded in matters, that mental experience can be involved in matter. When I look at you in the lake of my mind there is a wave. That wave subsides, but it remains in fine form, as an impression. We understand a physical impression remaining in the body. But what proof is there for assuming that the mental impression can remain in the body, since the body goes to pieces? What carries it? Even granting it were possible for each mental impression to remain in the body, that every impression, beginning from the first man down to my father, was in my father's body, how could it be transmitted to

me? Through the bioplasmic cell? How could that be? Because the father's body does not come to the child in *toto*. The same parents may have a number of children; then, from this theory of hereditary transmission, where the impression and the impressed (that is to say, material) are one, it rigorously follows that by the birth of every child the parents must lose a part of their own impressions, or, if the parents should transmit the whole of their impressions, then, after the birth of the first child, their minds would be a vacuum.

Again, if in the bioplasmic cell the infinite amount of impressions from all time has entered, where and how is it? This is a most impossible position, and until these physiologists can prove how and where those impressions live in that cell, and what they mean by a mental impression sleeping in the physical cell, their position cannot be taken for granted. So far it is clear then, that this impression is in the mind, that the mind comes to take its birth and rebirth, and uses the material which is most proper for it, and that the mind which has made itself fit for only a particular kind of body will have to wait until it gets that material. This we understand. The theory then comes to this, that there is hereditary transmission so far furnishing the material to the soul is concerned. But the soul migrates and manufactures body after body, and each thought we think, and each deed we do, is stored in it in fine forms, ready to spring up again and take a new shape.

Ref :[CW VOL.III]



SRI RAMAKRISHNA TELLS STORIES ON CHILDREN



DUTY OF PARENTS Swami Vivekananda (CW VOL.I)

The following are duties towards children :

A son should be lovingly reared up to his fourth year ; he should be educated till he is sixteen. When he is twenty years of age he should be employed in some work; he should then be treated affectionately by his father as his equal. Exactly in the same manner the daughter should be brought up, and should be educated with the greatest care. And when she marries, the father ought to give her jewels and wealth.

1. Childlike should be the Man of Highest Wisdom

Once a *sannyasini* came to the royal court of Janaka. To her the king bowed, without looking at her face. Seeing this, the *sannyasini* said: "How strange it is O Janaka, that you have still so much fear of woman!"

When one attains to full *jnana*, one's nature becomes like that of a little child—one sees no distinction between male and female.

2. The Simple Secret

God can be realized through child-like faith and guilelessness.

A certain person, on coming across a *sadhu*, humbly begged him for instruction. The *sadhu's* advice was, "Love God with all your heart and soul". The enquirer replied, "I have never seen God, nor do I know anything about Him; how is it possible that I should love Him?" The holy man enquired whom the other loved most. The answer was, "I have nobody to care for. I have a sheep and that is the only creature I love". The *sadhu* said: "Then tend the creature and love it with all your heart and soul, and always remember that the Lord abides in it". Having given this advice the *sadhu* left the place. The enquirer now began to tend the sheep with loving care, fully believing that the Lord abode in the creature. After a long time the *sadhu*, during his return journey, sought out the person he had advised and enquired how he

was getting on. The latter saluted the *sadhu* and said, "Master, I am all right, thanks to your kind instructions. Much good has come to me by following the line of thought prescribed by you. Time and again I see a beautiful figure with four hands within my sheep and I find supreme bliss in that".

3. The Nature of a *Paramahansa*

At one time I was staying at Kamarpukur when Shivaram was four or five years old. One day he was trying to catch grasshoppers near the pond. The leaves were moving. To stop their rustling he said to the leaves: "Hush! Hush! I want to catch a grass-hopper." Another day it was stormy. It rained hard. Shivaram was with me inside the house. There were flashes of lightning. He wanted to open the door and go out. I scolded him and stopped him, but still he peeped out now and then. When he saw the lightning he exclaimed, "There, uncle! They are striking matches again!".

The *Paramahansa* is like a five year old child. He sees everything filled with consciousness.

4. This faith of a child

A boy named Jatila used to walk to school through the woods, and the journey frightened him. One day he told his mother of his fear. She replied: "Why should you be afraid? Call Madhusudana." "Mother," asked the boy, "who is Madhusudana?" The mother said, "He is your Elder Brother". One day

after this, when the boy again felt afraid in the woods, he cried out, "O Brother Madhusudana!" But there was no response. He began to weep aloud: "Where are you, Brother Madhusudana? Come to me. I am afraid." Then God could no longer stay away. He appeared before the boy and said: "Here I am. Why are you frightened?" And so saying He took the boy out of the woods and showed him the way to school. When He took leave of the boy, God said: "I will come whenever you call me. Do not be afraid."

One must have this faith of a child, this yearning.

5. A Boy actually fed God

A *brahmana* used to worship his family deity with food offerings. One day he had to go away on business. As he was about to leave the house, he said to his son: "Give the offering to the Deity today. See that God is fed." The boy offered food in the shrine, but the image remained silent on the altar. It would neither eat nor talk. The boy waited a long time, but still the image did not move. But the boy firmly believed that God would come down from His throne, sit on the floor, and partake of his food. Again and again he prayed to the Deity, saying: "O Lord, come down and eat the food. It is already very late. I cannot sit here any longer." But the image did not utter a word. The boy burst into tears and cried: "O Lord, my father asked me to feed you. Why won't you come down? Why won't you eat from my hands?" The boy wept for some time with a longing soul. At last the Deity, smiling, came down from the altar and sat before the meal and ate it. After feeding the Deity, the boy came out of the shrine room. His relatives said: "The worship is over. Now bring away the offering." "Yes," said the boy, "the worship is over. But God has eaten everything." "How is that?" asked the relatives. The boy replied innocently, "Why, God has eaten the food." They entered the shrine and were speechless with wonder to see that the Deity had really eaten every bit of the offering.

(From The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna)



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND OTHERS IN NUCLEAR AND JOINT FAMILIES

ANURADHA, PAWAN ETAL

Relationships-Insecurity and loneliness: In a survey we conducted, Children were asked to write stories about an incident in their home. The majority of the children from nuclear families wrote about the trauma when their father, mother or brother were seriously ill, had had an accident, or had died and the problems in getting timely help. They also wrote about problems related to poverty or debt or betrayal by a friend of the family or about quarrel between parents. The stories were different but what was common was the way in which they always recalled problem, which depicted a certain helplessness and loneliness on the part of the child. Children from nuclear families experienced a high level of anxiety which was reflected in the stories.

On the other hand, the stories of children from joint families showed that they lived in a more secure world. The majority of the stories written by children from joint families were about quarrels between family members but not between parents, or about a traditional healer who was called to exorcise a family member who was possessed. Moments of deep anxiety and trauma and problems like hunger, poverty and feelings of terror or helplessness were completely absent from the narratives of children from joint families.

Interview with parents revealed that children from nuclear families felt lonely, insecure and fearful. Some adult responses illustrate this well:

“Children often feel sad and lonely in nuclear families as they have no one to play with.”

“Children from nuclear families feel more insecure, because they do not get much love as there are few people in the house, who are mostly busy. In nuclear families there is no one to intervene when the parents quarrel.”

“Children from nuclear families get no support when children from other families fight with them.”



In the role plays done by children, many of which were about joint families, the children were shown as having lots of fun. Children said: “We have a lot of playmates in the house; we eat together, play together and have fun. The house seems lonely without people.” In role plays they were shown going to school together. Another child said: “We all eat the food from the same *chulha* (a stove), and are really close to each other. We share our problems and joys with each other. Some typical responses of children from joint families illustrate this better:

“Girls in joint families get more love.”

“In a joint family we learn how to share. We get a lot of love from the senior family members and

grandparents because in a joint family the grandparents do not have to work very hard. They can rest more and give us attention.”

“Our problems often get solved by some family member. We have a lot of people to help us.”

“We get more opportunities to go outside our homes with our parents and take part in marriages in other villages too.”

“We live in a big house and people respect us in the village. Members of joint families get a lot of support when they are in trouble.”

iv) Personality of the child:

We were able to get insights into the personality of children from the responses and observation of children during focus group discussions and role-plays. The adults used the phrase, “This child has *sanskars*”, to define a child’s (positive) personality. They felt that

children from joint families imbibed ‘*sanskars*’ easily as children learn by observing and imitating adults; and joint families offer greater scope as there are more adults around, specially grandparents. As one 18-year-old girl from a nuclear family in Almora district said: “Children imitate whatever the adults do in the family. If they see wise and elderly people in the family they also become wise. But in nuclear families if they see the father drinking, then they learn to do that.” “It is only in joint families that children get ‘*sanskars*’. That is because there are grandparents who have the time and wisdom to pass it on to the next generation,” said a 25-year-old woman from a nuclear family. Another 23 year-old youth said, “Because our grandparents were grateful to God and prayed to God, we also learnt to pray. Our mother cooked in the kitchen and we learnt from her. Today in nuclear families children don’t even know what must be done before going to bed.”

The positive impact of grandparents on the upbringing of children was frequently mentioned by many people. A girl mentioned how her grandfather often told the children stories of the pre-independence days and how he had protested against in-justice.

The role plays by children revealed how children imbibe *sanskars*, by observing the behaviour of adults at home. Children were given 15 minutes to enact a typical scene from their families. The role plays often focussed upon the role and responsibility of the head of the family.

A CHILD’S WIT

Swami Vivekananda (CW VOL.II)

Every soul is infinite; therefore there is no question of birth and death. Some children were being examined. The examiner put them rather hard questions, and among them was this one: “Why does not the earth fall?” He wanted to evoke answers about gravitation. Most of the children could not answer at all; a few answered that it was gravitation or something. One bright little girl answered it by putting another question: “Where should it fall?” The question is nonsense. Where should the earth fall? There is no falling or rising for the earth. In infinite space there is no up or down ; that is only in the relative. Where is the going or coming for the infinite? Whence should it come and whither should it go?

In the role play the family members were shown to have respect for the listen to his advice about sharing of work, money or material goods. The role plays emphasis head not only the respect with which the adults addressed their parents and other elders (both men and women) in the family but also other ways in which respect was shown to them. The way the head managed the affairs of the household, took cognisance of the needs of each member of the family and the subtleties of it all came across clearly. The importance of consensus and not contest (majority rule) in the functioning of a joint family emerged from the role plays very powerfully. The role plays also depicted the daughters-in-law supporting each other by dividing the work (which showed how a lot of different jobs like cooking, ploughing, fetching wood gets done smoothly) amongst themselves. The women were shown as mutually deciding when each one of them would take time off to go to their mother's home.

Despite slight exaggeration about the ideal (joint) family, the majority of the role-plays enacted by the children revealed how and why people in joint families were more empowered. The subtleties in the role plays demonstrated that there were far more learning opportunities which existed in the (joint) family environment, for children. Role-plays also revealed how children learn-by imbibing from the environment in which they live. Children learn to be responsible as they see every member doing his/her allotted share of work. On the other hand, the problems multiply and affect everyone when even one of them behaves irresponsibly and the children are also made aware of this. Role plays are good illustrations of how keenly the behaviour of adults is noticed by children and how role models are powerful sources of imbibing *sanskars*. While talking informally with children and during focus group discussions, we observed that children from joint families were more relaxed while those from nuclear families were more concerned about making an impression on us and saying the 'right' thing.

The majority of the adult responses revealed that the children from joint families were better adjusted. The most important evidence of this was that girls from joint families were preferred as brides. The general feeling was that girls from joint families could get along better with other members of the family as well as other people in the village and adjust better to changes (*"khap, sakti hain, sah sakti hain"*). People said that they can adjust more



THE FUTURE OF THE "NEGLECTED MAJORITY"

From a sample survey, we find that if 100 million students get enrolled in the primary school, only about 30 million are found in middle school and about 16 million in high/higher secondary school. Of children in the age group 6-11 years, about 90-95 per cent enroll in primary school, at the secondary state, that is, age group 11-15 years, only 48 percent continue and at the higher secondary stage, that is, age group 15-17 years, only about 24 percent are found to pursue studies. In the age group 17 to 23, only about eight per cent are in the higher-educational institutions.

From these statistics, we can see that roughly, above 50 per cent of students drop-out at every stage, in the school. The questions that arise are what happens to all those youth who drop out of the educational system between the age group 11-17 years?

easily as they were not rigid and were far more tolerant and adjusting than girls from nuclear families. These was divided opinion about the girls from nuclear families. Girls from well-off nuclear families were considered to be a little spoiled and self-centered, while those from relatively poor nuclear families were supposed to be more hard working.

The focus-group discussions with children showed that children from a joint family knew more about local culture than children from nuclear families. The joint family children knew fourteen types of folk songs and dances (out of a total of seventeen types of folk songs in Jaunpur – *Myths, Legends and Folk songs of Jaunpur*, SIDH, 1997), while the children from nuclear families knew only five types of folk songs. Children from joint families also knew much more about local festivals than the nuclear family children. There was a significant difference in their level of knowledge about traditional medicines. The children from joint families knew far more home remedies than the nuclear family children.

Self-esteem and Self-confidence: Children from joint families had a higher self-esteem and were not embarrassed about their families, about using the local dialect, traditional occupations, etc., while children from nuclear families were clearly embarrassed. The children from joint families said:

“We cannot survive if we do not know our language. Because then we will not know how to cut grass or plough the land.”

“Our mother should wear the *ghagra* (long skirt which is the traditional dress). It is our custom.”

“We do not have to think hard when speaking in our own tongue.”

While children from nuclear families said:

“We feel ashamed to feed our guest with *mandua roti* (*mandua* is a local grain).”

“I like it when my mother wears *salwar kameez* not the *ghagra*”

Observations during focus-group discussions revealed some significant differences in personality among children from joint and nuclear families. Majority of the children from joint families had more self-esteem, confidence, spontaneity, honesty, initiative and leadership than the children from nuclear families. Children from nuclear families showed a tendency to initially say things that would please others, but later on they would contradict themselves and reveal what they actually believed in. For instance, some of the children from nuclear families initially spoke about the importance of manual labour and how love and affection were more important than money. Yet after sometime when the conversation turned in another direction, they contradicted themselves by saying: “Farming is the job of the foolish illiterate people, not of people like us,” and “I don’t need to work in the fields, I can buy anything, even labour and food with money.” They spoke earlier of the importance of being together in a joint family, but later said that it is best to substitute relatives and joint family with neighbours who could give the required support. On the other hand, such tension was not seen among children from joint families. They spoke with ease and gave examples to illustrate what they said. Very often children from joint families volunteered information in a spontaneous manner. The majority of the children from joint families displayed an ease with themselves, which contrasted sharply with the children from nuclear families, who displayed two distinct opposite types: either they were full of bluster and over-confidence or they were completely tongue-tied. Initiative and leadership in conceiving and directing role-play was noticed more among children from joint families. During focus-group discussions children from joint families appeared less competitive than children from nuclear families. There seemed to be a lot of jealousy among children from nuclear

families-indicated by children colluding with and against each other. They also appeared to be keen to score a point over other children and were far more competitive. Traits of showing off and letting down another in the group was completely absent among children from joint families. The teachers' reports revealed that children from joint families were more confident and co-operative than children from nuclear families.

During the focus group discussions, observation of children's behaviour showed that children from nuclear families seemed more self-centered. One young boy from a nuclear family said: "We don't have to work with our hands. The illiterate will work in the fields." This complete disdain for the non-literate was obvious in the more well-off children from nuclear families. Children from nuclear families spoke of family relations only from a utilitarian perspective. Many of them spoke of building good relationship with neighbours, because they felt that joint families restricted their privacy. As one of them said: "I only need my brother's help in a crisis not his interference everyday." Comments by adults about children from nuclear families also confirms this, when they said: "Children from nuclear families do not realise the importance of relatives. They also do not think about their village or neighbours very much. They are too busy working. Perhaps that is why children from nuclear families only think of themselves."

The grey area: Discipline and obedience

There is a difference between the perception of children and adults about discipline in joint families. Children feel: "We learn to be disciplined as someone always stays in the house and punishes us if we make mistakes or do something wrong." However adults feel quite differently. This fact is borne out in the statement

made by a mother from a joint family when she complained: "In a joint family we cannot control the children by scolding them or beating them. Whenever we try to beat or scare our children, some uncle or aunt always intervenes on behalf of the child". But surely we would rather have happier children than those controlled by violence?

The debate between disciplines from freedom is an age-old debate in education. In this study another dimensions was added to it, namely the distinction between discipline and obedience. Discipline is a quality which must ultimately stem from within. It cannot be imposed from without. But one can be made to be obedient through fear. Unfortunately people did not make this distinction. They often meant obedience when they spoke of discipline and vice versa. It was the majority opinion that children from nuclear families are more 'obedient', not necessarily more 'disciplined'.

(Extracted from 'Child and the Family' Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas-Mussorie 2002.)



WORK BURDEN ON THE CHILDREN IN JOINT AND NUCLEAR FAMILIES - A STUDY

ANURADHA, PAWAN, ETAL



Work Burden on Children: The study revealed that children from both joint and nuclear families helped in household chores. The boys helped mainly with the work done outside the homes, like cleaning the cow-shed, fetching water, helping to plough the fields, grazing cattle, making the boundary walls etc., while the girls helped in cooking, cleaning vessels, washing clothes and in caring for siblings. But while talking to the adults and children, it became apparent that there was a significant differences in the quantum of work done by children in joint and nuclear families. Children from nuclear families were overwork we get no time to study." This was confirmed by several adult responses like. Children in a nuclear family are really quite miserable or "Children are happier in joint families, but in nuclear families they only work and work."

Children from joint families did not seem unhappy about their work. Their statements illustrate it. "All children help in the house. If we are told to do the work once, it becomes our everyday duty". Or as one boy said, "I felt happy to have learnt to plough from my father." However in the nuclear families, the children felt a kind of drudgery while doing the work and were and were unhappy doing it. their responses make this evident;

"We do it because we are told to do it."

"We have to work because there is no one else to help our family."

"If we don't work we won't get any food."

"If we don't work our parents beat us."

The responses clearly showed that children from nuclear families seemed to be burdened with far more work than the children from joint families. Also in joint families the children did not seem to perceive work as a burden, on the contrary they seemed to even enjoy doing it while children in nuclear families felt miserable doing it.

Extract from "Child and the Family" Society for integrated Development of Himalayas" Mussoire 2002



HOW DO CHILDREN SEE THE FUTURE?

(Centre for Media Studies Report)



MAN THE MAKER OF HIS DESTINY

Swami Vivekananda (CW VOL.III)

You know it already that each one of us is the effect of the infinite past ; the child is ushered into the world not as something flashing from the hands of nature, as poets delight so much to depict, but he has the burden of an infinite past ; for good or evil he comes to work out his own past deeds. That makes the differentiation. This is the law of *Karma*. Each one of us is the maker of his own fate. This law knocks on the head at once all doctrines of predestination and fate and gives us the only means of reconciliation between God and man. We, we, and none else, are responsible for what we suffer. We are the effects, and we are the causes.

A significant majority of adolescents in high - schools foresee the future to have more conflict and violence. And, they are not sure that living and life is going to be any better. No wonder then that against such gloomy perceptions about the future, school-going children consider “moral values” as relevant today. They consider “discipline” and “honesty” as desired virtues.

These are some of the highlights of the first-ever such study among eight, nine and 10th class students by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) of New Delhi.

The school-going children realise the “double-edged character” of television far more than their parents.

Teachers are viewed as an influencing factor by only half of the adolescents. In fact, more than one-third acknowledge that television is shaping their character far more than the teacher. One fifth even think that it is a countervailing force to become a “good student.”

A third prefer watching television rather than reading a book. However, only one sixth, mostly boys, prefer watching television to going out for a visit or to play.

These findings should be of concern to elders. For, more than one-third of adolescents acknowledge that their parents do not take any initiative on their Television - viewing - habits. One-fifth also say that there was never an occasion in the school or in class, not

even informal, when television *per se* or any particular Television programme was ever discussed.

Obviously, neither the school system nor the parents at home seem to realise the role of television today, or of the need to moderate or counsel their children about Television viewing habits.

The pilot study for a longer national survey in 2003 was conducted extensively in Delhi schools and in institutions on the city's outskirts; 2050 adolescent students, boys and girls of equal number drawn from 10 municipal schools and 10 private schools, were interviewed during the last week of October 2002. Most students were

personally interviewed and in equal numbers from the private and municipal schools.

The CMS study has several implications. These include the need to reinforce "moral values" as part of the school curriculum and also about the media in general and television in particular. Television should become an issue for discussion in schools and at homes. Parents, in particular, should be concerned about its role in the upbringing of their children.

The reading habit among children needs to be promoted in many different ways. Independent professional counselling facilities should be provided to guide children who are otherwise under the influence of television.

"No one could claim concern for children today without being concerned about the role of television in building the character and personality of a child", the CMS director and social psychologist, P.N. Vasanti said, summing up the study.

CHILD IS THE FATHER OF THE MAN

Swami Vivekananda (CW VOL.II)

To return to mythology. Behind all those stories we find one idea standing supreme—that man is a degeneration of what he was. Coming to the present times, modern research seems to repudiate this position absolutely. Evolutionists seem to contradict entirely this assertion. According to them, man is the evolution of the mollusk ; and, therefore, what mythology states cannot be true. There is in India, however, a mythology which is able to reconcile both these positions. The Indian mythology has a theory of cycles, that all progression is in the form of waves. Every wave is attended by a fall, and that by a rise the next moment, that by a fall in the next, and again another rise. The motion is in cycles. Certainly it is true, even on the grounds of modern research, that man cannot be simply an evolution. Every evolution presupposes an involution. The modern scientific man will tell you that you can only get the amount of energy out of a machine which you have previously put into it. Something cannot be produced out of nothing. If a man is an evolution of the mollusk, then the perfect man—the Buddha-man, the Christ-man—was involved in the molluse. If it is not so, whence come these gigantic personalities? Something cannot come out of nothing. Thus we are in the position of reconciling the scriptures with modern light. That energy which manifests itself slowly through various stages until it becomes the perfect man, cannot come out of nothing. It existed somewhere ; and if the mollusk or the protoplasm is the first point which you can trace it, that protoplasm, somehow or other, must have contained the energy.

IMPACT OF FAMILY ON THE CHILD

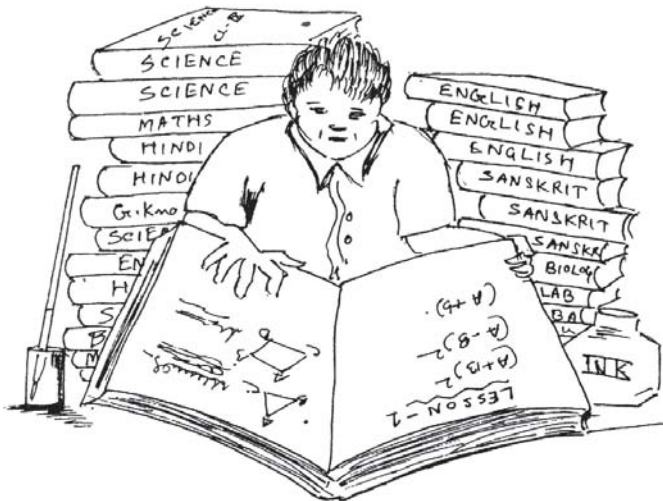
(Outside the School)

By Anuradha, Pawan etal

Impact outside school:

Care: *Dekh rekh* was the word used most often by parents or teachers while referring to the physical well-being of the child. For the respondents *dekh rekh* encompassed health (both physical and mental), hygiene and nutrition.

The responses of parents to our questions, indicated that children were better looked after in joint families as there was always someone in the family – grandparent, aunt, etc.—who was concerned about their health and



insured that they had their bath and meals at regular intervals. “Children are better looked after in joint families because there is always a special person-like a grandfather or grandmother-to take care of the children. It is only when people at home have enough time or leisure that children can be well cared for.” said a 34 year-old man from a joint family. “Joint families are good for children.” said a 58-year-old man from a joint family. “When my grandson fell ill, we have no problem. But if he had been in a nuclear family, then who would have gone to the cow-

shed, who would have worked at home and who would have fetched the doctor?” The aforementioned responses indicate that since there is distribution of work in a joint family there is somebody in the family to give children the exclusive attention they need. As a 32-year-old woman from a joint family said “In a joint family different work is allotted to different people and there is no excessive burden on any one individual and so every job is done well, whether it is looking after children, or looking after the guests or the buffalo or working in the fields...” Some children from joint families said: “When we fall ill, we are looked after and given medicines at regular intervals.”

On the contrary, most people are critical of nuclear families like this 70-year-old woman who said: “In a nuclear family, children are in a bad state. The parents lock them in, and open the door only upon their return. Sometimes the children in nuclear families do not even eat properly or have a bath.” In nuclear families children are often left in charge of younger siblings: “In nuclear families young girls take care of children and how can children know how to look after children?” says a 40-year-old woman from a nuclear family.

Even the emotional needs of children are better fulfilled in a joint family. This in turn, moulds their disposition and temperament

positively. A 20-year-old from a nuclear family in Almora district said, "Grandparents are more loving than parents who are overworked. Children in joint families are more loving and tolerant than those from nuclear families."

Nutrition: It is significant that children from joint families did not comment on food, whereas all children from nuclear families spoke a lot about food and also about food sufficiency in joint families.

"Children from joint families, get food at the right time and are fed properly."

"In joint families, there are many cows, goats and buffaloes and hence a lot of milk and butter."

"In a joint family, somebody is always there to give food to children."

"Children in joint families do not have to wait for food."

On the other hand, their comments about nuclear families were quite damning:

"Children from nuclear families have to go hungry often because nuclear families are usually poor."

"In nuclear families we have less animals and so less milk and butter at home."

There was a general agreement among the majority of children and adults (regardless of age and gender) that children in joint families were better looked after and hence were physically in better health than children from nuclear families.

Teachers' Assessment: The teachers' reports from 10 schools spread over five districts in Uttaranchal, (where the teachers scored children in hygiene and health, among other things), revealed that the majority of children from joint families scored higher in cleanliness and health than the children from nuclear families. Observation of children during the focus-group discussion also revealed that children from joint families looked better, were well fed, had well-combed hair and cleaner clothes than children from nuclear families

From the book "Child and the Family" Society for integrated Development of Himalayas, Missouri 2002

DIVORCE AND CHILDREN

Sosamma Pothan

Children of divorcees live mostly with the mother, or grandparents and receive education, or grandparents and receive educational training. Their loyalties towards father/mother are divided. When grown up, they retain painful memories. But they become strong because of their trials and tribulations. They share the family burden with their mothers. The majority of divorcees have no children. The number of children born to divorcees was any way small. Most children are kept by the mother. The law favours such a course. Post-divorce economic support of children come from 1. Mother 2. Mother's relatives 3. Father in that order. 40% of divorced fathers keep in touch with their children, staying with their mothers. Majority of the children knew of their parents' divorce, a fact that affected them emotionally.

In the West, when a divorce takes place, the family, a nuclear family at that, breaks up. In India a joint family absorbs the shock and the child continues to have a family even after parents divorce. Uncles and aunts substitute the missing parent.

(Extracted from 'Divorce its Causes and Consequences in Hindu Society', Vikas Pub. House (Pvt) Ltd., New Delhi 1986).



REINCARNATION OR HEREDITY

[Swami Vivekananda]

To one argument in connection with the doctrine of Reincarnation I will ask your patient attention, as it is a little intricate. We gain all our knowledge through experience; that is the only way. What we call experiences are on the plane of consciousness. For illustration: A man plays a tune on a piano, he places each finger on each key consciously. He repeats this process till the movement of the fingers becomes a habit. He then plays a tune without having to pay special attention to each particular key. Similarly, we find in regard to ourselves that our tendencies are the result of past conscious actions. A child is born with certain tendencies. Whence do they come? No child is born with a *tabula rasa*—with a clean, blank page—of a mind. The page has been written on previously. The old Greek and Egyptian philosophers taught that no child came with a vacant mind. Each child comes with a hundred tendencies generated by past conscious actions. It did not acquire these in this life, and we are bound to admit that it must have had them in past lives. The rankest materialist has to admit that these tendencies are the result of past actions, only they add that these tendencies come through heredity. Our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents come down to us through this law of heredity. Now if heredity alone explains this, there is no necessity of believing in the soul at all, because body explains everything. We need not go into the different arguments and discussions on materialism and spiritualism. So far the way is clear for those who believe in an individual soul. We see that to come to a reasonable conclusion we must admit that we have had past lives. This is the belief of the great philosophers and sages of the past and of modern times.

[C.W. Vol.-I]

SARADA DEVI A UNIVERSAL MOTHER

By Her Devotees

It will be seen that Sri Sarada Devi received from her husband Sri Ramakrishna all that a Hindu wife expects. But some may perhaps object, that she had no issue. Her own mother Shyamasundari Devi once lamented: "My Sarada has been married to an ascetic. She will never know the happiness of being addressed as 'mother'." The master, who happened to hear it, remarked: "Your daughter will have so many children that she will be tired of being addressed day and night as 'Mother'." And countless indeed were her spiritual 'sons' and daughters'. She was the Sahadharmini, a companion in life, not of an ordinary man, but of the Incarnation of the age, who came to generate Bhakti and Jnana among men, and whose main teaching inculcated renunciation of lust and possessions. In conformity with his ideal, which was hers too, the children born of her were not physical but spiritual, and of these she had a countless number.

From 'The Gospel of the Holy Mother' Sri Ramakrishna math-Madras 91



IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN - WORDS OF WISE PEOPLE (Collected)

1) Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of Man.

- Rabindra Nath Tagore

2) Feel the dignity of the child. Do not feel superior to him, for you are not.

- Robert Henry

3) The interest of the child and youth are the interest of Mankind.

- E.S. James

4) Children are God's apostles sent forth day by day to preach of love, hope and peace.

- J.R. Lowell

5) When children sound silly, you will always find that it is an imitation of their elders.

- Ernest Dimnet

6) The training of children is a profession where we must know how to lose time in order to gain it.

- J.J. Rousseau

7) The child is the father of the man.

- Wordsworth

8) The children have more need of models than of critics.

- J. Jonbert

9) The vast army of children all over the world, outwardly different in many ways, speaking different languages, wearing different kinds of cloths and yet so very like one another. If you bring them together,

they play or quarrel but even their quarrelling is some kind of play. They do not think of differences amongst themselves, differences of classes or castes or colour or status. They are wiser than their fathers and mothers. As they grow up, unfortunately their natural wisdom is often eclipsed by the teaching and behavior of their elders. At school they learn many things which are no doubt, useful but they gradually forget that the essential thing is to be human and kind and playful and to make life richer for ourselves and others.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

10) The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil.

- Anon

11)

a) **If the child lives with criticism he learns to condemn.**

b) **If the child lives with ridicule he learns to be shy.**

c) **If the child lives with shame he learns to feel guilty.**

d) **If the child lives with tolerance he learns to be patient.**

e) **If the child lives with encouragement he learns confidence.**

f) **If the child lives with praise he learns to appreciate.**

g) **If the child lives with fairness he learns justice.**

h) **If the child lives with security he learns to have faith.**

i) **If the child lives with approval he learns to like himself.**

j) **If the child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.**

- Anon



HIGH EXPECTATIONS MAY RETARD CHILD'S PROGRESS

S.N. Panwar

There is a rat-race among children to secure a high percentage at the annual examinations. I have seen students begging for marks in their answer sheets, so that they could earn a good name from their parents. Even the parents would like to discuss the performance of their children, with teachers. Sometimes, the parents complain to the Principals that the teachers are prejudiced against the children, which could affect their assessment of papers. Children getting higher percentage of marks and standing first in class have become prestige issues for over-ambitious parents. To satiate this, students indulge in malpractices like leaking of question papers, mass-copying in examination halls, over-writing marks in the progress report, forging parents' signature on progress reports, and lying for not securing high marks.

Normally, parents do not know the capabilities of their wards. They expect their children to become a doctor or an engineer or an IAS officer because of the social status attached to the profession. The affluent parents are ready to pay up lakhs of rupees to get admission for their wards in medical or engineering colleges irrespective of their capabilities. They will turn out to be utter failures. Instead, the parents should take the help of Vocational Guidance Bureau for choosing a career for their wards as per their capabilities.

When the high expectations of the parents are not fulfilled, they give vent to their pent-up frustrations on their children. Swarms of students show symptoms of stress. In Bombay Nair Hospital, 10-year-old children are regularly treated for stress-related ulcers because of examination - fears. A student always obsessed with fear becomes diffident or may turn out to be a dangerous delinquent as he is constantly below his parents' expectations in studies.



It is therefore the duty of the parents not to expect too much from their wards. Let them grow and study on their own. They can guide their wards in their studies but cannot force their interests on them. The parents should create a favourable environment at home where the child could develop naturally. The parents should try to find out the latent talents in the child and encourage them.

In the same way their weaknesses also should be identified and corrected. The school is looking after the studies for six hours and it is the duty of the parents to help the child for 18 hours in personal development. Natural development will make a child confident and further guidance by parents will accelerate the pace of progress in all directions.



WHO IS THE HERO FOR OUR CHILDREN?

(From the Unesco Report on media violence)

1. An average hour of television programming contains at least five episodes of violence, most of them either thrilling or rewarding.

2. Action heroes are known to 88% of the children of the world.

3. 51% of the children living in high - aggression environments, and 37 % of the children living in low-aggression environments take the action - heroes as their role-models. They think their characteristics are necessary to cope with difficult situations.

4. On an average 91% the children had access to television and spend an on average three hours a day watching it. It is 50% more than any other out-of-school activity including home-work.

5. 26% of the children take action - heroes as their role models. 18.5% of the children adapt popstars and musicians as their examples. Fewer girls consider action-heroes worth emulating.

6. Unesco says that censorship is not desirable, but parents and educators should exercise their responsibility by guiding media consumption of children.

7. "Do not blame everything on television" says Unesco. But all the same, violence on the screen is increasing. Unesco advocates (i) increased public debates involving politicians, producers and



pedagogues (ii) development of professional codes of conduct and self-discipline for producers and (iii) innovative forms of media education to promote active and critical media consumption among the young.

8. With communication systems like the internet, the media will be even more omnipresent and universal in the near future.

9. 44% of the children reported strong over - lap in what they perceive to be reality and what they see on the screen.

10. Nearly half the children surveyed said that they are anxious most of the time or very often.

11. 9% had to flee their home at least once in their life.

12. 47% said they would like to live in another country. (away from their present home land)

13. 16% of the children of high-aggression areas believe that most people in their neighbourhood die because they are killed by others.

14. 7.5% of these children have already used a weapon against another person.



FAMILY AND THE CHILD: A SHORT SURVEY OF LITERATURE

ANURADHA, PAWAN ETAL

What Others Say

Studies have proved that low socio-economic status need not necessarily mean predisposing a child to risk. Despite poor socio-economic level, caring behaviour of mothers and a high value placed upon children within the culture serve as mitigating factors. In a longitudinal study of high-risk children Werner and Smith reported that children who grew up to be competent, confident and caring were nurtured by substitute parents like grandparents or neighbours. Several studies in the area of childhood disability have shown the significance of familial affection network in the development and prognosis of children. Rao reported lesser burden experienced by (joint) families in rural areas who looked after schizophrenic patients. Phoolka's study highlights the strengths in the size of the family. Despite low socio-economic status, the majority of the families that had had a nurturing climate (23 out of 30), were joint families.

Sharma and Sharma's findings were based on studies of children growing up under difficult circumstances in and around Delhi. In their research data of 21 studies over the last 11 years, they found that children encircled in their familial network seemed to be coping far better than those who were deprived'. It was also found that the mother emerged as the major source of resilience and strength and the major player in sustaining and fostering the child's mental health. To the child she is the figure of attachment, caregiver, source of security and food who unconditionally offers care and stability even when she herself may be at great risk. Studies with children in stress-related situations have shown that positive experiences in the family and mediation by parents, during formative years protects the child from being at risk. Positive life events are protective factors and together which resilience help children to cope with stress. Pal used a case study approach with autistic children and

concluded that the "children's home is the most crucial variable in determining their present functioning and prognosis in future." Many more studies can be cited. The important point is that is time we acknowledge and respect the support structures in our own society and take these into account while formulating policies.

Evidence from cross-cultural studies conducted in the West have also proved beyond doubt that children living in relationship-centered culture enjoy obvious advantages over those that do not. Studies in the west have shown very clearly that despite better living conditions, the children are highly vulnerable, because of the high social toxicity or the degradation in the social environment of families and communities. We all know about the material progress that the West has made, particularly in the last two centuries. As a result there are very low incidences of infectious diseases because of availability of safe drinking water, sewage treatment, waste disposal, efficiency and care in food storage and distribution. Yet it seems that these are not enough. At another level things have deteriorated, perhaps beyond redemption. There has been a complete breakdown of the family in the West. The latest census reports show that a family consisting of two parents and their children (which

incidentally is now being called traditional nuclear family) has fallen from 45 per cent in 1960 to 23.5 per cent in 2000. As a result the social environment has become "toxic".

Commenting on the deterioration of the social environment in cities in the USA. Garbarino draws a parallel between physical toxicity that causes environmental degradation resulting in health problems and "social toxicity" that refers to degradation in the social environment of families of communities. As the social environment becomes more toxic, it is the children who are most vulnerable, who show the effects first, and accumulate the most developmental risk factors. The risk factors to which they are constantly exposed, include "being from a single parent family, poverty, racism, drug addiction or alcoholism, trauma from violence, and emotional problems that impair parenting".

Stephen Covey says that in the past thirty years the family situation has changed dramatically in the USA. There has been a 400 per cent increase in illegitimate births"; single parent families have tripled; divorce rate has doubled; teenage suicide has increased 300 per cent; scholastic aptitude test scores among students has dropped 73 points (according to The Economist of 14 July 2001, 60 per cent of high school graduates in USA are functionally illiterate); one-fourth of all adolescents contract a sexually transmitted disease before they graduate from high school; Domestic violence is the topmost

health problem for American women as 4 million American women are beaten by their parents. In 1940s the top disciplinary problems according to public school teachers was: talking out of turn; chewing gum; making noise; running in the halls; dress code infractions and littering. In the 1990s they have changed to drug abuse, alcohol, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault." Needless to say all this adds to the social toxicity of the environment.

But the West (and also our own educated classes enamoured by them) is either too absorbed in itself or too arrogant to acknowledge its mistake in the manner they looked at traditional societies like ours. Despite the obvious social problems they are unable to go to the root of it all. They tend to perceive everything in terms of economic loss or gain, without realising that this perception itself may be the cause of it all. They are certainly re-looking at families but only because there are 'great costs' involved. Leff (1996) comments: "Our problem in the West is that somehow or other we have to make up for the families who have disappeared and create a supportive structure – not for the patients – but for the single relatives who are often desperately trying to cope with schizophrenia. It is of course very expensive to create a network of professionals who act as a surrogate family but we have to provide that form of support because it is even more expensive to keep hospitalising patients." It seems as if the main concern is the expenses and not the social toxicity factor which is compelling them to focus upon their family systems.

Extracted from 'Child and the Family' Society for integrated Development of Himalayas-Mussorie 2002.



SOME CONCLUSIONS FROM A SURVEY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ANURADHA, PAWAN ETAL

The responses to our survey clearly showed a significant difference between the children from joint and nuclear families. The fact that there are more people to care for and support the children makes these children better looked after and more secure. Loneliness, insecurity, an unhealthy attitude towards work, individualistic outlook towards life and excessive workload seemed peculiar to the children from nuclear families.

In this context if we were to take stock, we would realise that our continued strength is that: more often than not, children are still wanted; most families are two parent families; many of our services, including child care, are non-monetized; neighbourhoods have permeable physical and social boundaries; and there is a philosophy of acceptance – children are God's gift and not a cross to bear. It is also common sense that as others are available in joint families to assist parents with child-care tasks and responsibilities, these parents are 'likely to display warmth rather than rejection towards their children.' This is particularly evident in the support extended to families that care for sick children.

Since a large number of studies have recognised the role of life-styles and cultural practices in the cause and prevention of illness and promotion of well-being, it is time that we counter the term 'children in difficult circumstances' used so often by researchers, because it is heavily loaded with notions about children, childhood, cultures and coping, from perspectives of dominant cultures. Aptekar and Stocklin agree with this, based upon a lot of empirical evidence. As a matter of fact they have stressed the need for caution in the universal application of the UN convention for the rights of children.

This does not mean that our children suffer from no deprivation. We only wish to acknowledge that despite acute deprivations, in India, the children are vulnerable but resilient because cultural belief-systems with in society define family structures. In other words, in the Indian family, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins

are an integral part of the worldview of the family. Children who have the support of other family members are less at risk than those who do not have this support. We need to recognise our strengths and look at our systems with 'our eyes' rather than through the 'eyes' of the West.

Extracted from '*Child and the Family*', Society for integrated Development of Himalayas – Mussorie 2002

**We have promises to
keep - promises made to
our children**

**Out of 100 children
born in India, 25 will not be
immunised. Sixteen will have
no access to clean drinking
water, 47 will suffer from
malnutrition in the first three
years, twenty six will be born
with birth weight less than 2.5
kg (minimum required), 15 will
never go to school. Of every
100 children who join first
grade, only 52 will reach the
fifth grade.**

(A UN DOCUMENT)



TIRUVALLUVAR ON OFFSPRING

1. We know of no blessing as great as the begetting children that are endowed with understanding.
2. Behold the man whose children bear an unstained character; no evil will touch him up to his seventh reincarnation.
3. Children are the veritable riches of a man: for they pass to him by their acts all the merits that they acquire.
4. Sweeter verily than ambrosia is the gruel soused and spattered by the tender hands of one's own children.
5. The touch of children is the delight of the body: the delight of the ear is the hearing of their speech.
6. The flute is sweet and the guitar dulcet: so say they who have not heard the babbling speech of their little ones.
7. What is the duty of the father to his son? It is to make him worthy to sit in the front rank in the assembly.

8. It is a joy to every man to find himself eclipsed in intelligence by his children.
9. Great is the joy of the mother when a man child is born unto her: but greater far is her delight when she hears him called worthy.
10. What is the duty of the son to his father? It is to make the world ask, For what austerities of his has he been blessed with such a son?

(Translation by V.V.S.Aiyar)

Towards a better tomorrow for children

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is making concerted efforts to come to grips with the major problems affecting adversely the rights of the child. Three issues - female - foeticide and infanticide, child prostitution and child labour are receiving constant attention at the highest level.

Statistical data reveal that the male/female ratio in India deteriorated from 1000:972 in 1901, to 1000:927 in 1991. The staggering cruelty, the violation of the rights of the girl-child and the societal pressures and tensions in those parts of the country where female - child is more readily aborted or killed are commentary on the long-term damage that this violence is doing to society, the NHRC says.

Promises to Children not kept (A world - view)

P.S. Sundararajan

| Promises made in 1990 | Performance up to 2000 |
|---|--|
| 1. The children the world over would be given the top most priority in allocation of resources. | They do not have the priority, right on resources. |
| 2. More investment on the young. | Gross under-investment. |
| 3. Mortality rate would be reduced. | Slight reduction. |
| 4. Primary education from 80 % to 100%. | Enrolment 80% Drop out 25% before 5 th grade. |
| 5. Infant and under - five - mortality will come down by 33%. | Came down only by 11%. |

(From A UN DOCUMENT)

DISCOVER THE CHILD

DR. K. SUBRAHMANYAM

An aged person of eighty, glowing with gray hair sat silently in a serene place. While the body was still, steady in the meditative posture, the mind was buffeted and battered by waves of hope and despair, faith and fear reflecting on the past in the ocean of memory. It was difficult to suppress them, silence them. Neither the wave nor the sea of remembrance was sweet. Struggle it was to overcome the thoughts. It was a strain, not a sport to live with a mind. Gone were the days of sport. Gone also were the days of peace. Suddenly a child came running, amidst her play, towards the old person in silence brooding over the past and sat on his lap. The eyes were opened and the person looked at the smiling child.



The child asked "Grandpa, Grandpa, what are you doing, sitting all alone here? I have been playing happily and looking at you all alone, I came to you. Shall I also sit like you? When can I become one like you? What am I to do to be like you? You are really wonderful to look at; tell me Grandpa, what should I do to be like you?"

The Old person replied, "Dear child, you need not do anything to be like me. You will, by passage time, become young and then old like me. You need not have to do anything to become old. But I have to struggle and struggle to be like you – simple and sweet, serene and

peaceful, playful and buoyant, bright and beautiful. All my striving is to become a child or child like. I am doing *tapas* to discover the child in me".

Children draw all in endearment, for the egoism is not yet formed in them. Sages are endearing to all since the ego is annihilated in them. It is egoism that eclipses the Atman. All angularities are due to egoism. Both the innocent children and enlightened sages are free from them.

How blessed we will be to be child like! In mythology there are five excellent role models – child – teachers – to guide us to the goal of child-like sweetness and sport, beauty and bliss. All our *sadhana* is to regain our childhood and immortalise it in us.

The teachers, the child-teachers to show us the way are five, each representing a noble trait of eternity. They are Markandeya, Satyakama, Dhruva, Nachiketa and Prahlada. It is a combination of all the five that makes us fully childlike. The five traits they represent are the five petals of the beautiful flower of life, not transient but lasting for ever. They are faith and truth; *dhriti*, *sraddha* and *bhakti*.

Faith is strength. It conquers all including fate. Faith in oneself is but faith in God. Self is God. If fate is the handmaid of God, faith itself is God. It is but the sport of faith to submit to fate. But when the submission is mistaken for weakness, fate is taught to behave and shown its place of a servant to faith. Faith and fear cannot coexist. Nor can fate

overpower the person of faith. In the absence of faith or when the faith is weak, fear and fate overpower us.

Markandeya is a boy. His fate is to die young at the age of sixteen. If fate is unconquerable, he should have died as fated. But he did not, because of his unconquerable faith in himself, in God.

The boy had immense faith in Siva. He held on to his God without any fear of death. The God of death, Yama came to kill him. But Siva kept Yama at bay. Not only was fate vanquished but the boy of faith was blessed with eternity. Fate is but a flood of time, sweeping and swallowing all weaklings in its current. Those who are strong and skilful oppose its impetuosity and swim successfully against its current. Strength is hidden in us. Skill is latent in us. Courage is concealed in us. It is faith that wakes them up and rouses them up to assertion and action. And the action is manifested in the conquest of time, conquest of fate, conquest of fear by swimming against the current. If everything is to happen according to fate, there is no need for our *rishis* to write the story of Markandeya. Similarly, we find in Savitri the strength of faith to conquer fate. She conquered death. Yama was won over. And she was able to get her dead husband back to life.

Youth and faith go together. The one of faith is ever strong. Strength is in one's youth, youthful faith. Therefore youth, strength and faith are synonymous, ever successfully present in Markandeya. Every individual is born with immense potentiality to overcome

every impediment while unfolding the SELF.

There is a precondition for the one of faith to be unconquerable and ever successful. And that is one's awareness of faith existing in oneself, one's awareness of the fact that there is faith hidden in oneself, one's awareness of the truth that faith is invariably in oneself as a firm mountain of flint. Faith then is but vibrant and triumphant since it itself is truth. Satyakama Jabala is a boy with faith in Truth. He sought education in a *Gurukul*. He made an application seeking admission. At the time of interview, he was asked to tell about his family background to facilitate the allotment of the appropriate branch of study. The boy was ignorant of his parentage. He returned to his mother to learn from her about his father. The mother drew blank, confessing her inability to name the father. The boy was bold enough to go to the master, fully armed with faith in truth. The damaging truth with faith was declared and the boy was admitted. The one qualification for the study of scriptures is truthfulness. And the fruit of all study is truthfulness.

No child ever tells a lie. Untruth is unknown to it. The egoism of adults and its accompanying evils such as possessiveness and gain by deceit only train the children in the perverse and adverse path of untruth. Initially the child resists. But it gradually yields on account of the formation of ego from within.

Dhriti is determination. It is the fruit of one's faith in Truth, one's unflinching devotion to an ideal, goal-fixation and its attainment in every walk of life, here and hereafter. Dhruva is but the embodiment of *Dhriti*. When he was denied his rightful place on the lap of his father, he did not keep silent. He regained it with determination. When we are denied our access to our original abode, when we are denied our own fundamental rights, we should be determined to reclaim them firmly with faith in Truth. Dhruva succeeded. *Dhriti* knows no failure as faith knows no defeat. Victory visualized without a shade of doubt is *Dhriti*. Concretisation of conceptualized success with firmness of faith at every step is determination. *Dhriti* and doubt do not coexist. Determination drives away doubt and is ever delightful reigning supreme in the kingdom of conviction.

While in execution, faith and truth with determination manifest as *Sraddha*. It is *Sraddha* when the thought, word and deed are meticulously attuned to the goal and

integrated for the fulfilment of the ideal. Meticulous adherence to every minute detail of the means leading to realization at the end is *Sraddha*. Nachiketa was a boy opposed to any compromise in the execution of any action. Not only does it contaminate the means, but it fails to produce the wholesome result. Nachiketa's father performed a *yagna* without any *Sraddha*. He polluted the performance of the *yagna* with insincerity. By compromising with the means, he adulterated the ideal, resulting in sin. Insincere execution of any duty is sin. To make amends, to release his father from the clutches of the accrued sin, Nachiketa offered himself as an object of sacrifice. The father was annoyed when the boy was repeatedly harping upon the father's insincerity. In annoyance the father asked Nachiketa to get out and hang himself. In other words, he was asked to die by offering himself to Yama the God of death. In letter and spirit, the order was carried out by the boy. With *sraddha*, he proceeded to the abode of Yama and presented himself before the God of death. Instead of terminating the life of the boy, Yama only liberated him from the clutches of ignorance and immortalized him. Rather, eternity was realized and established. It is *Sraddha* in thought, word and deed, that paves the way to perfection through perfect means. Adherence to the path of righteousness invariably leads to the right results, the fruit of Truth. *Sraddha* unfolds success, uncovers wisdom, reveals the hidden divinity and shows the SELF. Concentration is *Sraddha* which we find in children more. Attentiveness is their intrinsic trait.

Finally the whole process is sweetened and the labour made lovable and light by one's devotion. Faith does not falter when it is firm. It is fragrant as well, when it is coupled with *bhakti* or devotion. Truth is not only bright and luminous but beautiful and blissful when accompanied by *bhakti* or devotion. *Dhriti* is never dry but is ever delightful because of its inherent devotion to duty. And *Sraddha* is sweet since it is seldom devoid of devotion. Prahlada is a combination of all the virtues blossoming fully on account of his devotion. His faith in truth and determination to lead the chosen path of life with *Sraddha* soaked in the honey of devotion made his life lovable, fragrant, beautiful and exemplary. He is ever smiling and blissful. There is never a want or worry, anguish or anger, failure or disappointment. His is a life of perennial peace and boundless bliss. It is a life of fulfilment. Children are simple, sweet, sincere and cheerful. If only their innocence is protected from the

onslaught of egoism, they shine resplendent with enlightenment.

Credulity of the child confirmed and intensified by inner awareness is faith. Naked simplicity and oneness of the children seen in all and everywhere as the intrinsic spark of eternity is Truth. Determination or *dhriti* it is, when child's inquisitiveness is strengthened to the core. Child's attentiveness and adherence to the righteous means in every walk of life and in every field of study is *sraddha*. Finally it is *Bhakti* when the child's innocent love, sport and cheerfulness are integrated with life throughout the pursuit and fruit with faith, truth, *dhriti* and *sraddha*.

May the people all over the globe imbibe Markandeya's faith, Satyakama's truth, Dhruva's *dhriti*, Nachiketa's *sraddha* and Prahlada's *bhakti* to enliven, enlighten and immortalize their lives!



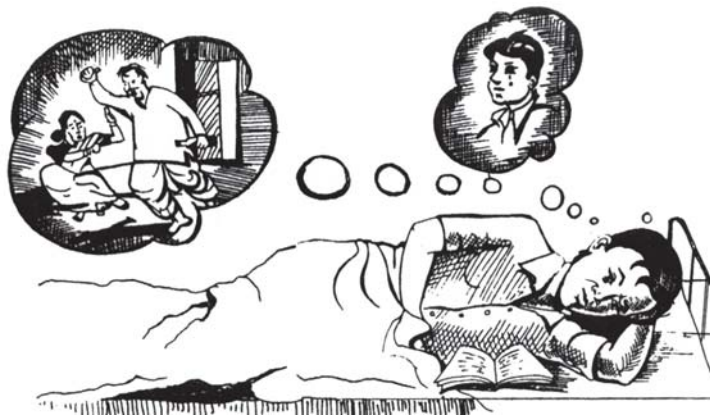
ECOLOGICAL POLICY AND THE CHILD

Vimla V.Nadkarni

1. In most of the literature on ecology, there is no specific focus on the family. While women as a group have received special attention, the problems of children and the family as a unit have not been given separate treatment and have to be implied from the vast sea of literature on the subject.
2. Industrialization, urbanization, switch-over to cash-economy, increased poverty, marginalization, dispossession of the poor and powerless, affect the children of the poor, of tribals and of nomads. Children across the entire spectrum of the society suffer because of environmental degradation and its effects.
3. Because of the increasing inaccessibility of rural people to forest lands, women and children spend more time in gathering fire-wood and walk more distances. Their time for education and togetherness dwindles.
4. 30 million people of India, mainly forest-dwellers, depend upon minor forest products (M.F.P) such as fruit and fodder. Herbs, medicinal plants, turpentine, resin, flowers for cattle feed, oil, liquor, flowers, roots and tubers for food, sustain the poor and their children. High vitamin foods such as gooseberries and honey are becoming more and more inaccessible to those who need it most-the children.
5. Shortage of cooking energy means decreased food in many cases for children.
6. Smoking *chullahs* which use agricultural residues injure children, affecting their lungs.
7. Shrinking forest lands, fodder-and grazing areas and high-yielding short-straw grain varieties, have made

animal fodder scarce. More women and children spend time, more time in collecting fodder.

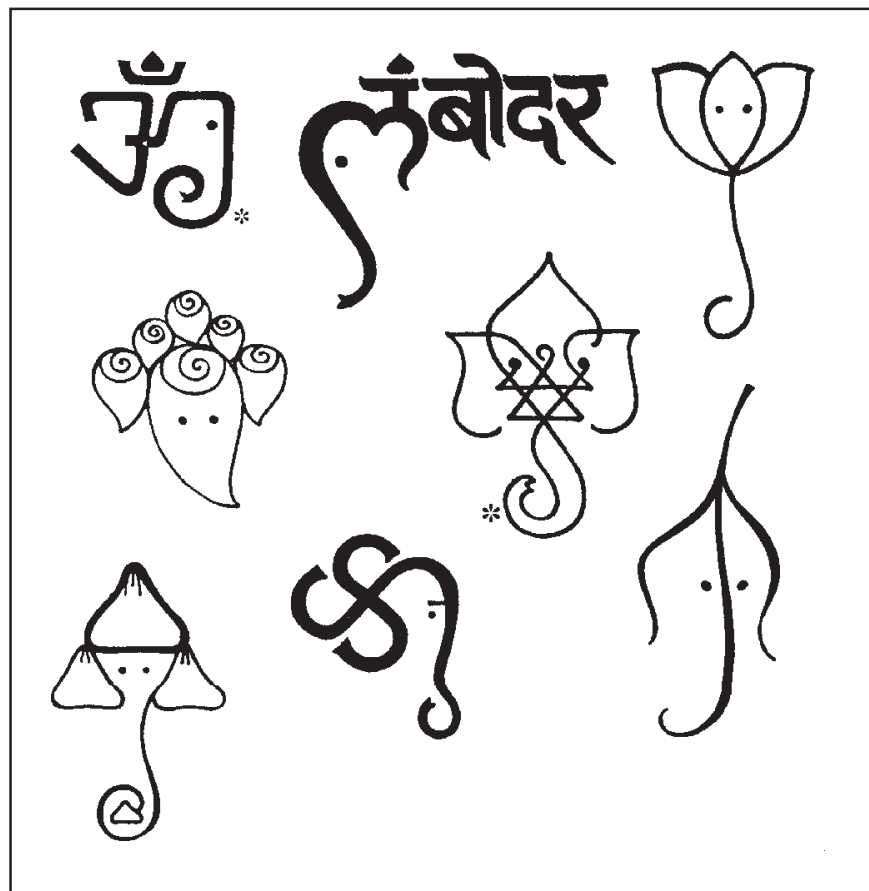
8. Shortage of water supply and worsening water quality have driven more children to sickness. Children also spend more time collecting water. Their mothers, spend increasingly longer durations and therefore the children are deprived of motherly care. Water scarcity drives people away from their natural homes, affecting social stability for all and social security for children.
9. In the family, the members most vulnerable to the effects of ecological degradation are the children. Children play an extremely important economic role. They look after the chores while their parents are away for the daily wage-labour. In Pura in Karnataka, for example, the children contribute 29% of the total time spent on fuel-wood gathering, 20% on fetching water and 34% on live-stock grazing. They are the first



ones to suffer from water-borne-diseases where the water systems are drying up or are polluted.

10. The family unit is a both a victim of disaster and also a channel for effecting change in the community. The destructive effects of disasters, include, disruption of normal family life due to deaths, loss of income and property, disruption of other social and community systems. Studies on post-calamity effects reveal that while many disasters may result in dramatic increase in social solidarity, famines produce disorganizations, disintegration, aggressiveness in human attitudes, crime, theft and other forms of anti-social behaviour....because famine is a usually long-drawn-out-calamity and is related to hunger.
11. In some instances, due to economic hardships, there was loss of control by parents over their children.
12. Due to drought and scarcity conditions, children are unable to attend school regularly. They are involved in relief works to supplement the income of the family as never before.
13. During disasters, the family as a basic social unit serves as the strongest support available to individuals for coping and it is the most primary one.

(Extracted and abridged from "Enhancing the Role of the Family as an Agency for Social and Economic Development". Tata Institute of social sciences" Bombay 1994.)

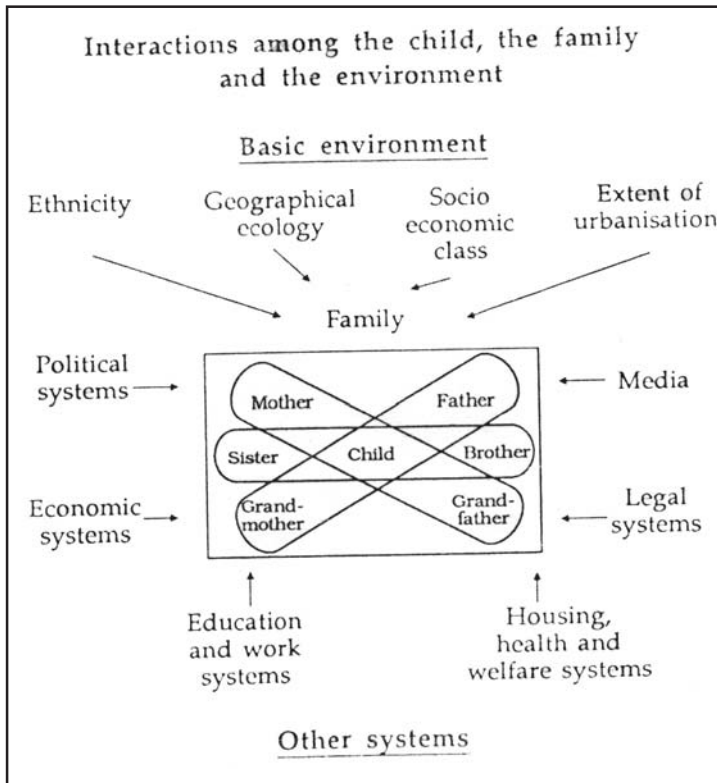


NEED FOR FAMILY FOCUS IN PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN

MURLI DESAI

I . Relationship within a Family

1. Family is the major source of development for children, by way of providing nurturance, emotional bonding, and socialization. It is essential to understand the family context of child-development and also because, family has the major potential to provide stability and support when there are problems from the environment.
2. The family context of the Child Development: the child, the family and the environment constantly interact with and therefore influence each other.



- a) The family now has reached a position of middle management, meeting the expectations of its society on the one hand, and meeting the needs of individual members on the other.
- b) Depending upon the family composition, a child forms a number of dyads of the following types :
 - i) filial or parent-child dyad
 - ii) fraternal or sibling dyads
 - iii) and grand-parents-grand children dyads.

In joint families, the child forms the largest number of dyadic relationships, whereas in single parent families he or she forms a minimum number of dyadic relationships.

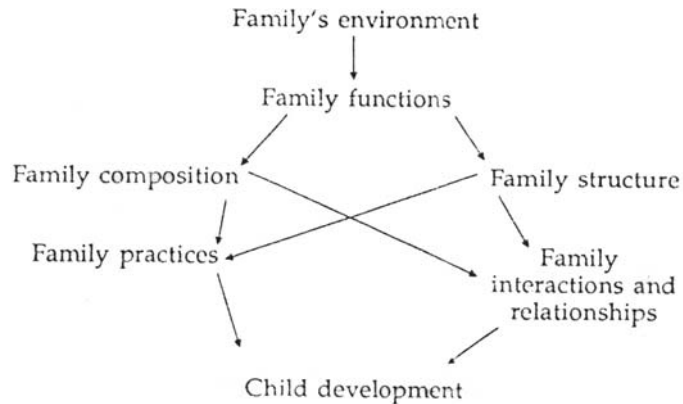
- c) In a joint-family, the child gets multiple parents and many adult-figures for his/her identification. The children are over-protected, and sheltered; self-non-self segregation is hampered.
- d) In a nuclear family, the child gets limited number of adult models to emulate, gets a strong sense of personal bond with the parents, with a greater scope for developing clear-cut self-identity.
- e) Children of single-parent families lack kin-ship and community support.
- f) A large number of children in institutions and on streets come from single-parent families.

- g) Decisions are made for children by others.
- h) Family structure determines the aspects of development of the child

II. Emphasis on Family in policies for children

- a) In most cases, the child can be best helped by treating the family as the central unit of service or focus of attention, whenever and as much as possible.
- b) The UN convention on the rights of the child says: For the full and harmonious development of the child's personality, it should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.
- c) The U.N. convention is convinced that the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community. A child has a right to be cared for by his/her parents.
- d) The world declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children has committed to respect the role of the family in providing for children and support the efforts of parents, other care-givers

Family factors affecting child development



and communities to nurture and care for children. Family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children.

- e) According to the UN documents, all institutions of the society should respect and support the efforts of parents to nurture and care for the children in the family environment. Every effort should be made to prevent the separation of children from the families. Whenever children are separated from their families, arrangements should be made for appropriate alternative family-care.
- f) In India, National policy for children directs efforts to strengthen family ties, so that the full potentialities of growth of children are realised within the normal family, neighbourhood and community environment. Education, health, welfare and legal systems have been developed in India, to meet the development and welfare-needs of children.

III Family focus in Developmental Programmes for children

- a) The integrated child development services (I.C.D.S.) is a major child development scheme of Government of India (GOI) with preventive and

developmental efforts. The I.C.D.S. provides a package of services, periodic health-care check-up, referral and medical services, monitoring of growth, immunization, supplementary feeding, non-formal pre-school education and health and nutrition-education for mothers.

- b) Functional literacy for adult women,
- c) National Institute for public cooperation and child development.
- d) Health and Nutrition education (HNE)
- e) Adolescent girls scheme.

All the schemes together try to see the child not as an isolated entity, but as a product, to the evolution of which a series of factors have contributed. All these factors have to be cared for as a part of child-welfare.

Family life-education should enrich family interactions and relationships. This education should prepare family members for different stages of family life span. Empowerment of family members for strengthening family interaction with other systems in the environment is an essential facet of Family-life education programme

III. The need for a Family Focus in Welfare Programmes for children

- a) GOI's policy on children gives a greater priority to Institutions over the family, which is a wrong approach. The goal should be to minimize and not to expand institutional services.
- b) Most of the crèches are in the urban areas whereas most of the working women, whose children need crèche service, are in the rural areas. ICDS should also provide day-care-service in rural areas.
- c) Street children also should be integrated with their families. Or they should be placed in a family setting.
- d) Families which have problems with child-care may be served in an integrated manner, depending upon the problem situation for the child.
- e) Families may be strengthened to look after the child by means of child- guidance, child-day-care and child-sponsorship. These services, if widely available in urban as well as rural areas, can take care of major causes of the problems with child-care and prevent the removal of the child from the family.

- f) The foster care of the children if needed, should be with relatives or neighbours i.e. in familiar surroundings.
- g) Foster families for destitute children should be planned for with great care.

IV . Implications For Action

- a) GOI should incorporate the role of the family in its National Action plan for children and consider plans for strengthening the family.
- b) Future rehabilitation plans should be family-centred.
- c) NGO's should create public awareness regarding reforms in family norms, laws and policies. Family-life-education programmes are very important.
- d) Social science and academic institutions should give priority to research on families and children at risk.

(Extracted from "Enhancing the Role of the Family as an Agency for Social and Economic Development"-Tata Institute of Social Science-Bombay 1994.)



SARADA DEVI AND A BEGGAR-GIRL

BY HER DEVOTEE

While at Benaras one day, the Holy Mother fell asleep a little. The house was almost silent with everybody resting. In that silence a song was heard from the verandah:

*“Where has my Mother gone?
For many days have I not seen
you; Mother, take me in the
lap.
What sort of a Mother art
Thou, so stony- hearted
towards the child!
Grant Thy vision, Mother, and
make me weep no more.”*

The song was sung in such a gentle tone that I felt as though some one was weeping at quite a distance. Suddenly the Holy Mother woke up and said, “Who is singing? Let us go, my dear, to the verandah and see.” We went and what I saw struck me dumb with astonishment. One girl was singing the song and her chest was bathed in tears as she sang. As the Holy Mother sat there, the girl bowed down to her and said, “Mother, my heart’s desire of many days is fulfilled today. I cannot express the joy that is flooding me today, Mother.” The Holy Mother blessed her and asked her about herself.

Girl: I am only a beggar girl, Mother.
Mother: Where do you stay?

Girl: I stay at the gate of Annapurna, near the Behari Baba’s temple at the Dasasvamedh *ghat*.

Mother: You are well off by taking alms, I hope?

Girl: By your blessing everything goes on well, Mother. There is no worry about daily needs. By the grace of Annapurna, no one has to go without food here. Mother, I am worried about how to get a little *Bhakti*.

Mother; That will certainly come about, my dear. You stay in such a sacred place. Here Lord Viswanath and Mother Annapurna are reigning actually. By their grace everything will come about.

The Holy Mother asked her to sing another song. She began to sing:

*Mother, may thou be pleased to
keep me as a child!
Let me not grow,
leaving behind the beauty of childhood.
A beautiful simple soul,
unaware of honour and infamy;
It does not know cruelty,
nor censure nor shame nor contempt.*

Mother: What a beautiful song!

Girl: I had a great desire for many days to see you. Hearing that you are here, I often think of coming but feel afraid that some one would object.



Mother: None will say anything. Come whenever you like.

The Holy Mother asked Prasad to be given to her. After receiving *Prasad* the girl was taking leave. The Holy Mother told her, “Come again, my dear.” Later she told us, “The girl has great devotion.”

After a few days, the beggar girl mentioned earlier came and bowed down to the Holy Mother. In her hand was a pear. She

offered it to the Mother and said, “Mother, it got it as alms today, and so I have brought it for you. But Mother, I

cannot muster the courage to offer it to you.” “You have done well,” assured the Holy Mother. “Ah! Give it to me, my dear.” Saying this she took the pear, touched it to her head and said. “The things given as alms are very pure. The Master loved them very much. It is quite a good pear too. I shall eat it now.” The girl was deeply touched and said, “I am only a beggar girl, what compassion are you bestowing upon me!” tears trickled down her cheeks as she said this. The Holy Mother continued, “Your songs are so sweet. Now do sing a song for me.”

The girl sang:

***Gopal, I shall deck you now.
Do dance thus and thus, wheel and turn about.
I shall fix up your anklets, my dear,
They would sound well jingling.
A golden cloth I shall wrap around your waist.
Gopal, my dear, I shall feed you,
And give you two pairs of golden wristlets.***

Concluding the song, she added, “Mother, if this song is sung, the Behari Baba Sadhu of Dasasvamedha ghat would keep dancing just like Gopal. His nature is exactly like that of a boy.”

The Holy Mother said, “Quite a good song, won’t you sing another?” She sang another song. The Holy Mother asked *Prasad* to be given her. Taking the *Prasad*, she bowed down to the Mother saying, “I shall take leave for the day, Mother.”

“Come again, my dear, come whenever you like”, said the Holy Mother.

From “The Gospel of the Holy Mother”
The Ramakrishna Math, Madras-91



CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

by N. Krishnamoorti

1) Why creative activities in pre-primary education? [p.p.e.]

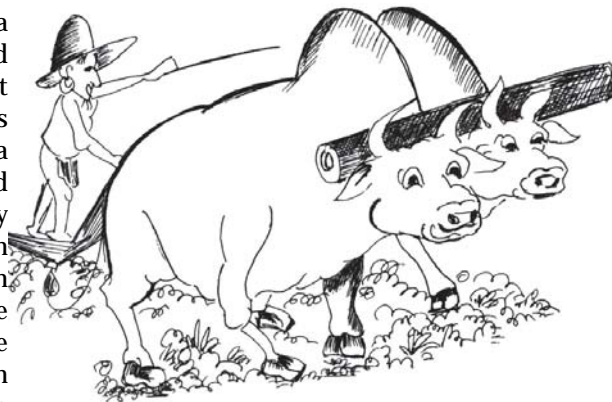
Creative activities nurture the imaginative capacity of a growing young child of p.p.e. age. Imagination is a world by itself with the individual as the only citizen of that private world. These activities, constructive in function, positive in mood, and creative in outlook, train the child to express its ideas in a precise and communicative manner. These activities afford the child a chance to examine various articles with which a child comes into contact. Basically a constructive activity is a happy experience for a child and the child indulges in it for the sake of the activity without any hope of external reward. The child grows in confidence, when it finds a picture, or a mould or a story grow in the manner it wanted it to grow. Infact the constructive activity reveals to the child heretofore unknown possibilities and aspects of its own 'personality'. The child also is warned to beware of its weaknesses. These activities teach the children to live, work, function and create in harmony with the other children of the community. Only such activities help the child grow as an emotionally balanced individual and with a rounded and well-integrated personality. The child's intellectual growth becomes action-based. It also develops in it an artistic feeling, a keen eye for observation and trains itself - in eye - hand - muscle coordination, an essential requirement in life.

The child also learns how to generalise and becomes better informed.

2) The role of the trainer:

The trainer of a child in constructive activities should rise to the challenge of the job.

He/She should encourage the child continuously. He/She should never give a model to the child, instead should prod the child to draw from its inspiration, imagination and memory. A child is a unique phenomenon. Instead of egging the child on to work in a spirit of competition, the guide/trainer should try to draw out the uniqueness of the child. There lies the core and soul of creative action. The trainer should trust the child and should patiently teach it how to keep its body and its surroundings clean. The creativity - session



should tap the eagerness of the child, respect its likes and dislikes, train its skills, foster its self - confidence and protect its uniqueness. Creativity is freedom IN action and it should never be an act of obedience, shoved down the throat of the child.

3) What kind of creative activity do we envisage for a child of p.p.e. age?

Shaping articles in coloured doughs or plasticine can be one. The child can make shapes with saw-dust. Colour combinations in sands can be interesting. Soap-sculpturing, string - painting, spraying patterns, paper folding and paper - cutting, pasting sand

particles, stone pebbles, pulse - pieces, broken bangle pieces on to paper in colourful designs, colouring, painting, sketching, gardening, washing and cleaning one's own clothes and personal articles, preparations of teaching aids, beading, creating patterned knots in ropes and strings, making rattles and cloth-balls arranging seeds, beads and shells as patterns numbers, letters and pictures, etc. There is no limit to the creative, constructive and productive way of looking at life and preparing the child to a life of satisfaction, application and happiness.

4) Free conversation and outing

Encouraging children to talk freely, is an art by itself. The guide/trainer/*balasevika* should be patient and prod the child to ask questions and should be able to answer them. Free -conversation trains the child in coherent and meaningful formation of sentences. The guide should encourage the child to talk about its surroundings, home, objects of its daily use etc. Once in a while the trainer/*balasevika* should take the children for outings, so that the children perceive the real world, experience real distances, heights, and things. The child learns to accept changes, and grow out of its small world as a frog in the well. The children perceive the real world through their senses and add variety and depth to their experiences. These visits should nurture the enthusiasm of the children, and help them grow intellectually. But adults should remember that what appears pedestrian and ordinary to them may turn out to be miracles for the children, who see things for the first time. The places visited may be as ordinary as a dairy or a post - office, a

garden or a railway - station, but the child will be charmed.



5) Stories for children of pre-primary age group:

Selected and pre-determined stories, skits, episodes and legends, orally conveyed to children have great educational value. They make excellent pastime. The child also shall narrate them. The child learns how to use a word in a specific context. It learns the art of narration and exercises the power of imagination, and practises the art of orderly and full expression of its ideas in words. Intellectual growth, the growth of the child's ability to relate itself with lives, objects and people around itself, etc. are helped by a child listening to stories and relating stories on its own.

Tales and stories help the child in understanding its own emotions properly. Checking one's uninhibited feelings and instincts, intensifying right type of emotions like love, wonder etc. are all by -

PLAY BASED APPROACH FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT W.A.F.HOPPER

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Playing | 2. Singing |
| 3. Dancing | 4. Imagining |
| 5. Acting | 6. Observing |
| 7. Experimenting | 8. Story-telling |
| 9. Drawing | 10. Painting |

Objectives to be realized: i) Acquisition of basic knowledge of the immediate environment ii) Formation of basic good habits and values iii) Acquisition of basic linguistic skills iv) Acquisition of basic mathematical skills.

(The Hindu)

products of story - telling. Slowly a child grasps the knack of selecting and reading a tale from a book that suits its taste.

The stories narrated should suit the age, sex and the cultural background of the child. They create a personal bonding between the child and the narrator. The child identifies itself with the characters of the story, especially, characters of the same age as the child. It is from such stories, that a child selects its role models for its ideal life.

The stories for children should create a love for nature, environment and lives around the child in its mind. The sounds and gestures of animals and birds should form parts of the stories. Children enjoy funny stories. But all the stories should be short and should be narrated at one go. As the child grows, it will start liking tales with moving objects, animals and people.



A tale should have the basic aim of inculcating values in children. Fairy tales, gypsy – tales etc. have always clicked with children. From Hanumanji down to Harry Potter, such tales carry the children with them, to new realms of fantasy and imagination. But the narrator should remember that the actions of the heroes should not be cruel or terrifying.

Clarity, self – control, faithfulness and hopefulness are virtues, children like in the characters of their stories.

Love of humanity, love of nature, spiritual values, altruism, patriotism, social consciousness etc. are other values, which can be imbibed by a child through the medium of powerful stories. Catchy tunes, songs, clapping, rhythmic action etc. add to the attractiveness of a tale narrated. Spiritual and mythological stories have always found favour with children.

The narrator should be thoroughly conversant with the story and should not betray any hesitation while telling the story to the child. Voice modulation, simple narration, explaining new words, suitable gestures and an attempt to draw a picture in the mind of the child through descriptive words, deepen the impressions created by the story.

The narrator may also make use of educational aids such as flannel boards, sand - trays, actions and gestures, puppets, cinema, video, computers, television etc. Toys and charts bring alive the characters. The human touch by the narrator is more important than all the mechanical devices put together.

6) The role of music in child's education:

Songs have tremendous impact on the child and their efficacy in impressing the child, enhancing retention, in the child's memory, helping the child in forming mental pictures and quickening the process of recalling memorised themes has been well researched. A song is a well - adjusted composition of words, tune, tone, ideas, rhythm and base-note (*sruti*). A song helps the child's emotional growth and culture. A child understands the sound of the word even before it understands its meaning. Sound is the basis for music. The child's daily routine, actions and education are full of music and rhythm. Singing and listening to songs lighten the burden of work. Music trains, and cultures a child's voice and harmonises it with the rest of the group, when

it sings in a choir etc. The basic exercises such as listening closely and repeating what one has heard are carried out in a song session. Enthusiasm, memory, constructive attitude, positive mood, voice modulation, flexibility and increasing range of voice are qualities sustained by music. The child learns that happiness, sorrow, compassion, fear, humour etc. can be expressed differently using appropriate sounds.

A song chosen for the child should have the same qualities as a story - simple, with few words. But the tune also should be simple, the lines short, with words being repeated in catchy rhythms.

Children love funny songs, carrying meaningless but - funny words, funny themes etc. Birds, animals, fellow human beings and the sounds they make, should find place in songs for children. As the child grows, story - songs (or song - stories) and songs with scope for action should be introduced.

The teacher should sing the whole song once and then start teaching the pieces or parts to the child. The songs should be led and followed! Clapping and beating rhythm with some



instruments add to the efficacy of the song. Rhythmic gestures, jumping, dancing and running add up to the weight of the song and make it more incisive. Songs well - endowed with rhythm, action - songs, story - related - songs, songs suitable for indoor games, question and answer songs, number - related songs, and of course group songs add to the variety and charm of songs.

7) Intellectual growth of the child in pre-primary education

Handling books, browsing them, free conversation, visits to out - door - stations etc. help the intellectual growth of the child.

Books make the child responsible and skilled, giving them a sense of possession and mastery. Books

introduce pictures, numbers, words, colour and shapes to a child. A Television - Video - or a Computer

MUSHROOMING PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS S.LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

1. Schools open pre-primary wings in order to ensure clientele for their primary sections.
2. They collect exorbitant fees from the pre-primary school children.
3. Ordinary teachers with no special training in handling pre-primary school (P.P.S) children are appointed.
4. The teachers and managements often do not have any scientific approach.
5. These pre-primary schools impose books on their children against scientific conventions.
6. The society at large is allowed to escape the responsibility of educating the parents.
7. There is no regulatory authority for pre-primary schools.
8. Too many books create an aversion for studies in the mind of the child.

(The Hindu)

screen also does the same, and makes the visual more lively and dynamic.

Story - books, song - books, books that teach the child numbers and alphabets, informative and communicative books and cartoon - books which delight the child, combine to introduce the child to a new world of knowledge.

Scientific, analytical and integrative thinking can solve the problems for a child. Thinking and intellect can inspire the curiosity of the child to know more about the objects around it.

Well - designed toys bring out the scientific spirit of the child's instinct. The child analyses a toy by taking its parts away, and integrates the parts to form the whole toy once again. By instinct, a child is a scientist. Observation, experimentation, verification, generalisation etc., the basic concepts of science, are picked up by the child in a p.p.e. centre. The child can be helped to discover what it does not know. It can also observe the similarities and dissimilarities between two objects or two experiences, or two qualities. A child should be exposed to a variety of experiences from which it can choose a satisfying experience. Learning to argue, think, enact, accept or refute on a logical basis, a child becomes very enthusiastic to learn and meditate. Knowledge grows through new experiences and new objects and through child's reactions to them. A simple schedule of zoological, botanical, physical, chemical, mathematical teaching can be built with locally available and locally relevant material.

8) Learning through playing:

A child's world consists of a lot of playful activities. A child, like Brahman of Vedanta, is playful by nature, purposeless, efficient, self - less, and delightful action is its play.

A child, through play - acting, rather rehearses its future life. A child's abundant energy releases itself through its play and this release cultures the child's mind and emotions

and trains its intellect. Physical and mental growth, a good digestion, followed by proper appetite etc. are the immediate benefits of a good play - session for a child. Perspiration, better blood - circulation, deep breathing, strong bones and flexible joints are other outcomes of a play - session. A play - field is an excellent place for the child to express its feelings. The child is made active, busy. The plays and games prepare the child for anticipating life's opportunities and threats. Cleverness and spontaneous and quick reaction to external stimuli, are other traits inculcated by game - plays in a child. Perhaps the greatest contribution play - games make to the life of the child is to prepare it to encash opportunities. Responsibility, self - confidence, completing a given job, leadership qualities are all imbibed by a playful - child. Intensifying its feelings, the child gets an emotional release. A sense of fulfilment or satisfaction follows a play - session. A proper coordination of a child's eyes, hands, feet, mind and muscles is a great education for a child, earned in a play - session. A child learns to play within the frame - work of rules, and learns to be honest, to obey the leader and to cooperate with team - mates. A play - field truly builds the character of a child.

A spirit of fair competition, taking success and defeat as parts of life, practising humility in success and dignity in defeat, and learning to treat a victor with grace and without envy are other qualities learnt in a play - field.

In this manner constructive activities shape a child's mind and promote integrated growth.



I. **W**hy a Nursery school?

1) When a child grows, it should learn how to make proper use of its limbs. It should learn the use and purpose of every one of its actions.

2) A child should learn to express its emotions precisely. The child wishes to learn of the world and needs to express itself to the world outside. A nursery school fulfills this need.

3) To develop an innocent child into a properly endowed human being, a nursery school is essential. The institution acts as a bridge between home and the society at large.

4) The nursery provides the child with an opportunity to play and socialise with its peers - other children of same age group.

5) It is the nursery school that can afford to provide the child with all play- materials and educational aids.

6) The children of parents working in farms and factories are left uncared for. They require the protective care of nursery schools to help them to grow in an organized manner.

7) A nursery provides the right combination of freedom and restriction, to the child.

8) To wean the child away from the confinement of its home and acclimatise it to the society outside, a nursery training is helpful.

9) A nursery is meant to help the child in its all - round growth.

II How did nursery schools come into existence?

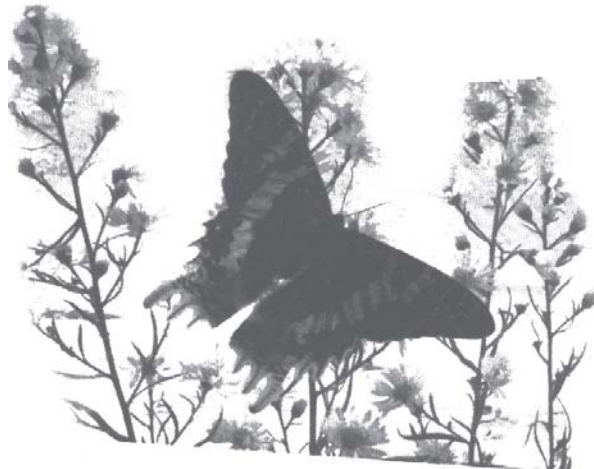
A variety of socio-economic reasons helped nursery schools for children of preprimary - age - group to come to existence.

a) In times of war, nursery institutes helped war widows and war - orphans to come together and find solace in each others' company.

b) Industrial revolution and urbanization led to the break - up of joint families. Nuclear families which emerged left the children deprived of the care by family members. Nursery institutions try to fill the gap.

c) Female literacy, empowerment and freedom have combined to send children to nurseries.

THE ROLE OF CRECHES/ NURSERY SCHOOLS/ PRE-PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS (COMPILED)



d) Much psychological research, carried out in the last two centuries has sensitised the parents and educators to the need of preprimary training for children. This is the age group when a child picks up things fast.

c) Medical knowledge has proved that defects of children both physical and psychological, can be remedied if detected early. Nursery schools also serve the corrective and rehabilitative purposes.

III) What exactly does a nursery - school seek to do?

a) A nursery institution (N.I.) seeks to fulfill the basic physical and psychological needs of a child.

b) It gives, or trains parents / *balasevikas* to give, the basic inputs such as food, shelter, dress, air, water, right type of environment etc. to the child.

c) It is in the nursery institution that the crucial psychological necessities of the child, namely a sense of protection and security, love, freedom, encouragement, action based creativity etc. are fulfilled.

d) A N.I. is an extension of a home.

A Balasevika is a surrogate mother.

e) A NI encourages the motor actions of the child by engaging it in games and plays and gives it play - materials and toys.

f) A NI helps the child in regulating its emotional upsurges.

g) A child's instincts are regulated, trained and cultured in a N.I.

h) It is a NI that quenches the intellectual curiosity of a child and eggs on its inquisitiveness.

i) The tastes of the child are refined so that he/she can discriminate and enjoy the best. When a child experiences love of nature etc., it wishes to cultivate similar tastes and sharpen them.

j) A child from a state of dependence, learns to stand on its own legs. It develops into a self-sufficient and self-supporting human being through the N.I.

h) Positive attitudes, creativity etc., are inculcated in a child in a N.I.

l) Proper habits and routines are imbibed by the child. Timely and correct dosages of food, sleep, learning to perform ablutions at proper times and proper places, healthy habits and manners, a sense of duty etc. are learnt by the child in a NI.

m) A NI encourages the integrated development of the child, combining physical activity, emotional stirrings, intellectual and linguistic abilities, social, patriotic and spiritual consciousness etc.

n) A NI prepares the child for higher levels of learning and formal education. In a N.I., reading, writing and arithmetic are not directly taught. But there is hidden and covert training of the child in these aspects of learning and the

child prepares itself in the NI for education proper, at the primary, or formal school.

Integrated Development of a Child Dr. G. Pankajam

1) A child has many dimensions of growth. Its physical development, proper and rightly proportionate physical growth, weight - gain, freedom from diseases and physical and functional efficiency form the basis of the child's growth.

2) Motor development: The child should move about and function normally. It should employ its muscles properly and the body should be helpful in the social functions of the child. A variety of games and exercises help the child in this dimension of growth.

3) Cognitive Development: From the sensory motor development - stage to formal operational stage, the child grows gradually.

4) Language development.

5) Concept formation.

6) Intellectual development.

7) Emotional development.

8) Social development including patriotic feelings.

9) Spiritual development.

(From Dr. G. Pankajam's Book - "Pallimun-parruvakkalvi" - Lakshmi Seva Sangam - Gandhigram - 1992)



EVERGREEN-STORIES

Leela Madhusudan

1. The bygone times saw children grow up at least till the age of five, enjoying their grandparents' love, affections and above all listening to their stories, which indirectly educated them and influenced their lives to a great deal. Stories of great warriors and their heroic deeds can inspire and instill courage and determination in the young minds. They can inculcate a sense of patriotism by listening to the life stories of Jhansi Rani.
2. The present generation kids are glued to TV having no one to entertain them at home.
3. The scenes from the small or big screen affect the psyche of the children with a negative effect.
4. The stories narrated by elders at home, unlike TV serials, are of short duration.
5. A small child understands from the elders that virtuous deeds are rewarded and evils punished.
6. Stories also contribute to the all-round development of a child. Right type of character formation is helped. Early lessons of honesty, punctuality, sincerity, efficiency and politeness, are imparted to the children.
7. Development of rational thinking, understanding the need for planning, (thought before action) and problem solving capacities, are the other gains from listening to the stories.
8. Children will understand how cleverness, intelligence and presence of mind can overcome the obstacles in life.
9. Expressing curiosity by asking a variety of questions, eagerness to know etc. are other benefits that the children get from stories.
10. Stories warm up the minds children and help in developing their retention capacity. The central idea contained in them remains with the children for years to come. When they recollect the stories, their memory is stirred up and the children get increased capacity for information-storage.
11. Today, parents and teachers can use stories as an effective medium for cultural and traditional education. Stories can elaborate the importance of religious festivals and ceremonies.
12. Stories teach languages to the children. A healthy reading habit, learning to use libraries, references books and, voice modulation techniques are learnt.



13. The teacher also should have the flair for narrating stories to the children.

OVER-INDULGING IN COMPUTER-LEARNING G. GAUTAMA

As we enter the 21st century, children believe that machine is more powerful, better than a living human being. The machine has acquired status, become a symbol of power and modernity with available future. The young are growing and learning. What question does this kind of thinking pose to the establishment, educational institutions, teachers and parents?

While the computer's limitations are not being adequately understood, one is not sure, whether talking about the dangers is relevant. Whether we like it or not machines are here for good. They are going to occupy increasing, physical spaces, psychological spaces particularly for the younger generation. Human society has a tremendous resilience for legitimizing things which are not fully acceptable.



FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILD BEHAVIOUR

MRS.J.K.PILLAI

As more and more mothers are going out to work and therefore have less time to spend with their children, especially the young ones, does the mental health of the children suffer?

Are the children likely to become delinquents as they view violence on TV more and more?

What are the effects of divorce on children?

Why do some parents become baby batterers?

Are boys more intelligent than girls?

Why are some children educationally backward?

Psychologists have been interested in studying the process of development of children and have been examining such social problems to find out answers useful to society. It would be wrong to suggest that modern psychology has final answers to all the questions. Human behaviour is very complex and it is very difficult to assess. Current knowledge available on the various factors which influence child behaviour and learning are highlighted.

Babies come into the world as individuals. They are neither good nor bad when they are born but have the potential to become either good or bad through his interactions with the various environmental factors. Child's development occurs in a social context. Not only does the environment act on the child but the child too can act on his environment. Parents can enhance or suppress the child's educational potential. It is also true that a child is never just a passive being that one can mould into whatever shape the adults desire. The phenomenon of baby battering which has attracted so much attraction in the recent years is not really something new. It is probably as old as the family itself. Various investigations have revealed that violence results from a combination of several factors such as financial and occupational problems facing the family-members and friends, inadequacy of the parents and some characteristics of the child himself. There is evidence to show that the battered children are the most difficult children – either sickly, born prematurely, faced feeding problems or sleeping troubles. Being more difficult to rear, they make extra demands that the parents are not able to meet, and thus the child unwittingly invites trouble.

There is a widespread belief that children especially in the pre-school period require full time mothering and that it is the duty of the mothers to stay with the child night and day – otherwise the child's mental health would suffer.

Comparisons of children with mothers at work and those with mothers at home have not found any difference between them. It has been found that children who go to well-run, well-equipped, crèches/day care-centers, with the

extra stimulation they get through play materials and contact with other children, gain both socially and intellectually. There is no evidence to show that the child's attachment to the mother is in any way diluted by a daily period of being apart. But one has to make sure, that the quality of the substitute care provided in crèches/day care centers is satisfactory. It has also been found that mothers, who go out to work not only develop a sense of self-worth and self-esteem but are capable of having a warm interaction with the child while spending 'quality time' with them.

It has been established that there is nothing magical about the blood bond. Children do equally well with good adoptive parents as with good biological parents, since successful parenting is a matter of particular personality characteristics and not of "blood". There is also no truth in the notion that fathers cannot carry out the functions of parenting as mothers.

No one doubts that children learn from television. There is enough testimony to show that they learn efficiently from instructional television. But an average child tends to view more of fantasy and formula programmes such as cartoons and films. In the early years of childhood when he is quite foggy about the story-world and the real-world, the mass media content has greater impact on children, if they believe that it "really happened". Many children get suggestions for their future lives from what they see in the TV. But delinquency cannot be explained in terms of simple reasons such as



heredity or poverty or lack of discipline or watching TV. A combination of circumstances needs to be considered if one has to explain delinquency. Open disagreements in the family, marital conflicts, inter-generational conflicts, impact of alcoholic fathers, divorce and broken homes etc. lead to increased aggressiveness, antisocial behaviour and delinquency in children. Due to the embarrassment and stress caused by the adverse changes in the family, children become "problem children". Late arrival to school, unaccountable absences, unpopularity among other children, sudden display of violent

T.V. VIEWING AND CHILDREN

Alladi Prabhakar

1. Watching T.V. certainly depresses the students' academic achievements. Quite a few programmes are useless.
2. Those children who are able to select items for viewing and practise restraint are found to do better academically than non-viewers or over-indulgent viewers.
3. American children are not high viewers. But Japanese children are addicts to the idiot box.
4. T.V. viewing has declined radically in the U.S.
5. Moderation for Indian children, with restricted view of cultural and current events is the ideal dose.
6. Heavy views take a toll. Students are radically affected if the children exceed 3 hours a day of T.V. viewing. One hour should be sufficient.

temper, being moody etc., are traced to difficulties at home.

The child resorts to cheating in examinations, if he is afraid of meeting the parent's anger when he gets poor marks. Research indicates that poor living conditions, economic problems, stress in the family, conflict among family members, unstimulating environment, lack of cultural and leisure facilities experienced by lower economic and social status families, act as powerful handicaps to the educational progress of the child.

Many factors influence children's learning. It is through language that the child is able to indulge in complex thinking which leads to intelligent behaviour. Verbally fluent, expressive households have enormous advantage over the child whose home is verbally impoverished. Talking to the child, encouraging him with verbal praise and conversing with him help the child to build up a working vocabulary. Lack of verbal skills makes the child isolated; he does not make friends easily, but becomes physically aggressive and ill-mannered.

The ability to think clearly and sensibly is needed to grasp concepts. Children go through three stages of thinking – thinking based on doing, based on imagery and based on languages and symbols. Practical experience is the first step for thinking and conceptualization.

Both lateral and vertical thinking are involved in intelligent behaviour. Usually we concentrate on vertical thinking or logical thinking. More opportunity for lateral thinking such as problems of brain-teasing-varieties, quizzes, puzzles etc. improve their intelligent quotients.

Encouragement of divergent thinking, nonconformist answers, flexible thinking, playing with ideas, fantasizing etc. promote creative thinking among children.

There are no genetic differences in intelligence between races. Nor are there any difference based on sex. In a given population, there are as many intelligent girls as boys and as many dull boys as girls.

A number of factors influence the child's ability to learn. Cognitive factors like intelligence, creativity and memory, affective factors like motivation, social factors like maturation, age, sex, social background and study habits are of great relevance to learning.

Learning for reward is preferable to learning under punishment.

Learning motivated by probability of success is preferable to learning motivated by fear of failure.

Children with high-esteem and low-anxiety perform better than children with low-esteem and high-anxiety.

Meaningful material and meaningful tasks are learnt more readily than meaningless material and tasks.

Good study habits are increasingly important as the child grows older and takes responsibility for his own learning.

Notable differences exist between individual children in speed of learning, energy output, depth of feeling and facility of insight. Learning opportunity should meet the needs of the learner and adapted to their levels of maturity.

Children need models more than they need critics in building up character and values.

(From The Hindu)



CULTIVATING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN

DR.R.PARTHASARATHY

In his book, 'Working with emotional intelligence', Daniel Goleman includes the following five basic emotional and social competencies:

Self awareness: Knowing what we are, feeling at the moment, and using those preferences to guide our decision making; having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and well grounded sense of self-confidence.

Self-regulation: Handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; recovering well from emotional distress.

Motivation: Using our deepest preferences to move and guide us toward our goals, to help us take initiative and strive to improve, and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations.

Empathy: Sensing what people feel, being able to take their perspective and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people.

Social skills: Handling emotions in relationships well and accurately reading social situations and networks; interacting smoothly; using these skills to persuade and lead, negotiate and settle disputes, for cooperation and team work.

These five components of emotional intelligence pave the way for actualizing or utilizing our potentials to the fullest extent. The experts have indicated that emotional intelligence does not mean merely 'being nice'. At strategic moments, it may demand not 'being nice', but rather, bluntly confronting someone with an uncomfortable but consequential truth they have been avoiding. Secondly, emotional intelligence does not mean giving free rein to feelings. Rather, it means managing

feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals. Finally, our level of emotional intelligence is not fixed genetically, nor does it develop only in early childhood. Unlike IQ, which changes little after our teen years, emotional intelligence seems to be largely learned, and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences – our competence in it can keep growing.

The personal and social competencies do not develop in a vacuum. Our socializing processes, especially the socializing agents – family and school, play a vital role in cultivating emotional intelligence in children.



UNBURDENING THE CURRICULUM LOAD

J.S.RAJPUT

Formative years of learning

The initiation of a child into the learning process is a matter of great contemplation. Generations of educationists have reflected deeply upon the necessity to strike a balance between the traditional tools of imparting basic knowledge to small children and the contemporary technology available to simplify the early learning process. All around the world, children are going to school at a rather young age—as early as two years of age. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), is the stage when the child is prepared for the primary school stage. Parents of today are perhaps the first generation to have benefited from the pre-school education process. Quite understandably, they place a high degree of importance upon their child's evolving mind being furnished with the right setting for assimilation of appropriate scientific temper and social outlook. The latest venture of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), of developing a new curriculum framework, began in 1999 and after extensive consultation and consensus building, finalized in the form of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education. Pre-school education and primary education have been given special treatment in the new proposals out of a consensus that the learning experience at the very beginning of education can play a crucial role in the later education of children. At the ECCE stage, it is proposed to informalise the process completely. Learning, at this stage may be characterized by group activities, play-way techniques, language games, number games and a range of activities directed to promote social adaptability and environmental awareness in children. The use of the three Ps—pleasure, perception and participation needs to be emphasised upon.

Children need to be attracted to the learning process and the response should be spontaneous. It is envisaged that such an approach would ensure readiness to learn and do away with curriculum load which might damage their neuro-muscular capabilities. Formal teaching of subjects, reading and writing must be clearly prohibited. Further,



ECCE needs to be made uniformly available to all children of the country to ensure equity.

During this period, there ought to be opportunities to use the language orally and listen to it in the natural interactive mode. Children should be provided with ample opportunities for developing essential skills of identification, comparison, matching, naming, drawing and counting, without subjecting them to formal ways of learning numbers. Social awareness can be instilled in children by facilitation of child-to-child interaction and organizing activities helpful in developing positive attitudes, reflexes and habits for healthy social participation. They should be encouraged to play with pets, identify the common birds, animals, plants, means of

transportation and celestial bodies like the sun, moon and the stars.

After the child crosses five years of age, it enters the primary schooling stage. The NCERT's New Curriculum Framework has visualized the primary stage in two segments with inherent internal continuity. The first segment comprises standards one and two, a period where transition from informal to formal education should be smooth. The child gets to face the blackboard for the first time, observes basic classroom discipline and interacts with peer groups.

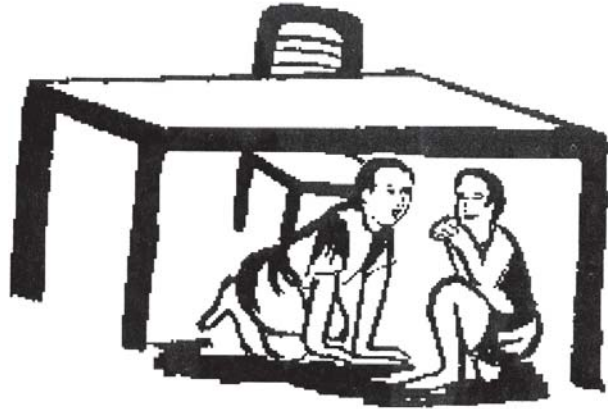
The second segment consists of standards three through five, when layers of understanding of basic systems are gradually implanted on the youngsters' minds. During this stage, the child is prepared to understand the environment and learn in a systematic way.

NCERT's scheme of studies for the first of the two segments is as follows: (1) one language – which may be mother tongue or the regional language. (2) mathematics and (3) art of healthy and productive living. It is envisaged that the teaching of the language and mathematics will constitute an integrated whole, taking



in to its fold the natural and man-made environment. The teaching process will be fully woven around the environmental concerns. About the art of healthy and productive learning, it can be said that these are visualized to contribute towards all-round development of the personality of the child.

The goodness of healthy living can be explained by organizing games, teaching *yoga*, music, drama, drawing, painting, and clay modelling. In organizing these activities, local factors may be given



due importance. The children will be encouraged to participate in creative activities such as free-hand drawing and painting. They will be involved in the activities related to work-education, so as to enable them to be free from inhibitions and promote a good work-culture. For furnishing their minds with sound values, they will be treated to stories and anecdotes from a variety of spiritual tomes drawn from every religion and school of thought.

For the second stage, standards three through five, the NCERT has structured the learning process in this way: (a) one language: the mother tongue or regional language; (b) mathematics; (c) environmental studies; and (d) art of healthy and productive living. This is the stage when the child's mind will be developed so that the child grows with a scientific temper. They will be provided with experiences to help their socio-emotional and cultural development with a realistic awareness and perception of the

physical world around them. This may be accomplished by stimulating the power of observation, classification, comparison and the drawing of inferences through activities conducted within and outside the classroom.

The integrated approach would be most suitable to achieve the desired objectives. The knowledge assimilated in the previous segment will be further strengthened by ensuring the participation of all children in the activities related to music, dance, drama, drawing and painting, puppetry, health and physical education, games and sport, *yoga* and productive work.

Much discussion has been stimulated over the language learning approach proposed in the primary stage. The NCERT believes that during the formative years of learning, language instruction is crucial not just for meaningful learning in all the subject areas, but also to the learner's emotional, cognitive and social development. It is a harsh Indian reality that we are still witnessing the admissions process to the educational system of the first generation learners who need to be given special treatment because of the strong probability of them dropping out. It is estimated that the dropout rate at the end of the primary stage is as high as 35 per cent. Failure to teach language skills properly and adequately in the child's early years may lead to serious impairment of his absorption and retaining powers at higher stages, thereby pushing him to drop out. Above all, language education must aim at encouraging independent thinking, free and effective expression of opinion and logical interpretation of the events of the past and the present.

Despite general acceptance of the importance of language education, the practical side has been ignored for too long. The oral aspect of language has to be emphasized and oral examinations in language must be made an integral part of evaluation process. Emphasis would have to shift from the teaching of textbooks to extensive general reading.

Finally, children should be encouraged to use the language in speech and writing for academic purposes, at work places and otherwise.

(The author is the Director of the National Council of educational Research and Training NCERT. The article is from The Hindu)

Needs of a child attending a Nursery institution (Collected)

When the child comes out of the mother's eye-range for the first time, it feels very insecure. The (Nursery Institution) should provide the child a sense of security and protection and prepare the child to withstand the trauma of separation from its mother and train it for increasing self dependence. The child should get enough opportunities for playing especially with self - corrective educational toys. The child gets training in socialization by interacting with other children. Mental and intellectual growth is assured. The children are trained in the art of conversation, asking questions and getting answers. The analytical intelligence of a child gets an opportunity for growth in the N.I.

A child expects others to handle it with compassion and treat its fears and apprehensions with sympathy.

Self - dignity, independence in action and freedom of the child should be nurtured and expressed. Its enthusiasm, creativity and flair for collecting or making beautiful objects should get outlets in a N.I.

The child's right for total physical, mental, intellectual, social and spiritual growth is fulfilled in a N.I.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS ON SCHOOL CURRICULUM

ANURADHA, PAWAN ETAL

Our earlier study, A Matter of Quality as well as the present one, has revealed very forcefully that instead of developing any analytical or critical skills, the school succeeds in replacing the old values, beliefs with new and alien ones. This erodes the confidence and self-esteem of the child and ultimately demoralises society by disparaging all that is one's own – be it the lifestyle, clothes, language, food, occupations, manner of thinking, knowledge systems, etc – and creates a division between the school and the home. The children start coveting and imitating all that is western under the mistaken belief that it will make them 'developed' and 'modern'.

To regain the strength of our society, we need to restore the self-esteem of our children. This can be done by giving them the confidence about their own systems. This is difficult because modern education has mesmerised everyone to such an extent that only certain ways of thinking, are considered as 'rational' and 'scientific' while the rest are clubbed as superstitious or unscientific; only certain things are progressive, while the rest are 'backward'. Therefore to rebuild our indigenous strengths it is essential that we simultaneously challenge the symbols of 'modernity' in order to recover the spaces usurped by the dominant paradigm. It is only when the children are be freed from its stronghold can they recover the ground to find their roots, correct the mistakes and realise their strengths.

Therefore we need to make an assessment of the problems created by the modern schooling system. It is not just the textbooks but also the values upheld by the school teachers and their administrative bureaucracy that get communicated to children in schools. This needs to be investigated and steps taken to rectify the damage.



Textbooks/Curriculum:

We need to conduct a critical analysis of primary and secondary school textbooks at the national level to see the impact of the damage done to rural lifestyles and the confidence of the people and make appropriate corrections.

If our textbooks can have stories which show a *mullah* or the *pundit* or the *sadhu* as a charlatan then we should similarly have stories about the lawyer, the doctor, the bureaucrat, and the scientist also depicted as sometimes cheating people. We can show that frauds and good people exist in every profession. This will help restore the balance.

Our textbooks depict Mr. Singh as a person who is shown walking with a dog and a stick wearing a suit (obviously educated and affluent) while his *mali* (gardener) called Budhua is shown wearing a *dhoti* (obviously not educated and poor in the eyes

of the textbook writer). It is important to see how distorted values can be imparted to children even through one such picture. Our textbooks show a clean house as one where there is no cow but a dirty house where there is a cow and cow dung. This gives a very strong message to our rural children to refrain from farming and keeping a cow.

To restore the balance in the society which is getting completely mesmerised by “*modernity*”, the children must also be encouraged to understand that ‘science also makes mistakes.’ There are umpteen examples of medicines which have been banned after fresh discoveries. These can be brought to the notice of children to show that the modern medical system is not flawless. A large number of diseases are themselves caused by the modern medical system. That technologies like fertilisers or pesticides also have adverse side effects.

The children must learn to make distinctions. For instance between *saksharta* (literacy) and *shiksha* (closest would be education); between *sukh* (happiness, contentment, peace etc.) and *savidha* (convenience); between *lakshya* (objective e.g. *sukh*) and *madhyam* (medium e.g., conveniences, money etc); between opposite and different. Children need to be taught there is not always an either/or Yes/No, black/white kind of a situation. That things are more often ‘different’ rather than ‘opposite’. These need to be incorporated in the curriculum.

Extracted from ‘Child and the Family’
Society for integrated Development of
Himalayas-Mussorie 2002



TEACHING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY Aruna Appaswamy

1. Teaching methods have to take into consideration not only the syllabus, or the examination but fostering a healthy curiosity.
2. The ability to learn should be developed.
3. Auto-learning should be facilitated.
4. Concept-learning should be promoted. Appropriate questioning techniques have to be adopted.
5. For slow-learners, individual instruction methods are to be practised.
6. Teachers and students have to develop reference skills.
7. Values, character education, methods of knowledge gathering should find places in the curriculum.
8. Cultural education, art-training, appreciation of art to develop our aesthetic sense are needed.

Brain-storming session by teachers, compulsory reading habits, demonstration classes by experts, involvement of teachers to solve the institution's academic problems, in-service training for teachers, feed back from students etc. will improve the campus atmosphere and help the institution fulfill its objective.

(From The Hindu)

Education is the manifestation of
perfection already in man.
- Swami Vivekananda.

THE MONTESSORI WAY

VASANTHA NADARASSAN

To form a democratic society, it is important to cultivate democratic attitudes in children when they are tender. To inculcate such feelings and attitudes Madam Maria Montessori, chose two-and-a-half years as the optimum age after extensive experiment on child development.

It is due to the lack of such values that people have no chance for social interactions. When people grow older they become shy, backward, develop inferiority or superiority complex, with a disturbed "psyche." Sometimes they become bossy without being direct and simple. They expect others to do what they want, otherwise get irritable. People are jealous and stubborn, over - possessive many a times, with all sorts of negative attitudes. They misunderstand others without a valid reason, lose their temper and are easily influenced by wrong conditions. They spend their time and energy, thinking, talking and laughing at other's mistakes. Lack of gratitude, or respect for elders - all these lead to unacceptable behaviour in society. Such uncaring attitudes develop social disasters and ultimately harm national integrity. Social factors/skills cannot be taught, she says it comes from experience and not from explanations.

Dr. Maria Montessori, experimented it scientifically in classrooms, calling it the "Society of New Children," a society by "Cohesion." By this she meant to imply that it was something formed by an attraction among the

children and not imposed from outside. It is based first of all on respect for their rights of others - for example, children would never think of quarrelling with one another over the apparatus. Thus, she had only one set of each apparatus in the class designed for the special purpose. If any problem arose over priority they did not run to the teacher but they were capable of solving them by mutual consent and agreement. The teacher gives them perfect freedom and observes the phenomenon of

Beating joy out of a child

When a parent or a teacher beats a child into submission, his/her innocence is destroyed; the child's life becomes utterly joyless.

A violent childhood may lead to a violent adulthood. A child who faces the wrath of an adult grows up believing that violence is the answer to all problems. Such children become complex individuals. Corporal punishment makes a boy or a girl sullen and defiant. Often his/her intellectual development slows down in the absence of congenial peace. They lack confidence, become nervous and in some cases become bullies. Ultimately the rod fails. On the contrary it causes greater indiscipline and suffering.

(From The Hindu)

perfect discipline. This is the society of New Children - a normalised one. They learn to wait for their turns.

These little ones live in a higher plane. Theirs is truly a cooperative society. First, there is reciprocal help. The older children help the younger and the younger help each other. They show respect for and interest in each other. There is no envy, there is only admiration among the children when one newly succeeds in a task.

The admiration is spontaneous just as we admire the work of a great sculptor. When the child has the misfortune to break something, he is very sorry, because when the children

are at this stage they are not destructive. They are concerned and they handle the materials with care. If such an incident takes place, other children console him and help him to tidy up.

Children can also become a moral help to one another-when one child is a disturber in the class, when no one has corrected him, another one says "you are naughty - but you must become good." This bad behaviour is a misfortune and the unfortunate child is helped, which goes a long way to form the character of the children to care for the lesser fortunate, like the disabled, handicapped and elderly when they become adults in society. They learn to put back the materials in the same place, once they have finished it. This helps them to be patient and give due respect to others which is more important in adult life for sharing and caring habits within the family and in society.

All these little things bring about understanding and sympathy towards each other. Gradually, a harmonious atmosphere is developed which gives them a marvellous spirit of serenity. Here freedom and discipline come together. But usually we think they do not go together. Actually there is no freedom without discipline. This harmonious combination leads to a real building up of a democratic society later when they become adults. Order is the basis of this harmony.

Some activities are done in groups. The children learn to have the same aim and work

together in order to achieve it. They aim at perfection. They have to be relaxed and gain self-mastery of mind and body which becomes a unifying experience. The children understand that they have to help each other in order to achieve the results. Peace and joy are the result of this combined effort. In adult life too these efforts will make them achieve wonderful results by grouping themselves in society for achieving common benefits.



An adult society organised as a constructive society on the same basis as these children will be a natural society of cohesion. Attachment to other people is the first stage which brings all men to work for common good. Our forefathers such as Mahatma Gandhiji and Ambedkar had envisaged and strived for such a society.

Whenever a child is in need, other children immediately run to help and furnish the task. Thus, they have a social activity. They cooperate with each other in useful activities. Cooperation in this way is the consequence of a free life

with free activity.

They also have a social discipline. It's not a forced discipline. No one orders them but they do everything harmoniously together, but what we find in schools as discipline is a social error.



It is the discipline of the school but not a preparation for social life, because in society each one chooses his/her work, each must do different things but all must work in harmony with due respect to each other.

Gradually, a construction becomes obvious in these children which cannot be seen in deviated children. Even if the teacher is not in the class they will work properly - what we see in normal schools, such as children shouting once the teacher is out of the class or children rushing out madly through the gates are reactions to an unnatural discipline.

This, on the contrary is an environment of real work and real responsibilities. Slowly, the child takes the sentiment of the group. He feels proud and happy to belong to this group. This is the rudimentary expression of social sentiment. Later, this is identified by the child, he is happy to belong to his class, school team or even country. He is proud not only about his work but also about the wholesome achievement of his group. This is more complex kind of unity. It is a higher sentiment such as love for the nation.



We often think that freedom and obedience are two contrasting things. But children who do enjoy freedom are obedient. Because this obedience comes from the formation of an individual as a result of inner growth, otherwise it is external and is real repression. The real obedience blossoms unto the perfection of an individual. None other than one who is a master of himself can obey. If we do not have the "inner discipline" it is difficult to obey. Children who are happy, harmonious and are at peace will obey their teacher, the teacher who asks and never commands.

Character formation is the most important aspect of an individual. A person of character is able to complete his work. Mostly, we find people take up different things



and unable to complete any of them. They are incapable of decision-making. They are not sure of themselves. They are like children who cannot act independently. How do we build up a good character, what can we do about it, are the vital questions parents and teachers are facing now in our society. But everything becomes futile without proper character. If a child has no patience he cannot understand what we want to preach or teach him. If they are indecisive it is useless to tell them to decide for themselves. These qualities can be developed through experience and exercise so what we have to do is simple as this.

We have to give the children enough opportunity to exercise themselves in these respects in everyday life.

They must have opportunities to exercise all these virtues which together form a strong, good character. Life is based on choice, all day in numerous situations, so that they learn to make their decisions. They cannot acquire these qualities through obedience to the command of another. If he is to be proficient, he has to practise. He





has to practise to become an adult in the same way.

The formation of character cannot be taught, it comes from experience and not by explanations - everything needs long preparation and much practice. Moral instructions alone cannot achieve the wonderful results we get from a Montessorian environment. It would be easy to govern if one could make people better by fine words. The greater part of knowledge comes



through continuous exercise. We may change the exercise but we must continue to practise, otherwise we stand to lose what we have gained. Therefore children must not be abandoned. They need the teacher for quiet guidance and positive expectation. They must have the right opportunities for both these aspects should be fulfilled with day-to-day consistency and continuity. Then when the children are at this stage they naturally exercise themselves and do

much more than children of this age are generally capable of.

Social development, the question of character formation, the relationship between the teacher and the child, etc. are to be planned according to Dr. Maria Montessori, the great educationist and scientist of child development.



Children are naturally full of love and sympathy. They develop these qualities without direct help from the teacher, the marvellous activity and discipline come naturally according to her. They become remarkable men and women later but it is left to us to make use of her scientific techniques devised with great care.

“Child is the father of the man” - the hidden powers of the child await understanding and helpful approach of the adult to blossom.



**CHILDREN CANNOT
SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES**

They depend on us to speak for them.

They are powerless.

They suffer most when resources are maldistributed.

They need us to bring their very special needs to the notice the powerful.

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD THROUGH YOGA PRACTICES

DR.H.R.NAGENDRA ETAL

a) Personality development at the physical level:

Does the growth of physical personality imply a bulky body weighing 100 kgs.? An ideal body has the following features:

- (i) A proportionate body with all the muscles relaxed in normal state. It is soft like a flower, flexible to the core.
- (ii) Instantaneously, it can acquire a diamond's hardness. Having all the organs and systems in the body with least abnormalities is the first feature of a good personality at the physical level. The chronic and acute ailments are thus absent in such a body. It is here that the therapeutic application of *yoga* is cutting grounds.

The second aspect of personality development at the physical level is to make the body work more efficiently by using the energies in the most controlled fashion. At resting periods, all the muscles metabolic rate is very low. During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body. At critical times, under conditions of high stress, the functions of the organs so nicely co-ordinate regions which need more energy. The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation. This 'stamina' of the harnessing of the inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such co-ordination, can be effectively accomplished by *yogic* practices. It is in this area of application of *YOGA* that specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen and dancers are keenly interested and are putting *yoga* to utmost use.

b) Personality Development – Mental Level

The power of imagination – 'creativity' and 'steadfastness or will power' are the two aspects of the mind which come under this head of personality proper

printing. It has been seen that *yogic* practices enhance the creative power of man. As such, many musicians, poets, film-artists, engineers and technologists have been attracted to *yoga*.



'Will Power' is an essential requirement for all persons to accomplish any work however insignificant or great the task be. *Yoga* by its systematic and conscious process of calming down the mind erases the weaknesses in the mind and builds 'will power' into it. Into such a mind, each challenge arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation and bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfast to the core, such a person takes up with marvelous sobriety the challenges in life and converts them to opportunities for accomplishing his mission.

c) Intellectual Level

in the modern era of science, a sharp intellect and the faculty of reason play a key-role in the scheme of education. Rather than mechanical



cramming up of information, thinking and understanding are valued more in the learning process. The children are taught right from the primary stage to think logically and scientifically.

The capacity to analyse and correlate relevant information forms the function of the intellect; concentration is the expression; precision is the outcome.

However, this enhanced power of the sharpened intellect associated with deep powerful concentration among the 'intellectual cream' of the society has also bound man to the whirlpool of the strong clutches of deep concentration. Though it is torturous and he, very much wants to come out of it, he cannot. His worries and attachments do not release him. The development of personality at the intellectual level should not only result in an intense sharpening of the intellect sharpened intellect. Swami Vivekananda rightly emphasizes, 'Concentration and Detachment' as the two vital parts of education. Not only should it be possible for one to delve deep into any subject on hand but also be able to come out of it any moment. It is again the speciality of YOGA that can bring about this



comprehensive development of the intellect. As we have seen, *YOGA* includes the skill to calm down the mind.

Hence, *YOGA* is attracting the attention of many 'intellectual sufferers', bringing them into its fold.

d) Emotional Level :

Our emotions control our behaviours, especially at a crucial juncture. The challenges of the modern era pose a great threat to the emotional faculty of man, probably stronger than ever. Yet, the culturing of the development of our emotional faculties-finds no place in the whole scheme of education. Man looks lost amid the atrocities of life unable to overcome his emotional conflicts, block and turmoils. The result is deep unrest, agony and psychosomatic ailments.



Yoga trains us (i) to systematically sharpen and sensitise our emotions, (ii) to consciously expand and diffuse the overtones and such sensitization.

Thus, *YOGA* offers a fine tool for the development of the emotional personality of man.

e) Spiritual Growth:

A man may have a very sturdy physique, amazing creative power, a powerful intellect and a highly sensitized emotional grasp, yet, may have no idea of spiritual progress. He may not possess even an inkling of the spiritual dimension. What then can be said to characterise the development of personality at the spiritual level. The Kathopanishad defines the same thus : Normally, all of us are so

structured that we look mostly outside ourselves at the environment. The senses grasp the things around them – predominantly the objects of the world outside, solving the problems associated with it, unraveling the mysteries therein using such knowledge to make our life more comfortable and enjoyable; bringing up our children to perpetuate and sustain the society around us; striving to set patterns of behaviour and etiquettes of transactions and so on. We are busy throughout. Notwithstanding this pattern of life, some glimpses into the depths of our inner dimension occasionally flash in all our lives. Very few catch these glimpses but some are awefully struck by the hitherto unknown dimensions hidden within. The search begins; the quest starts.

परांचिखानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूः तस्मात्
 परान् पश्यति न अन्तरात्मन्
 कश्चित् धीरः प्रत्यगात्मनमैक्षत् ।
 आवृत चक्षुः अमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥ कठोपनिषत्

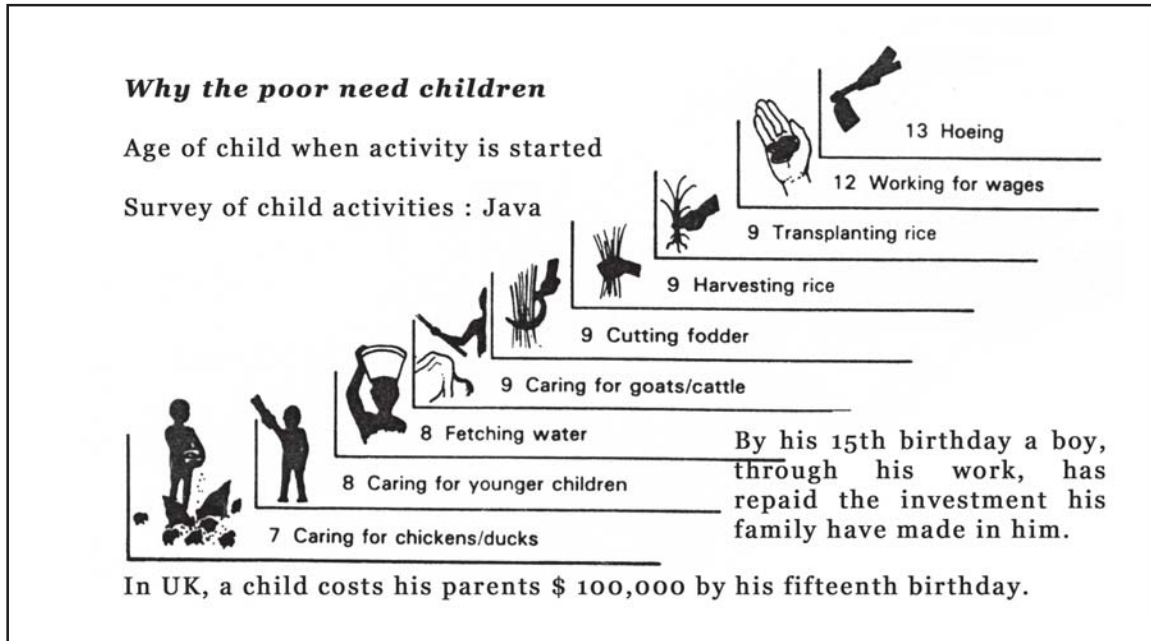
*Paranci khani vyatrnat svayambhuh tasmāt
 paran pasyati nantaratman,
 Kascit dhirah pratyagatmatmanamaiksat avrtta
 caksuh amrtattvamicchān. [Kathopanishad]*

The self-existent lord structures the sense as out-going.

Therefore, one sees the outer things and not the inner Self: a rare, discriminating one, desiring immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the in-dwelling Self.

Then that person is on the march towards spirituality. Thus the spiritual dimension of man concerns itself with the inner world, the move towards the causal state of the mind, the root of the intellect, and the substratum of the emotions when man starts looking inwards. It is this inward journey that marks the beginning of the spiritual quest. An introspection, an inward look, an inner awareness, feature the quest. The subtler layers of the mind unfold themselves; the inner dimensions of the personality open out.

Yoga is not only a process for leading man towards this astounding hidden personality of man by bringing mastery over the body,



mind, intellect and emotional faculties, but also a powerful tool to manifest those hidden potential powers in him. As man progresses his zeal to perfect himself grows. In the process, he learns and understands the expressions of Nature around him. The great scientists and great seekers of reality do not hesitate to open themselves to unknown regions as well. There is an adventure in it for them. The new glimpses of the inner world draw them within. It is this openness, humbleness and humility among the highly developed researchers of the modern scientific era which is making them use yogic practices in their quest. They know no prejudices. Appreciation of such developments by their earlier seekers characterize them. *Yoga* is leading them to open up their spiritual dimensions.

This process of education for the development of personality is a continuous function of one's growth level as portrayed in a schematic. The greater the development of personality, greater will be his educational implications and greater will be the unfoldment of perfection in him. This growth of the individual is coupled with the emergence of the 4-fold consciousness enunciated earlier. Let us try to understand what we mean by them:

f) Civic Sense:

Recognition of the importance of civil rules and regulations laid down by the State in tune with jurisprudence and a wilful adherence to these codes of conduct, a sincere discharge of civic responsibilities as an ardent citizen of the students that if we voluntarily accept and adhere to the rules, there is great joy, satisfaction and growth not only for ourselves but also for all in the society as a whole. Examples: Road traffic rules – avoiding to go round the circle; strikes and destruction of civic amenities.

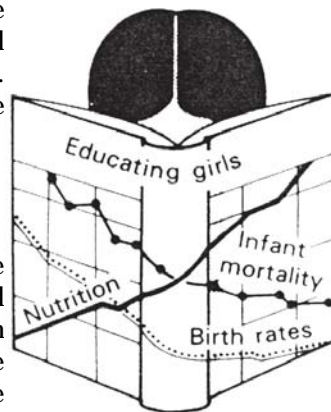
The State should enforce these rules strictly or else the 'Tamas' in man cannot be

shattered. Such enforcements should be accepted by the citizens and we all should help in maintaining law and order in the society which is our primary responsibility.

g) Patriotic Urge :

A deep feeling that I am an Indian and I should strive my best to foster the interest of the country forms the basis of patriotism. This feeling for the country may be evoked in the students by making them aware of our grand culture which is the oldest, of the beautiful resources our Motherland has provided and of the role India has to play in maintaining world peace by carrying the message of real human values. In teaching history, geography, science, etc., we should direct the attention of our students towards the great heritage of our land.

Most of the nations which have achieved great success and growth, built up their country fast, have one common factor – patriotism. Almost every one of the citizens carries this mark of intense love for his country. That spirit



The education of girls is closely associated with a falling infant mortality and birth rate and improved nutrition.

'Train a man and you train an individual; train a woman and you build a nation.'

of patriotism gets expressed even in trivial actions. They are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of the country.

A visitor to Japan lost his wrist watch in a hotel. His complaint was taken quite seriously by the manager and the police were brought in for the search. The visitor was leaving the country and the watch could not

be found. While boarding the plane, the visitor finds the Police Inspector apologizing for the unfortunate incident and requesting the visitor to accept one of the most expensive watches of Japan. After handing over the watch, he appealed, 'I would appreciate if you can hold back the news of this incident to yourself back home'.

Often, patriotism is considered disruptive, especially in an age of global communications seeking world harmony and peace. A right attitude to Nationalism as part of Internationalism would ward off this narrowness and fanaticism. One belongs to his family as well as to the nation and to the world. There is no conflict about the same; The NCERT syllabus should be framed as to invoke interest and develop patriotism among the students.

The names of Scientists, Technologists, Historians, Musicians, etc. from their own country can be invoked as done in Russia could be one of the means by which self-confidence and love for our elders could be infused. Studying the lives of great patriots is yet another powerful means.

Such a spirit of patriotism can channelise the energies of the students in the right direction for national good. Such an atmosphere all around can bring excellence in people.

All over, the national freedom movement had spread like all consuming fire. People sacrificed everything at the altar of Mother Bharat. The spirit had a deep and wide spread impact on the minds of all scientists, artists, etc. That invoked the dormant potentialities in most of the people. Best of talents emerged in this period only. Two Nobel prizes were awarded for outstanding work in Science and Literature. They were only symbols of the emergence of excellence.

The students should be made to realize that there is greater joy in giving than in accumulating for themselves. For the ailing humanity all over the world with greed and speed, love is the need. Service is the penance. The new value system with love and service as the fore-runners is the need of the hour. Let us foster this, right from childhood.

h) Spiritual Urge:

An intense quest to find the REALITY, the meaning and purpose of life, the connection between the world outside and inside, the secret of happiness and misery-forms the basis of spiritual urge. By understanding and experiencing even the simple tenets of spirituality, an appreciation of the grand spiritual heritage can be developed. It is then that a zeal to foster and propagate spiritual wisdom develops. As Swamiji says, 'Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity is the message of spirituality most relevant to the modern era. It has to be inculcated in the students through various programmes.

**From "Yoga in education" VK
YOGAS BANGALORE 1988**



PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION NEEDS OVERHAULING

K.SIVADASAN PILLAI

1. Pre-school education—what and how?

The education offered to children below the age group of 5 years is called pre-school education. It is also termed as nursery education, *kindergarten*, *Balvadis*, *Anganvadis*, *crèche*, play school, etc, to mention a few.

Local names are also prevalent in most States. The usual pattern is to offer children of 3 and 4 years this kind of pre-school education. Even children below 3 years are sent to such institutions or centers.

When both the parents are employed and grandparents are not living with them to look after the kids, (consequent on the emphasis on nuclear family in place of joint family system) children below 1 year are also put into day-care centers. Thus it can be noted that pre-school education has no specific lower age limit. (Upper limit is 5 years – in rare cases children are retained in such institutions after 5 years).

This is mostly in the non-formal sector and run by voluntary agencies or individuals who have a room and a little open space to spare.

2. The approach needed

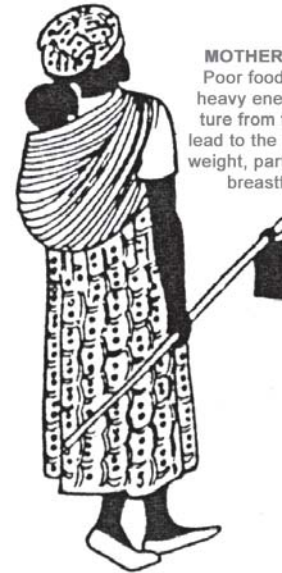
Children are not expected to be taught during pre-school stage. What is expected at this level is to give children "Sensory training". Through observation and real life experience children see, smell, weigh, touch, taste and thereby formulate perception and concepts rhymes are offered to them orally and children sing, dance, play, act etc. according to their aptitudes. Number concept is also indirectly

given to them but nothing formal. But what is happening in most pre-schools is teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Though this is against the pedagogic principles, many parents need this and if any institute or individual declines to do so on principle, they withdraw their children and admit them in some other institution. Most parents ask their wards in the evening what they learnt that day. To satisfy this, the nursery/pre-school teachers are forced to forget "sensory training" and resort to formal teaching.

3. The non-academic factors that influence pre-primary education

It is alleged that entrance tests and interview are conducted before admitting children to L.K.G. classes. What a pity! In some schools, the parents' capacity to donate liberally as and when asked for is verified in interviews. Only the rich who can rise to such frequent demands get their children admitted to such schools. The fees charged also vary. Nearly one year ahead, booking to LKG admission begins. It is even more tough in cases of managements having classes from LKG upto Master's Degree courses in one premises or in the neighbourhood. Thanks to Yashpal Committee who directed the authorities not to



MOTHERS' WEIGHT
Poor food supply and heavy energy expenditure from farming may lead to the mother losing weight, particularly when breastfeeding.

conduct entrance tests and interview at this level, and not to punish children with formal studies and cartload to textbooks, note books etc. How far these suggestions have been implemented, has to be enquired into and remedial measures taken.

4. The right to education!

The right to education is among the fundamental human rights as per the Vienna declaration. In our constitution we are yet to make education a fundamental right. "Literacy is a right, not a privilege". So should be the case with education. This should not be interpreted that any one can pursue any type of education according to one's desire. This should not however affect the sovereignty and solemnity of the nation. India should have an "Enlightened and humane society" as suggested by the Ramamurthy Committee. Indian culture and Indianness should be reflected in our system of education.

5. English at what stage?

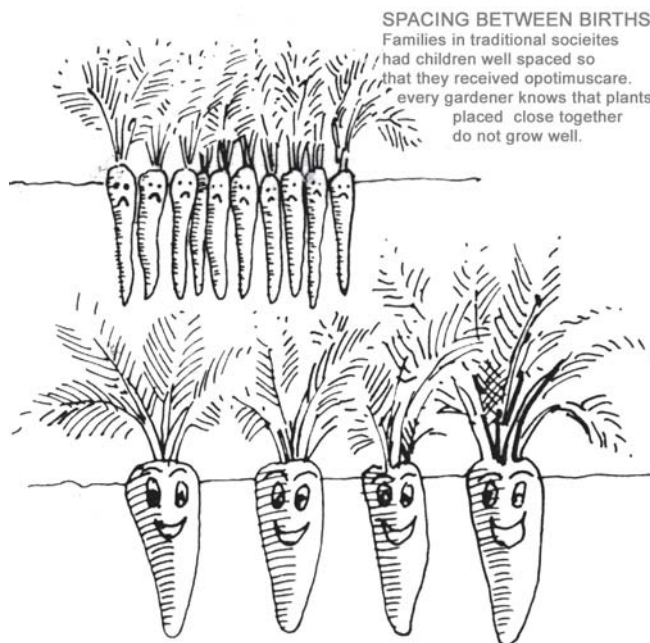
One should not rule out English medium schools or divisions. But should we adopt it at pre-school level also? Can't we retain mother tongue as the sole medium of instruction at least upto standard IV? It is better to introduce Hindi first and then only English in our

schools. Provision should be made for learning as many languages, as possible—Indian and foreign—as per one's likes, abilities and needs, but only one language and that too, oral, only at the pre-school stage.

6. Social regulatory mechanism

Like primary and secondary schools, there should be rules and regulations for establishing and running pre-schools. The minimum requirements by way of space, building, infrastructural facilities, teaching-learning aids according to the Montessori type of didactic apparatus, open spaces, etc. are to be laid down. Accessibility, location etc. are also important. Wherever possible, pre-schools should be attached to the lower primary schools or established in nearby areas to facilitate the children joining the local primary school (The pre-schools to act as feeder schools!)

Even such schools with 25-30 students should have one teacher and some persons to help. Where the number is large, a proportionate increase may be made. The approach should be one of "sensory training" and not of formal teaching and learning. Fees may be charged according to the ability of the parents and exemptions may be given in deserving cases. No child should be denied of pre-school education on grounds of poverty, caste denominations or locality.



THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN EDUCATION Uma Prasad

Pre-primary level

1. Arts including music will help the overall development of the child.
2. The character of the child will undergo subtle changes for the better when it learns music.
3. Nursery Rhymes help the child in focussing on the teacher, her tunes, gestures etc.
4. The children learn the subjects faster.
5. They show keen interest to attend school
6. They will not be restless in schools.
7. The entire class will participate in the learning process.
8. The students become more disciplined.

At the Primary level Music helps the child in the following ways

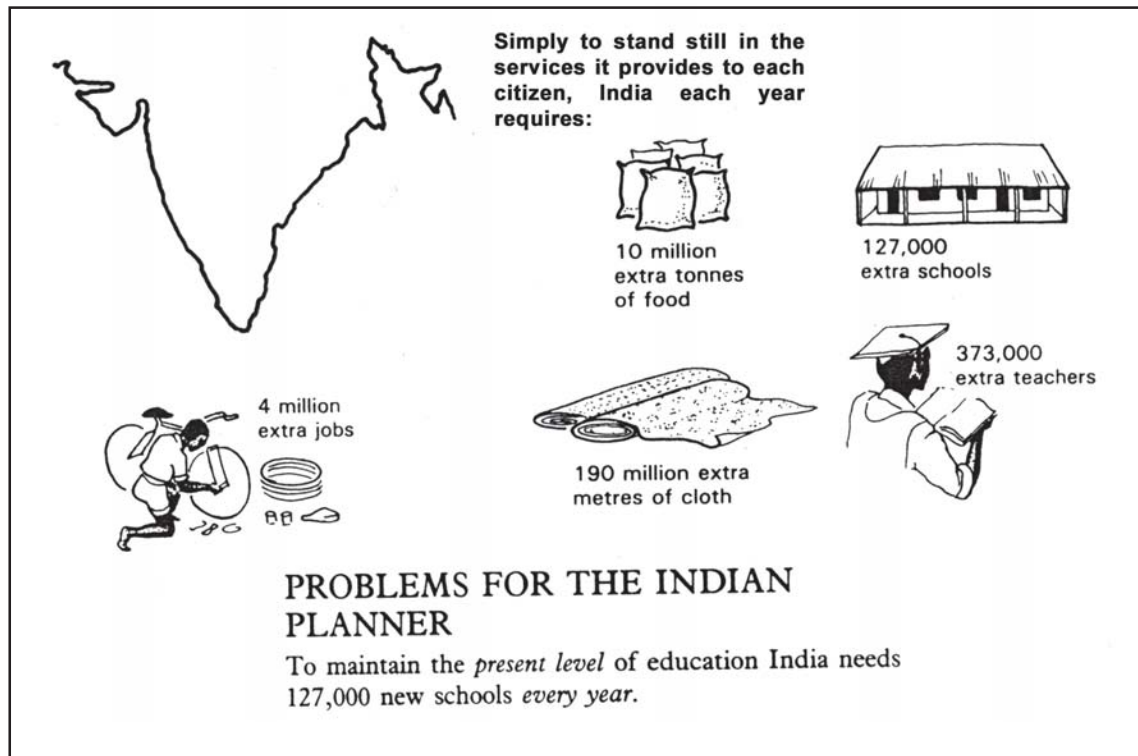
1. The boredom in learning is reduced.
2. The effort needed to memorise portions of text books is reduced.
3. Group singing promotes team spirit.
4. Learning instinct is kindled.
5. Children enjoy coming to school.

At higher level (Upper primary level):

1. Extra subjects can be learnt easily.
2. After school hours also the effect of music stays.
3. A hobby to occupy the leisure time is acquired.
4. Classical and instrumental music can be taught to this level of students.

At high school level, songs, prayers with greater emphasis on context can be taught. Values such as devotion to God, patriotism, tolerance, personality development etc, can be inculcated.

(The Hindu 14.07.1998)

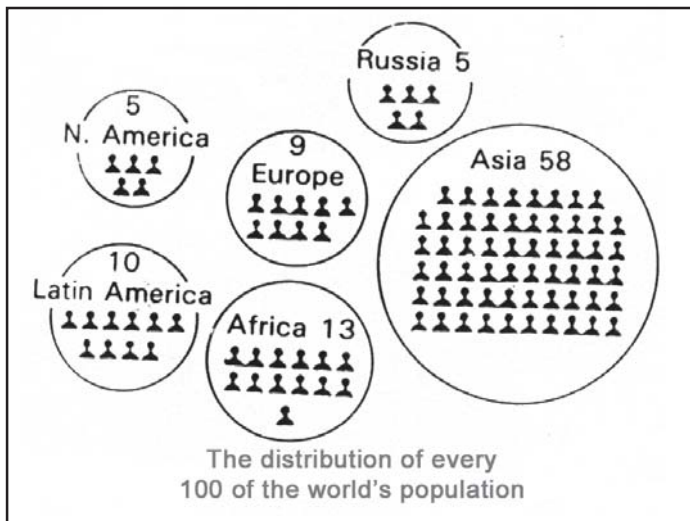


RIGHT-BRAIN ORIENTED CURRICULUM FOR ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

D.VENKATARAMAN

1. Introduction

Neurological studies indicate that education as it is now structured develops only one part of the human brain i.e. (Left Brain) and leaves the other part i.e. Right hemisphere (Right Brain) untouched, which has a high level potential. The prevailing pattern of education is heavily biased towards left cerebral functioning and is antithetical to the right-cerebral functioning. It now seems likely that many of the objectives of education can be achieved and youth problems can be solved through kind co-operation of the right hemisphere functions. So it is important to develop and activate the functioning of the right-hemisphere for development of creative factors.



Hence the understanding of hemisphericity dominance of students and development of right-brain oriented curriculum are important and indispensable.

2. Hemisphericity

Hemisphericity is the cerebral dominance of an individual in retaining and processing different modes of information in his own style of learning and thinking. The differences in preference of the two hemispheres for information processing have been referred to as styles of learning and thinking (SOLAT) by Torrance (1977).

3. Left hemisphere functions

Research conducted during the last two decades has revealed that the human left cerebral hemisphere is to be specialised for primarily verbal, analytical, abstract, temporal and digital operations. (Bogen, 1969, Gazzaniga, 1970 Ornstein, 1972)

4. Right hemisphere functions

The right-hemisphere is lateralised for multiple processing. It can be more insightful, can have a rudimentary verbal conceptual scheme, elaborate language-comprehension, analogic elaborate language comprehension, analogic and aesthetic experience, produce more visual imagery and see things in a broader perspective.

(From The Hindu)



TOWARDS BETTER TEACHING - LEARNING ENVIRONMENT


LALITHA RAMAMURTHI

1. Introduction

We all know that the first teacher is the mother. According to medical research and investigation, it has been proved that the emotions of a pregnant woman affect the baby inside. This shows that the learning process starts from the womb. A growing infant feels safe and happy in the hands of a content and concerned mother. This feeling of security and happiness forms the basis on which the personality of the child develops.

2. The home front

It is imperative that the children are given a proper home environment which is conducive to positive growth and development. The role of a mother is of greater importance than that of a father, during the earlier years of a child.

A mother singing a lullaby is actually instilling a sense of music, of rhythm, of harmony of notations in the young mind. When she tells him stories, real and fictitious, she is instilling discipline, moral values and fearlessness. Children come to know from stories that the good always wins over the evil. They love the heroes of folklore because they are physically strong, morally bound and always ready to help the needy. That is why when the children refuse to eat or do exercise the 'parents tell them – "If you don't eat properly and do proper exercise, how you can be a hero like...."'.


Therefore, it is upto the mothers to groom the children. Mothers should be educated. Motherhood is not an easy job. They should be ready to deal with any situation. Mothers can meet, exchange views, analyse problems posed by children and help each other. They should meet teachers at regular intervals to get some picture about their children in school.

For a male child, his father is always a hero because he commands respect. When the father cultivates habits which lead to violence at home, he becomes a fallen hero for the child. When there is a constant fight between parents, the most affected person is the child. Children resent fights and heated arguments. This resentment, if left untackled, slowly grows deeper into the child's psyche.

The more repressed his anger, the more disobedient he becomes. The more disobedient he becomes, the more punishment he gets from the school and from home. When he grows into an adult, either he becomes a very violent person, hating the world or he withdraws into a shell avoiding everybody. In either case, the child is deprived of a normal life.

AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHED LITERATURE ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

S. Thirumalai Kumar

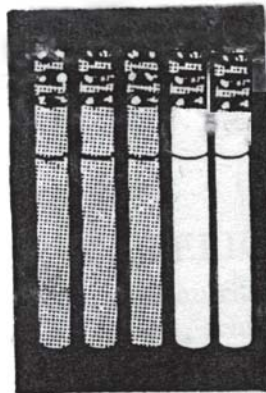
A study of Newspaper articles on Education for children reveals the following points.

1. Profound education means perfection of character.
2. Corporal punishment instead of helping the teachers, serves only to widen the gap between the teacher and the child.
3. A child who is deprived of parental love and affection can be tempted easily to go astray.
4. Parents should understand the 'gap' - generation gap between them and the children.
5. Character building can be achieved only by building proper atmosphere in the school.
6. Success to a child should mean developing skills and an acceptable personality.
7. Children like to feel that they are big. They relish any responsibility, test of skills or any other challenge.
8. Education ensures the growth of the child's self-esteem.
9. Expression of personal opinion and independent thinking should be encouraged.
10. Curriculum should help development of character, skills, attitudes, values, and personality of individuals to make the children good citizens.
11. Today's children have psychological and social problems at school as well as at homes. Teacher-student report should focus on that problems.

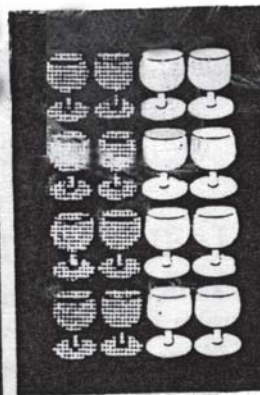
(The Hindu 14.7.1998)

The price of health

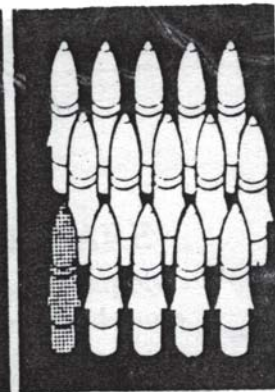
Providing primary health care - including water and sanitation, trained workers communicable disease control and basic drugs - would cost and extra \$50 billion a year for the next 20 years. That is \$12.50 per person per year.



$\frac{2}{3}$ of world spending on cigarettes



$\frac{1}{2}$ of world spending on alcohol



$\frac{1}{15}$ of world military spending

ESSENTIALS FOR ALL ?

The cost of providing this is small compared with other expenditure.

NEIGHBOURHOOD-SCHOOLS SARALA RAJPUT

The education commission known as the Kothari commission recommended the establishment of neighbourhood-school systems in India. The concept of common schools and neighbourhood-schools is a reality in many countries. As identified by the Kothari commission, it (lack of neighbourhood awareness) is the main problem in the country. Those staying in metropolitan cities can hardly believe in a situation in which all children of the neighbourhood, irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status would attend the same school. This was a dream enshrined in the commission report, which fondly hoped that such schools would provide quality education, generating interest in all sectors of the community in the affairs of the school. When the commission report was translated into the policy document, it was suggested that all privileged schools should be required to admit students on the basis of merit. It has hardly been implemented.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE N.C. SRIDHARAN

Dr. Howard Gardner who has done extensive research on human excellence says: "Intelligence is the ability to solve problems that one counters in real life and the ability to generate new problems to solve. The human mind should also have the ability to make something or offer a service that is valued within one's culture.

1. Linguistic intelligence to express ideas and concepts in words.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence to concentrate on thinking logically
3. Spatial intelligence to enable a person to think in a three dimensional perspective. It calls for a high level of visual-constructed images and creativity useful to architects, painters or pilots.
4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence-the ability to manipulate various things and objects as needed by sports persons, dancers and surgeons.
5. Musical intelligence; these are right-brain driven persons who can appreciate parameters such as pitch, melody, rhythm, or tone.
6. Interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to improve the rapport and people-management skills. This helps in teachers, social workers, politicians etc.
7. Intra-personal intelligence-the ability to introspect and understand oneself is newer dimensions. This is helpful in planning one's life, to understand one's own strengths and weaknesses for theologians, psychologists, philosophers and original thinkers.
8. Naturalist intelligence: The ability to understand nature and the gifts of nature for one's own development. Agriculturists, farmers, landscapers etc. require this knowledge.

It is possible for educational institutions to develop these eight types of intelligence.

CHILDREN : THE PERENNIAL SOURCES OF NATIONAL RESURGENCE

DR. GIRISH S. BAPAT
DIRECTOR, JNANA PRABODHINI
PUNE, INDIA.

Children of India

India is an ancient land. Generations after generations have gradually built its culture and heritage over thousands of years. For such a continuity to be maintained, there must have been and there must be even today, a system of passing over the torch to the next generation. In every generation there must have been creators, preservers and reformers of this age-old Indian culture. Such latent creators, preservers and reformers are present in this twenty-first century also. They are the children of India. Today, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, we will see only the child-like form of these potential builders of the future and makers of history. But in the second decade they will be the torch-bearers. They will be shaping and adding to the Indian heritage by living in it.

All the Children have Two Special Gifts

All the children in India are born with the twin gifts of humanity and Indianness. They are human beings and Indian. Even these two gifts should equip them to become makers of future India. The very fact that they are human, gives them the capacity to will, the capacity to act purposefully and the capacity to make sense of, and build knowledge about, their surroundings. Being born as an Indian, gives them the opportunity to participate in a unique nation-building process, a process

which includes all the major religious sects in the world, all the ecological habitats of the world, a diversity of languages and all types of political ideologies. This process is a melting pot which retains the distinguishing features and yet establishes a common identity. The efforts to accept different forms of the same identity are a speciality of India, arising out of its spiritual motto of ' *EHSS gV² odàm: JhþYm dXpÝV.* ' What will be successful in India will be a role –model for the world. All the



children in India must be considered as blessed for this unique opportunity that they have before them.

The Physical and Mentally Challenged Children

To have a special gift on your person and not to be aware of it is

very unfortunate. Though endowed with the special gifts of humanity and Indianness, there are children who do not have the time, security and encouragement to become aware of and to explore and own the gifts with which they are born. Some are physically challenged, while some are mentally challenged. Unconsciously or consciously they have to spend their childhood, and even later years, coping with these challenges. The generation which is holding the torch today will have to search for potential *Ashtavakras* (*Ai>mdH«S*). *Ashtavakra* had his physical frame bent in eight places. Yet he was a sage at a very small age. He was ridiculed by learned *pundits* because of his external features. Only *Janaka*, the king and yogi could recognize his worth. We need *Janaks* to recognize *Ashtavakras* challenged by their physical frame. Among the mentally challenged there are slow learners and late starters. *Totaka* was so slow that he had not learnt to speak till he was eight years. *Adi Shankaracharya* saw the spark in him and stimulated him to become a poet and an *acharya*. There are not enough *Shankaracharyas* to stimulate the children.

Children Who Have to Struggle against Adversities

Many children who are fortunate not to have the above challenges, eagerly explore their surroundings. They, like all children, are also gifted with the ability to dream. They have boundless energy. They have spontaneous curiosity. They are unashamed of their ignorance. They can raise questions showing insight. They can be very imaginative. They are open to new experiences. They are very receptive. They can strike friendship with strangers.

Before they can start using their gifts, these children are forced to go along a different path. A girl of eight years has to baby-sit for her siblings. A boy of ten years has to go after the cattle. A boy of twelve starts working in the fields with his father. A boy or a girl of fourteen

has to leave school and start contributing to the family purse. A girl of sixteen finds that the next day she is going to be given in marriage. All such children suddenly find that childhood is not just being and becoming, growing and manifesting. They discover that childhood is struggling and coping. These children slowly lose the contact with their valuable mental and intellectual gifts through non-use. They are challenged by the poverty and ignorance of their parents and the momentum and inertia of the society around them. The gifts of these children have to be salvaged before they become engrossed in the struggle against adversities. The future Dr. Ambedkars and Lal Bahadur Shastris are hiding in each of these adversity - challenged child.

Children Straitjacketed by their Elders

There are many families where the parents suffer and protect their children from adversities. There are other families who have

In those countries which have succeeded in reducing the number of deaths in children, there is a decline in the birth-rate within one generation. One parents have confidence that their children will survive, the need to have many children declines. In the past, it took one or two generations for the birth-rate. Now it takes less than a generation. A fall in child deaths has always come before a fall in birth-rates.

- From Our Children's World

already overcome the adversities and the children are totally unaware of them. These children too share all the gifts which the physically, mentally and adversity-challenged children have but cannot use. The children unfettered by adversities are free to explore and find out what other gifts they are born with. They discover that they have the ability to concentrate, the ability to persevere, the ability to search for problems, the ability to solve problems and make innovations, the ability to

feel others' sorrows, the ability to help others, the courage to own up mistakes, the urge to protect others. All these abilities are useful in nation-making. These children should have a chance to develop and exercise these gifts. But many have parents and teachers who have exhausted all their energies and will in protecting their

children from the adversities. They feel that they have achieved and their children should also be satisfied like them with fending for their families. Children have the potential to contribute to the welfare of ten, hundred and thousand families if their abilities are nurtured. Their vision becomes limited to their own family only because of the over-cautiousness and short-sightedness of their elders.

Giftedness Poised on Various Rungs of the Ladder

The children challenged by handicaps or adversities need understanding, helping hand, guidance and a gentle push towards self-reliance. The children limited by their elders

THE PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN: FOOD, HEALTH CARE, PLAY

Three groups of children were given different services and compared with elite children.

- Health care alone gives no change.
- Adequate food combined with health care gives full physical growth.
- Food, health care and stimulation lead to full intellectual development.

For every parent, adequate growth of the child's brain in the first two years of life should be priority. Adequate growth of a child as shown by a weight curve is the only practical way to ensure adequate brain growth.

Vitamin A is found in dark green leafy vegetables. Each year 14,000 Indian children go blind for the rest of their lives because they are not fed these foods.

- From Children of our World

need a vision of their role in an arena larger than their families. The children who are already self-reliant and have a larger vision need motivation to self-actualisation through national resurgence. Then there will be some children who will say that they have the gifts not only of being human and being Indian, but also have the gift of the urge for spiritual self-realisation. All the children of India have gifts ranging from being human to having an urge for spiritual self-realisation, but they have to start from different rungs of the ladder of enabling conditions. They can climb the ladder each at his or her own pace. It is necessary for the resurgence of India to recognise the gifts not only of those on the top rung of the ladder but also of those standing on all the lower rungs. The gifts of some are like surface water, immediately accessible to the nation. The gifts of others are like ground water, accessible with difficulty and

THREE PERIODS OF HEALTH CARE

1. **Improved nutrition, living conditions, water supply and waste disposal, achieved by social reformers not doctors.**
2. **Individual care, vaccines and antibiotics.**
3. **Health improvement dependent on changes in lifestyle and environment.**

-From Children of Our World

after much effort. But the gifts of all the children are the resources of the nation. The children of all generations are the perennial sources of our national resurgence. The children are the nation. Their gifts are their assets. Their gifts are therefore national assets.

Search for the Gifts

The gifts that the children have been endowed with are numerous. They can be sensed and observed by their parents, teachers and peers. Sometimes even the children are aware of their own gifts. For the last hundred years, a scientific search has been also going on for detection of the emotional and intellectual gifts existing in the human being. This search has discovered special and general intelligence; intelligence functioning in specific area and that active over a range of subjects. This search has found that there are some who have a talent for languages, while some have a fascination for symbols. There are some who have a facility in manipulating figures, while some are good at forming and enriching human inter-relationships.

A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT

Good food, adequate growth and maintenance of health are important but growth of the intellect is essential. Play is the vital schooling of the young child.

- From Children of our World.

Some have the gift of thinking critically and some can think creatively. Some can memorise, some can analyze, some can evaluate. The range of human gifts is enormous. This search is going on in India as well as in many other countries. What has been observed is only the tip of the iceberg. It has also been found that many of the observed capacities can be enhanced by training. All these gifts are a consequence of the main gifts of being human. All the children have them. They have to be

uncovered, shaped and sharpened by purposeful efforts.

The Third Gift

The human form gives the ability to manipulate, to communicate, to form relationships, to think. To be born in India gives access to the common Indian heritage - its unique creations and its spiritual orientation. Besides being human and Indian, being born in a particular species and in a particular place, all the children have one more gift. This third gift is the ability to receive flashes of intuition and work towards bringing that intuition into reality by spurts of unsurpassed vigour and dedication. The human form may have some defects. A child may be born in the shadowy darkness of the Indian society where the light of India's achievements has not yet reached. Even these children have this third gift which is the real source of permanent advances in the national life of our country. This gift seems to need no training. Only the blocks have to be removed and the direction of its application has to be indicated.

Motivating the Children to Kindle their Gifts.

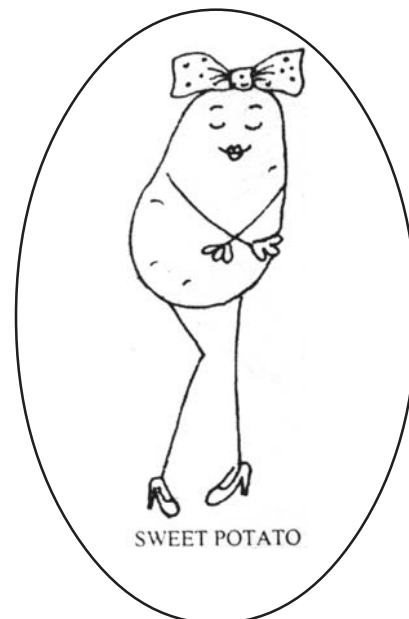
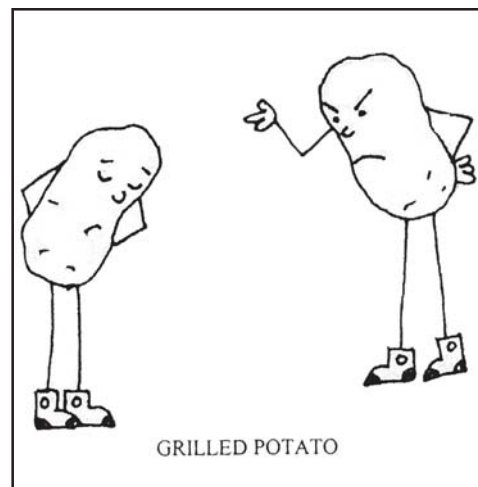
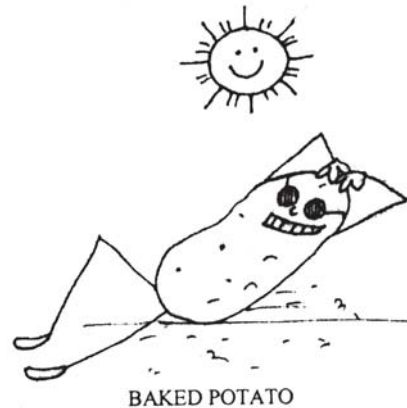
We find many times that there are children for whom the physical limitation, the social handicap or the economic adversity itself becomes a source of motivation. They sing the song of 'We can overcome' and make a place for themselves in the society by their achievements. Today's Dr. Mashelkars and Dr. Abdul Kalam are outstanding examples of such motivation. There are other children who have the gifts and the favourable conditions for the use of their gifts. These children have to be motivated to excel in their field of study and activity. They have to be motivated to deploy their gifts in solving relevant problems — social, technological, economic — for the benefit of an individual and for the benefit of India.

These children who are on a firm and favourable starting ground need an exposure to a variety of learning experiences. They need interaction with stalwarts in various walks of life. They need to see the whole range of socio-economic conditions. Some of these exposures strike a chord in their hearts, rouse their curiosity. This sets them on a learning curve leading them to challenges which test their abilities. Learning to overcome these challenges, they find an area, where it becomes their life-mission to set new standards of excellence in it. Motivated in this way, they then get a sense of self-growth by their contribution in their area leading to the resurgence of India to higher levels of human existence. We have to remember that the gifts of Indian children will be fully manifested when they are used to fill the gaps and holes in the national life of India and raise it to a higher level of consciousness.

NEIGHBOURHOOD-SCHOOLS

SARALA RAJPUT

The education commission known as the Kothari commission recommended the establishment of neighbourhood-school systems in India. The concept of common schools and neighbourhood-schools is a reality in many countries. As identified by the Kothari commission, it (lack of neighbourhood awareness) is the main problem in the country. Those staying in metropolitan cities can hardly believe in a situation in which all children of the neighbourhood, irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status would attend the same school. This was a dream enshrined in the commission report, which fondly hoped that such schools would provide quality education, generating interest in all sectors of the community in the affairs of the school. When the commission report was translated into the policy document, it was suggested that all privileged schools should be required to admit students on the basis of merit. It has hardly been implemented.



MALNUTRITION-CAUSES, EFFECTS AND SOLUTIONS

Dr.N.JAYA

To be healthy and active, it is essential to have food in adequate quantity, quality and variety to meet one's energy and nutrient requirements. Without adequate nutrition, children cannot develop their potential to the fullest, and adults will experience difficulty in maintaining or expanding theirs.

Nutrition and its significance

Nutrition is perhaps the most important factor, which affects the health of a child. It plays a profound role in combating diseases as malnourished are susceptible to diseases. This leads to infection, which further deteriorates the nutritional status, resulting in a vicious circle. Infections may sometimes become lethal to a malnourished person. Over a third of the world's malnourished children live in India. More than two-thirds of India's preschool children are moderately or severely malnourished. Of the 11.18 million children under the age of five, child mortality is estimated at 3 million children (Lopez 2003).

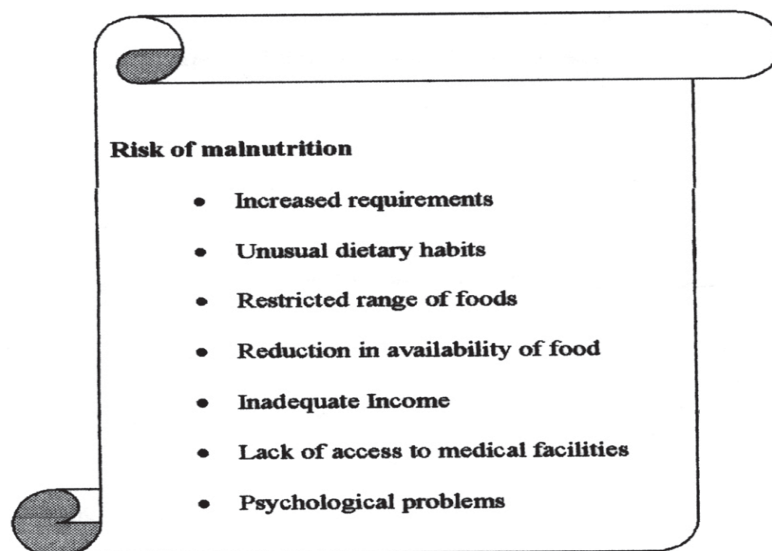
One reason for children being vulnerable is their rapid growth rate coupled with demanding and excessive nutritional needs. Ideally, young children need frequent and nutrient dense feedings, but all too often, weaning foods used in poor countries like India, are bulky and are of poor nutritional quality. These children are also exposed to an overwhelming array of agents of infections, respiratory and gastro-intestinal, at a time when their immune systems are developing. Infections lead to poor appetites and their metabolic effects result in substantial energy and nutrient loss.

Evidence from the fields of physiology, nutrition, psychology, education and other fields continue to accumulate to indicate that the early years are critical to all of later life and hence provision of balanced nutrition is essential.

- Brain cells are formed during the first two years. Recent research shows that stimulation of a child's senses affects the structure and organization of neural pathways in the brain during the formative period. By age six, most of these connections are made (or not, as the case may be). Thus providing opportunities for appropriately complex perceptual and motor experiences at an early age favourably affects various learning abilities in later life and can even compensate, at least partly, for deficits associated with early malnutrition (Dobbing, 1987).

- Allowing disability and arrested development to occur when it could be prevented is a violation of human rights. The fact that children are dependent on others for satisfaction of their rights, creates an even greater obligation to help and protect them.

Research evidence demonstrates that the early years are critical in the development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour and that there are long term effects associated with it. Society benefits economically from investing in young children because its productive capacity increases. The increasing survival of vulnerable children, changing family structure, composition and child rearing practices, urban rural migration, the growing presence of women in the labour force, and other changes create imbalances that require concerted attention to early care and development. In compendium, a person who is well developed physically, mentally, socially and emotionally will be in a better position to contribute economically to family, community and country than a person who is not.



Long term effects

The long term effects of malnutrition on human function are profound. It leads to

- higher infant mortality rate.
- higher rates of neo-natal, post-natal, peri-natal mortality.

- Low birth survivors are likely to suffer growth retardation and illness throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.
- Long term impairment in mental and motor development.
- Impaired learning and low school achievement.
- Low hemoglobin levels.
- Growth failure in early childhood leads to women who are very short and have narrow pelvic inlets; this places them at great risk of delivery complications and death.
- Growth retarded adult women are likely to carry on the vicious cycle of malnutrition by giving birth to low birth weight babies.
- Reduced muscle mass and limited physical work capacity.
- Reduce productivity hampering economic growth and
- Lower life expectancy.

Succinctly, malnutrition leads to reduction in overall well being, quality of life and compromises on the holistic development of the human potential.

What can be done?

*** Create awareness**

A great deal of energy must be put into raising awareness about the process of child development, the deteriorating conditions affecting early childhood development, about the long-term effects of developmental faltering on individuals and societies and about the options that exist. Perhaps, mass media should play an important role in helping to raise awareness, correct misconceptions and provide basic information about child development.

*** Demystify**

An effort is required to demystify myths related to child development and to overcome misconceptions that impede actions. For instance:

Child survival and child development are perceived as sequential processes (rather than simultaneous one). As a result, programming to save lives usually defined in terms of treating diseases, comes first; programming for child development, with mental and social and emotional components comes later. They can and should come together.

Health and nutrition are known to influence psycho-social well being, but the reverse is seldom recognised as true. This one way view favours programmes concentrating on health and nutrition, with psycho-social development left aside, or vice versa.

The myth that mothers are the social and always the best caretakers of their children throughout the early years is associated with the idea that programmes of care outside the home with other people is detrimental.

The native notion that real learning and education begin at school seems to have grown stronger as the system of schooling has expanded. Failing to realize that the earliest months and years of life is equally significant is an important reason for this.

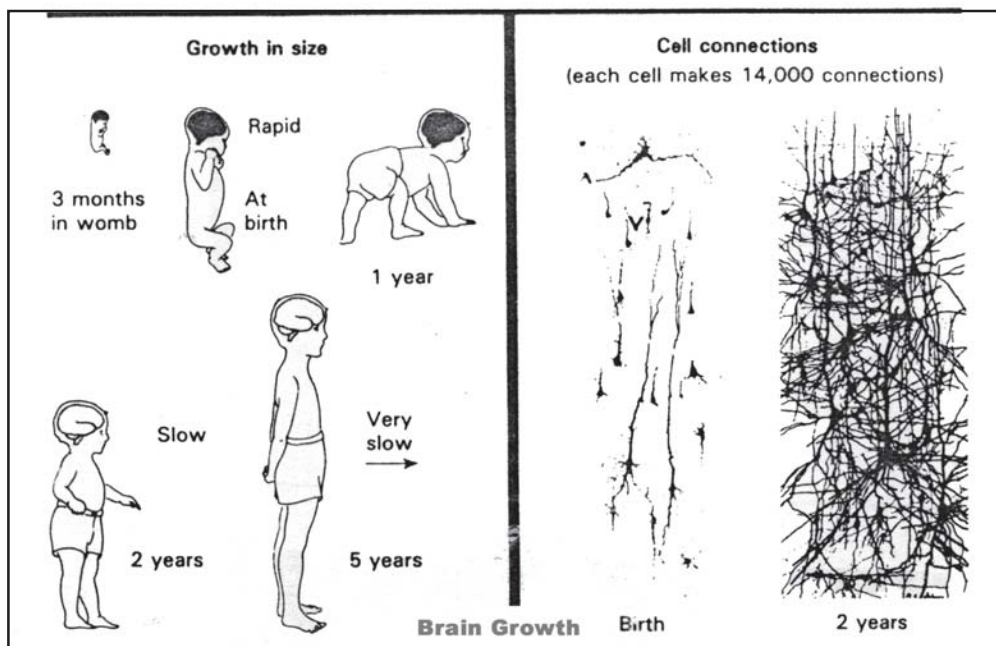
This is a tendency to think that so called 'traditional' child rearing practices and beliefs are out-mode and need to be corrected or replaced with modern practices. This biases early childhood programmes towards a "compensatory" model rather than towards a supportive and constructive one, working with the strengths of families and communities.

* Inform

But more than dissemination of information is required for changes in awareness and attitude to occur. An active strategy is needed creating opportunities for discussion, dialogue, experience with alternatives, and participation in all phases of programming for child development. Such a strategy must build on both academic knowledge and experience.

Girl Child: Concern of Everyone

In spite of many reservations, in reality, the girl child has to accept an inferior status in the socio-economic, religious set-up and enjoys only fewer of the childhood years than boys. Female children even without going to cradle are sent to the grave. The girl child continues to be neglected at all levels. Right from the beginning she is forced to live a life of deprivation, ill health and exploitation because of age-old traditions, social customs and prejudices. On the contrary, the birth of a son is celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm. Discrimination against the girl child does not end here. It manifests itself in various forms in the family and society. Deep-rooted in-built social prejudices ensure that she is shackled to a life of deprivation, humiliation, docility, blind obedience and total dependence. The dubious society of ours consciously or subconsciously and systematically discriminates against the girl child rights from her birth, if at all she is allowed to be born. Unceasing assault continues till her grave.



The different discriminations and atrocities directed against the girl child in the context of health are elaborated here in after.

I. STATUS OF THE GIRL CHILD

Demographic Distortions.

The following tables and facts emphasise the distortions in the demographic distribution of girl children.

Total Population (in crores)

| Year | Total | Males [%] | Females [%] |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 2001 | 102.70 Cr | 53.12 Cr | 49.57 Cr |
| Census of India | [100] | [51.73] | [48.27] |

*Census of India 2001, 'Provisional Population Totals'

- The total population of girl children (0-14 years) in Indian constitutes 19 percent of total population and 40 percent of all women in the country.
- Of the child population (0-14 years) nearly 50% are girls.

Sex Ratio of Total Population and Child Population 1961 – 2001

| Year | Sex Ratio in the Age Group of 0-6 Years | Overall Sex Ratio |
|------|---|-------------------|
| 1961 | 976 | 941 |
| 1971 | 964 | 930 |
| 1981 | 962 | 934 |
| 1991 | 945 | 927 |
| 2001 | 927 | 933 |

* Census of India, 2001, 'Provisional Population Totals'

- Out of the 12 million girl children born every year in India.
 - One and half million does not live to see their first birthday;
 - Within 5 years another, 3,50,000 succumb to premature death; and
 - By the 15th year three million of them die.
 - Age specific death rates reveal that up to 35-years more females than males die at every age level (wal, 2000)

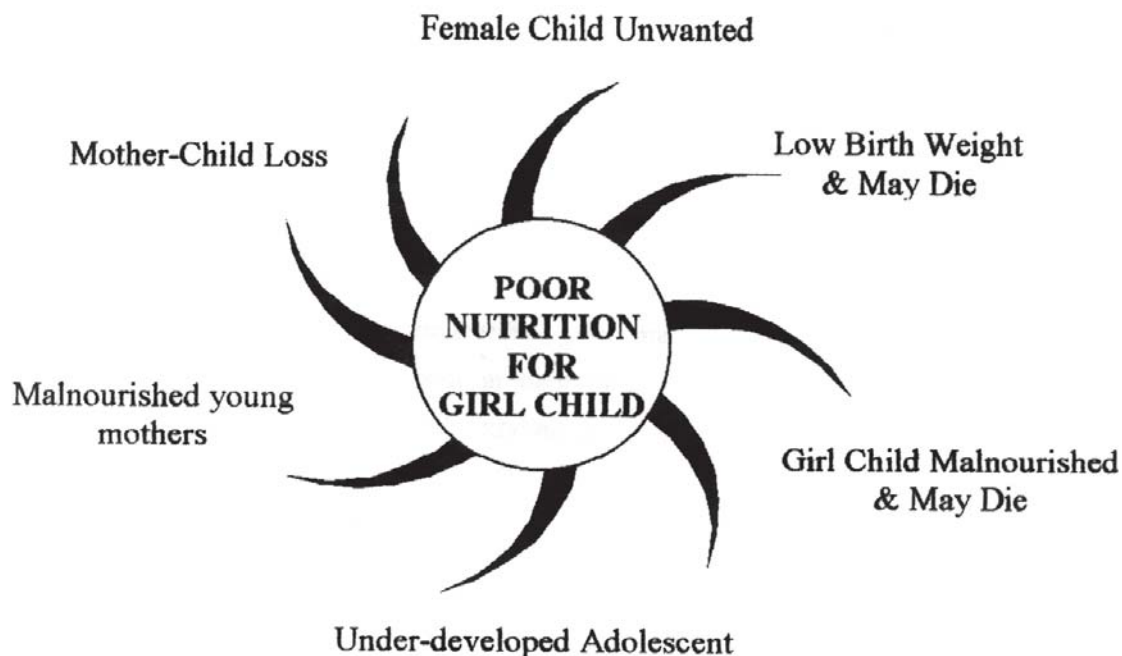
Low Level of Sex-ratio

It is indeed ironical that the woman craves more for a male child than a man does, and unfortunately, she is usually blamed for producing a girl child though science has proved conclusively that the sex of the child is determined by the male chromosomes. Beginning with this root-cause, there are other reasons for eliminating the girl child.

- **Deliberate discrimination against girl child takes several forms:** Nutritional denial such as inadequate breast-feeding and early weaning; insufficient or delayed medical care; lack of attention, emotional deprivation and insufficient investment in resources. All these have been documented as leading to excess mortality of the female child.

- **Womb to Tomb Syndrome :** Sex selective female abortions – another manifestation of gender discrimination against girl children is sex-specific abortion of female foetuses. It is sad how modern technology and scientific possibilities are being exploited to determine the sex of the unborn child in the womb of the mother even during the first few months of pregnancy. It is the attitude of the community and preference of the male child, which encourages such practices.

- **Maternal mortality is a long-term** fall-out of the neglect, deprivations and deprivations undergone by the girl child, represented by the vicious cycle below:



· Female infanticide, purposive killing of new-born female babies, is another terrible practice that has been existing for generations and is still prevalent in many parts in India. In the average Indian society, it is considered a disgrace to have a girl child because men are the pride of the society. The parents of the girl child feel inferior and consider the girl child a liability in terms of future dowry and social status.



· Malnourishment and neglect of the girl child result in higher mortality at young ages. In Europe and America, more boys than girls die in the first five years. In India, 20 percent more girls die during the first five years. It is again the story of gender bias, neglect and deprivation. The neglect of the girl child affects her health in many ways. She is given less food, at times even deprived of her mother's milk, because she is only a girl. Foods such as milk, meat, eggs are usually reserved for men and the growing boys. Neglect also includes deprivation of necessary medical care at times of illness that boys are promptly given, while girls are rarely provided. Premature death of the girl child is the consequence of all these neglect.

Recommendations

· Strict action against the culprits of female foeticide and infanticide. Government should endeavour to strictly and totally curtail pre-birth sex determining tests, which have reduced marginally and otherwise gone underground following the legal ban on the practices.

· Creating necessary public awareness.

· Tightening of the dowry-laws and reducing expenditure on girls would surely help in bringing down the incidence of female infanticide.

· Family life education for the use of birth control practices would help women in preventing unwanted births.

· Eliminating all forms of discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference, which result in harmful and unethical practices such as prenatal sex-selection and female infanticide. This is often compounded by the increasing use of technologies to determine foetal sex, resulting in abortion of foetuses.

· All community groups have their own associations. They have control over their people. The leaders of these associations can be entrusted with the checking of female infanticide in these regions.



HEALTH & NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE GIRL CHILD

A. Prevailing Conditions

Birth Rate & Mortality

| Particulars (1999) | Indian | Tamil Nadu |
|--------------------|--------|------------|
| * IMR/1000 | 72.0 | 67.2 |
| * MMR/1000 | 4.0 | 1.1 |

* Roy (2000) Women and Child Development in India

* Infant Mortality is found to be a direct fall-out of early marriage and young age of the mother and lack of attentive medical care immediately following birth, if the new-born is found to be a girl.

Major Causes of Deaths in Girl Children (in percentages)

| Cause Groups | Age-Groups (in Years) | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|------|-------|
| | Less than 1 | 1-6 | 7-14 | 14-24 |
| 1. Infectious & Parasitic Diseases | 9.8 | 12.1 | 9.2 | 7.5 |
| 2. Viral Infection | 13.3 | 18.6 | 14.1 | 6.0 |
| 3. Diseases of Blood | 12.1 | 13.6 | 6.0 | 4.7 |
| 4. Diseases of CNS | 4.7 | 4.8 | 6.2 | 4.0 |
| 5. Respiratory Diseases | 16.0 | 9.4 | 3.4 | 1.4 |
| 6. Digestive Diseases | 4.3 | 6.6 | 5.8 | 6.6 |

* Survey of Causes of Death, 1996, Office of RGI, Vital Statistics Division
New Delhi

Nutritional Profile of Girl Children

The NNMB data on rural population show that the average heights and weights of girls are lower than that of boys. The girls stood lower than boys when compared with the growth standard of the National Centre for Health Statistics (NCHS) for Indian children as well (Reddy et.al., 1993)

- 15-20% of the girls in India do not achieve their expected height and weight as women
- In the age group of 1-5 years almost half (49.1%) of girls were under weight;.
- 20.3 percent were severely underweight;
- And Stunting was observed in 56% of girls (Tenth Five-Year Plan: Interim Report of the Working Group on empowerment of Women, May 2001).
- In India an estimated 50-55% of the girls in adolescence are said to be anaemic.
- As an unavoidable repercussion 60-70% of the women during pregnancy are severely anaemic
- In India, in 1990, 19 percent of maternal death were due to anaemia (National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau-NNMB Report of Repeat Surveys 1988-90).

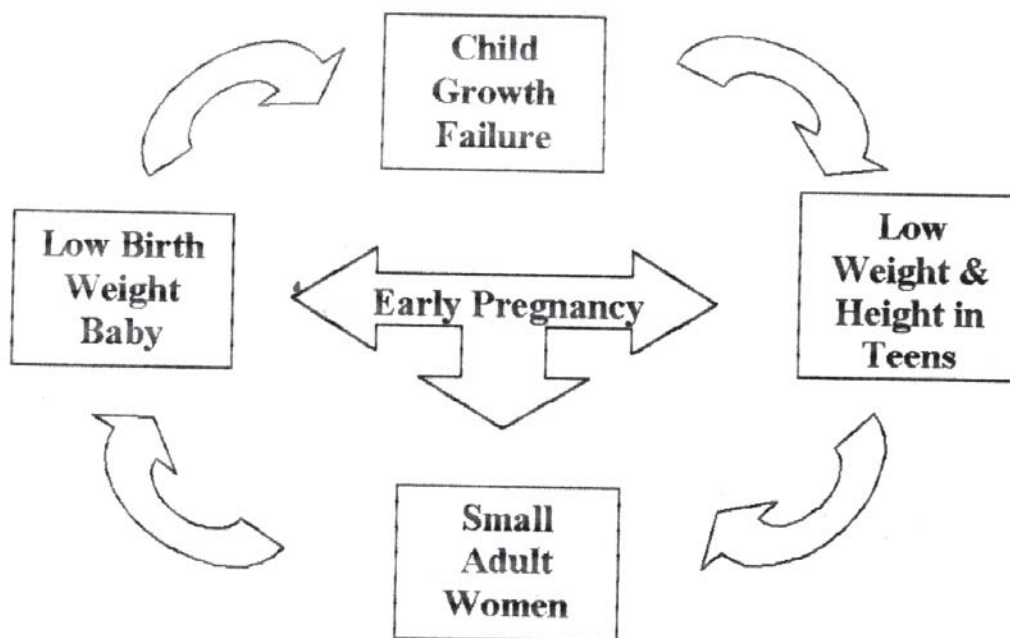
Causes

- ◆ More than a quarter of the country's population – girl children and adolescents are considered as the lesser child.
- ◆ Surveys have shown that male children are breast-fed for longer period, than the female child is, thus nutritional discriminations starts very early in life. A male child is breast fed when the mother has time, while girls are breast fed for shorter period, so that mothers could be pregnant once again for a male child.
- ◆ Later in life, more nutritious food is given to the male child in preference to his unfortunate sisters who have to make do with leftovers. Girls are given inferior nutritional intake. Also boys have greater access to fruits and other foods outside the home as they get pocket money for going to school. Girls are denied this, since they mostly stay at home.
- ◆ Differential maternal care for male and female children.
- ◆ Medical attention in case of illness is mostly delayed and even denied in case of girl children. While male children are promptly referred to medical services at times of illness, while the girl child is rarely taken unless she is very seriously ill or is about to be married.
- ◆ Deep-rooted gender discrimination deprives the girl child of her childhood. She is compelled into early marriage and child bearing. More than 15 million girls aged 15 to 19 years of age give birth each year. And this results in several unhealthy outcomes.

Implications

- ◆ In India, for the girl child, the period from infancy to adolescence is made to be a perilous path as described Figure. Girlhood: A Perilous Path.
- ◆ Existing discrimination against the girl child in access to nutrition and physical and mental health services endangers the girl child's current and future health.
- ◆ Inadequate food and frequent infection lead to malnutrition and hold back the physical and mental development of millions of girl children.
- ◆ Although the girl child has a natural biological advantage over the boy, in India social disadvantage outweighs the genetic advantage of girls.
- ◆ The unhealthy outcomes of early marriage and child bearing are that:
The child grows into an adult, who has not grown fully to her genetic potential, and thus continues the vicious cycle of under nutrition, disease, and poor health.
Motherhood at a very young age entails complications during pregnancy and delivery and a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average.

- The children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality.
- Early child bearing continues to be an impediment to improvements and severely curtails the educational and employment opportunities.
 - Early marriage and motherhood has a long-term adverse impact on the young mothers and their children as described in the Figure; The Inter-generational Nutrition Depletion Cycle (National Nutritional Monitoring Bureau – NNMB Report of Repeat Surveys 1988-90).



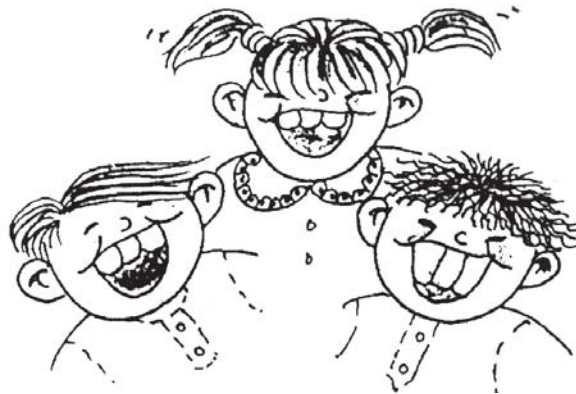
Involvement of various groups in promoting nutritional status of children.

- Politicians need to understand the problem, potential solutions and broader social, economic and political implications of action.
- Planners require a greater technical understanding, must have a feel for specific actions open to them and need to know about costs. They must be shown that intellectual, social and emotional development of young children is not simply a by-product of other programmes. They need examples of integrated attention.
- Professionals need help to redirect their thinking towards more supervisory roles and toward actions that draw upon experience as well as on other academic preparation. Curricula will need to be reviewed and revised so those medical doctors in training learn about child health and nutrition.
- Programme implementers in communities, NGO's and government need to think holistically of the various ways in which real participation can be incorporated into the programmes.
- Families and other caregivers need concrete information about actions that they can take in the home. They need to be supported with adequate knowledge regarding child rearing.

Recommendations

· Girl child in India is subjected to inequality, Disparity and Neglect. Gender biased inequalities permeate the very fabric of the social and cultural environment and the value system. Following which the girl child has lesser entitlement to health care, nutrition, education and even parental attention. At times deprivation of girl children may also result from parents inability to feed their children because of poverty. Taking an holistic view of the situation.

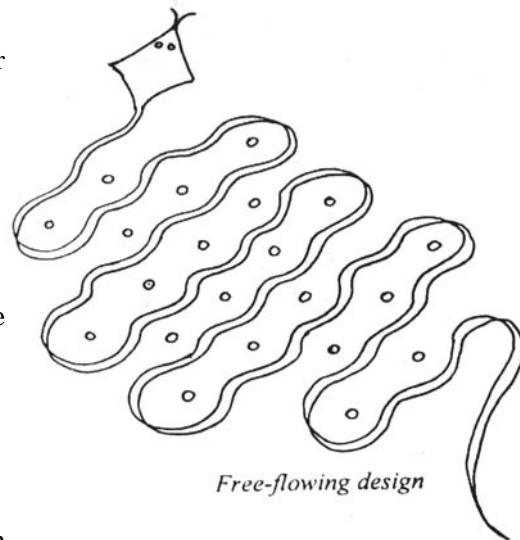
- Immediate political, social and economic reformations are imminent for solving the problem.
- Necessary action by the national Governments with due participation and involvement of the people at the community level are mandatory for effective solution.



· These apart there are some basic health essentials for ensuring healthy girl children in future.

- From birth to the age of three years they should be weighed every month. If there is no weight gain for two months, means something is wrong and this requires attention.
- Breast milk alone is the best possible food for about the first six months of a child's life, which the girl child should be provided without deprivation.
- By the age of four to six months, the child needs other food in addition to breast milk. And a child under three years of age needs food at least four to five times a day. Again the girl child should be provided these on par with their male siblings.
- It should be considered obligatory that all children, especially girl children need foods in breast milk, rich in vitamin A, green leafy vegetables and orange coloured fruits and vegetables. Inadequate food stunts child growth and also infections and illness.
- Girl children also need timely and appropriate care during illness. Repeated infections and illness accompanied with inappropriate care result in poor child growth.

· The health of the girl children in the developing world could be dramatically improved if all families were empowered with today's essential child health information.



- For elimination of discrimination against girls in health and nutrition the following actions are suggested to be taken by governments and NGOs:
 - provide public information on the removal of discriminatory practices against girls in food allocation, nutrition access to health services.
 - Sensitise the girl child, parents, teachers and society concerning good general health and nutrition and raise awareness of the health dangers and other problems connected with early pregnancy.
 - Include health and nutritional training as an integral part of literacy programmes and school curricula starting at the primary level for the benefit of the girl child.
- With a futuristic approach safekeeping of girl children's health should also include awareness about safe sexual practices, self-protection, access to and reduction of the cost of treatment, encouragement for HIV counselling and testing, youth friendly services, and revenue generation activities for afflicted women.

The answer to tackling child malnutrition in India does not lie in the elaborately manufactured foods. The need is not for trained doctors or for advanced food technology. A huge dent could be made in a huge problem by relatively simple means, if we could summon up the resolve to make the reduction of deprivation our number one goal and if governments of the developing countries like India could accept this as a number one priority.



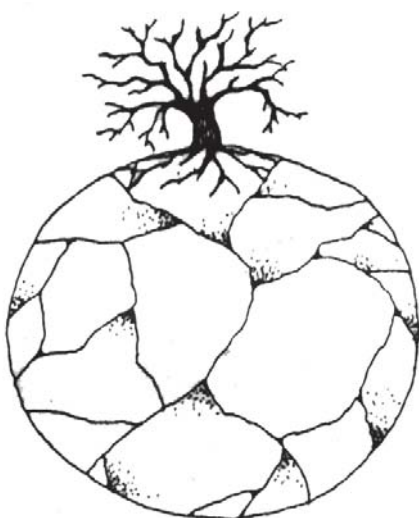
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NEW DIMENSIONS IN MODERN EDUCATION

DR. H.R.NAGENDRA ETAL



The last four centuries in our globe have brought about immense changes in our understanding of Nature around us. Corresponding educational modifications have become mandatory in the society. The modern educational system has changed quite fast to keep up with this growth in understanding. Yet, a bigger change appears to be in the offing.

Newton-Descartes' mechanistic world-view and the classical deterministic approach featured by objective experimental methodology have kept us going over the last three to four centuries. The religious superstitions, blind beliefs, dogmas, rituals, customs, manners and habits have been replaced by rational thinking with a life-style based on comfort. The era of science and technology has been the result. Education is also tailored to this era and today, it is predominantly science-oriented and technology-based.

In the encounter, man has moved from ignorance and superstitions to a place of rational thinking. The intellect is developed. The power of discrimination is harnessed. This move has brought great dividends in terms of solving (i) the basic needs of man's food, shelter and clothing and (ii) unravelling the secrets of the tremendously vast spectrum of the physical universe from the level of fundamental particles at the micro-level to the galaxies and milky-ways at the macro-level. Generalised laws like relativistic mechanics and quantum theory have replaced the classical mechanics. We are now going even beyond the quantum theory.

The last and the present decades are showing signs of new break-throughs in physics, micro-biology, brain research and medical sciences on the one hand and economics, technology and social sciences on the other. Sensitivity and matter-based approach are good but hypersensitivity may be devastating. Too much of materialism may turn too bad. It is then that the new transformation begins. Problems become stepping stones to newer understanding. About four to five decades ago, under similar situations, the probability theory and quantum mechanics sprang up opening a new vista of knowledge. Soon, our world view will undergo a total transformation, said Professor Josephson, the Nobel Laureate of the University of Cambridge in his lecture

'Beyond Quantum Theory' in 1985. From the present matter-based world-view, we may advance to a more fundamental world vision that consciousness, intellect, mind, life, etc. are primary and matter is secondary. That will be a total turning of the tables in science. And so will be our approach to education.

If micro-biologists have started adding life as a separate entity, brain researchers have recognized the inevitability of using consciousness as the innate core of all brain—functioning – the medical world has recognized the limitations of the modern drug therapy, mainly based on the matter-based world view, in dealing with psychosomatic diseases and psychiatric problems.

Just as petrol based technology is turning predominantly ecological, non—pharmacological approach is getting increasingly recognised in the field of medicine.

Economic models have started including health costs and expenditure on tension and stress hazards in making themselves more realistic; the classical objective, linear models in economic theories are replaced by non-linear, highly probabilistic and sophisticated models. Social philosophies have started reconsidering the value system (GNP) on which they classified the nations. Economics as a total measure of social growth is being replaced by human well-being as the measure. All these mean a total transformation. Educationists too are dissatisfied with the pattern of education and are introducing rapid changes in the curriculum. Naturally, it appears, we are on the verge of a transformation and at a turning point as rightly and Professor Fritjof Capra envisages.

In this transition towards a fundamental and profound change in our world-view, Professor Josephson continued, "We find a direction, a new light in the Eastern wisdom—the wisdom from the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Shatdarshanas* etc." Many other progressive scientists and thinkers have similar view and research is progressing all over the globe. So are educationists examining the concept of the education as propounded in the East.

Swami Vivekananda was very clear in portraying this concept of education of our ancient seers – 'Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man'. It is not mere cramming of information. Neither is it a mere

sharpening of the intellect. It is a process of transforming a man to a MAN, a process by which man raises himself from his sleeping animal level of instincts, to a normal level and then becomes a great man, superman, divine man and ultimately reaches divinity itself. This process is a verily *yoga*. Hence, education and *yoga* are almost synonyms. In *Mundakopanishad*, the wide spectrum of education has been divided into two categories – *Para* and *Apara* in response to an ardent student seeking true education from a seer. He asks him thus:

dfLelluqHkxoksfoKkrs

I ofene-foKkre-HkorthrA

Kasminnu bhagavo vijnate sarvamidam vijnatam bhavatiti.

(By learning which I know everything Sir, please teach me that equations. In answer to this fundamental question, the teacher introduces two types of education).

}sfo | sofnr0; si jkpb vij k p

Dwe vidye veditavye para caiva apara ca.

Para (divine) and *Apara* (secular) are the two *vidyas* to be learnt.

Apara

r= vij k% _Xonks ; t pñ% l keonks
vFkobn%f' k{kcdYi k0; kdj .ke-fu#Dre-
NnkT; kfr"; fefrA

Tatra aparah Rgvedo yajurvedah samavedo atharvavedah, siksa kalpo vyakaranam niruktam, chando jyotisyamiti.

The *para vidyas* include the four *Vedas*, *Rgveda*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva* and the six *Vedangas* (supporting scriptures) – epistemology, code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metre, and astrology.

Para

वफ्क ijk ; ; k rn{kjef/kxE; rs

Atha para yaya tadaksaramadhigamyate.
(Mundaka, 1.5).

The *para vidya* (divine) is that actual process by which one reaches that perfection or unmutilated reality. While the first concerns itself with the knowledge of the external universe and the internal world, the second refers to the actual process of getting at it, experiencing it by a total metamorphic transformation of oneself. A total personality development and not merely cramming up information is what is suggested. Hence, the holistic vision of education propounded in the *Upanishads* include both the secular and the divine emphasising true education, the process of transformation as primary and the secular as secondary. This is what is termed as 'Spirituality-based Education' to bring about a spiritually-oriented culture in the society featured by love and harmony, efficiency and co-ordination, bliss and fearlessness, affluence, supporting the growth of the ethical value system, etc.

Swami Vivekananda enunciated 'Concentration and Detachment' as the principles of true education to achieve the goal of total development. This is what Patanjali portrayed in his second *sutra* while defining *yoga*:

; kxf' pRrofRrfuj ks/k%

Yogah citta vritti nirodhah

Yoga is total control over mental modifications.

A capacity to concentrate which helps to overcome the randomness of the mind and a skill to vanquish all thoughts totally and remain silent are the two-fold processes of mastery or control over the mind. Thus, the fundamental part of education is to achieve this mastery. What we are at, mostly in our education, is the former and not the latter, a skill to calm down the mind as beautifully portrayed in the great text on *yoga* – *Yogavasistha*:

eu% i z keuksi k; % ; kxbR; fHk/kh; rs

Manah prasamanopayah yoga ityabhidhiyate.

This aspect of relaxation and detachment is the missing part in our educational process. And that is the new dimension to be added into our curriculum.

To meet the demands of modern life-style, full of speed, stresses and tensions, an all-round personality development is mandatory. Integral *yoga* is what is suggested by Sri Aurobindo. The physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components of man have to blossom to greater and greater levels. This then brings a fourfold consciousness-civic sense, patriotic urge, service zeal and spiritual aspiration to make man a useful component of the society in which he lives. This approach towards a total growth of man forms the basis of a holistic vision of education.

(From *Yoga in Education Vol.I VKYOGAS-Bangalore 1988*)



CHILD AND AYURVEDA

Prof. (Dr.) S.K.Mishra

Ayurveda is a complete philosophy of life which encompasses duets of pleasure and pain, useful and useless, the life that fulfils and that which does not, and at the top of all this, it enables one to quantify these attributes. By living an *ayurvedic* way of life, one becomes one's own master. It enables a person to live in a radiant state of happiness. This state in *Ayurveda* is termed "Hitayu". This enables a person to make all four achievements described as *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksa*.

Ayurveda has assigned to itself two main functions

1. Maintenance of Health in a healthy person.
2. Cure from the ailments in a diseased person. It describes a definite set of measures of this.

In the present era these concepts are being compromised for narrow short term gains, which is decomposing the *persona* of an individual which is the root cause of the chaotic and destructive situation in the modern world. Since *Ayurveda* is the '*upaveda*' of the

The practical steps taken in India in the field of preprimary education

The Kothari commission has recommended some practical models for p.p.e. in India .

- 1) For children of age group 3-5 years, integrated care - centres especially in urban slums.
- 2) Half - day balwadis in urban as well as rural areas.
- 3) First stage - day - care centres.
- 4) *Anganwadis* in rural areas.
- 5) Institutions linked to primary schools.

"*Atharva Veda*" – it goes without saying that this is the continuation of Divine knowledge. It enables a person to develop the divine element in him and achieve the ultimate – The *Nirvana* – which is termed *KAIVALYA* by same. The spiritual approach which clears the psyche and increases the level of consciousness of the persons makes a healthy psychosocial behaviour which is the real motivating force for the future generations.

The Gita clearly says – "whatever is done by the enlightened one becomes an evidence and is followed by the masses –

*"Yadyadacarti sresthas.
Tadtadevetarojanah
Sa yat pramanamkurute
Lokastadanuvartate.*

Which clearly implies that *Ayurveda*-way of life will be a definite motivating force for the future generations if it is adopted by the society.

If we consider the child-in-making, we will be convinced that "*Ayurveda*" is the only science which has given so much of thought for this. The *Sukra-Sonita Samyoga* – i.e. the time of fertilisation is the occasion when the *Atmana* (Soul) enters the future body of the child – Hence an ayurvedic physician will always advise the couple to be *Satwika* (creative) during the days one is trying to have a child. If we consider this an atmosphere and bodily *Satwik* qualities are likely to develop a fully healthy and long-living child, capable of making all the worldly achievements in his life. If the parents take care of the *Ayurvedic* knowledge, regarding the *Dharma* (duties) of the future parents, the

poor child who often pays for the follies of the parents will be saved of it. These considerations have been glamourised but not utilised.

The “*Dincarya*” (Day-schedules) “*Ratricarya*” (night-schedules), and “*Rtucarya*” (the seasonal routines) have been vividly described. If they are followed by the parents in the first place, they themselves will lead a healthy living, then they will produce a healthy offspring and last but not the least, their exemplary life will make healthy habits in their children. If the parents want their children to be happy and healthy they have to educate themselves first, which will be giving a natural training to their children as parents. We all know that the parenthood in a child develops when he is being parented. Hence if we want some *Ayurveda* to go to the parenthood of the future India, the presently sexually viable couples of the reproducing age must adapt to *Ayurveda*. This will enable them to rear their children in *Satwika* (creative) personalities which will solve not only their but some of the nation’s and world’s problems also.

EDUCATION OF AYURVEDA TO CHILDREN

In the modern era of glamour and artificial living, children are not being given any education regarding their *Ahara* (Diet), *Vihara* (Behavioural pattern), *Carya* (Routines and schedules of life). In the name of education, they are being prepared for the rat race which has nothing to do with their personality-development or raising their level of consciousness. This is the cause of worsening child and adolescent crime-situation.

How does a child collect information?

A child gathers 87% of its information through its eyes, 7% through its ears, 3.5% through its sense of touch, 1.5% through its sense of smell and 1% through its sense of taste. A creche/nursey teacher should select her educational equipments accordingly.

**(From “The Hand - book of Nursery schools”)
Madurai 1-1980.**

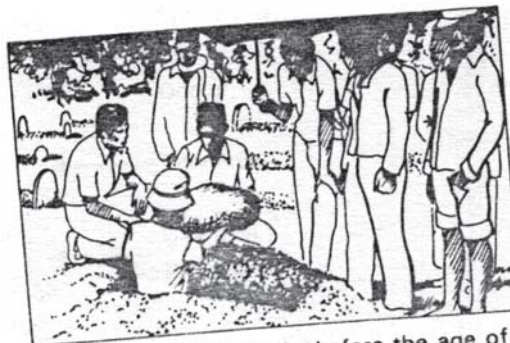
Ayurveda, if introduced from the primary education level in a graded manner, and be gradually enhanced at the secondary school and higher education level, the individual, social and national health can be better taken care of. The western model of hospital-beds per quantum of population as a health indicator is not going to solve the problem. If the child gets to know how to take care of his health by the resources readily available in his surroundings and the atmospheric vicinity, he will not only save the pollution of the milieu exterior, but also will be purifying his milieu interior. These components

DIARRHOEA IS SO COMMON

The very frequency of diarrhoea deceives parents and health workers.

In the less developed countries, one in ten of the attacks leads to significant dehydration.

Only one in a hundred episodes is fatal —
BUT ONE IN TEN CHILDREN MAY DIE FROM DIARRHOEA.



Each child has 10 attacks before the age of 5

cannot be introduced to a child without educating him about the *ayurvedic* concepts of *Ahara, Vihara and Carya*.

AYURVEDA AS THE CULTURE:

If Ayurveda is introduced to the child as the modern culture, the child will learn to save the national resources and the bio-diversity of the country. At this juncture, I would like to point out that, instead of propagating only plantation of trees, plantation of trees of higher medicinal properties like *Neem, Amla, Aswagandah, Arjuna, Jamuna*, and so many others could be easily introduced to the children who will not only plant but educate themselves as well as the society regarding the self-healthcare system.

Ayurveda has simple ways of correcting ailments and preventing even serious ailments if the thoughts of *Ayurveda* are introduced. Why should a child be not educated about the *Ayurveda*-way of life in personal hygiene, sexual behaviour, and *Sattwik, Rajasic* and *Tamasic*, diet which directly affects the psyche of the child?

If *Ayurveda* was adopted it would have never prompted the Government to open Beer bars so freely or Cola drinks availability would have declined just for the lack of demand.

Even today if the concepts of preventive and promotive health are introduced to children, they can become better and move useful units of the society – an invaluable asset of the nation.

We have already lost too much, by not adapting to *Ayurvedic* way of rearing a child and educating children about *Ayurveda* – Let' us start now. Better late than never

Sarve Bhawantu Sukhinaha
Sarve Santu Niramayah
Save Bhadrani Pashyantu
Ma Kasciddukhbhagbhavet.

ON BRAIN GROWTH

Scientists', research on brain growth has revealed the following fact. A chimpanzee baby is born with 70% of its brain already developed. The remaining 30% also develops within the first six months after the birth of the chimp - baby. This is also true of most birds and animals. But a human being is born only with 23% of its brain developed. The remaining, 70% is developed within the first six years and the balance 7% develops and completes the process between 19 and 23 years.

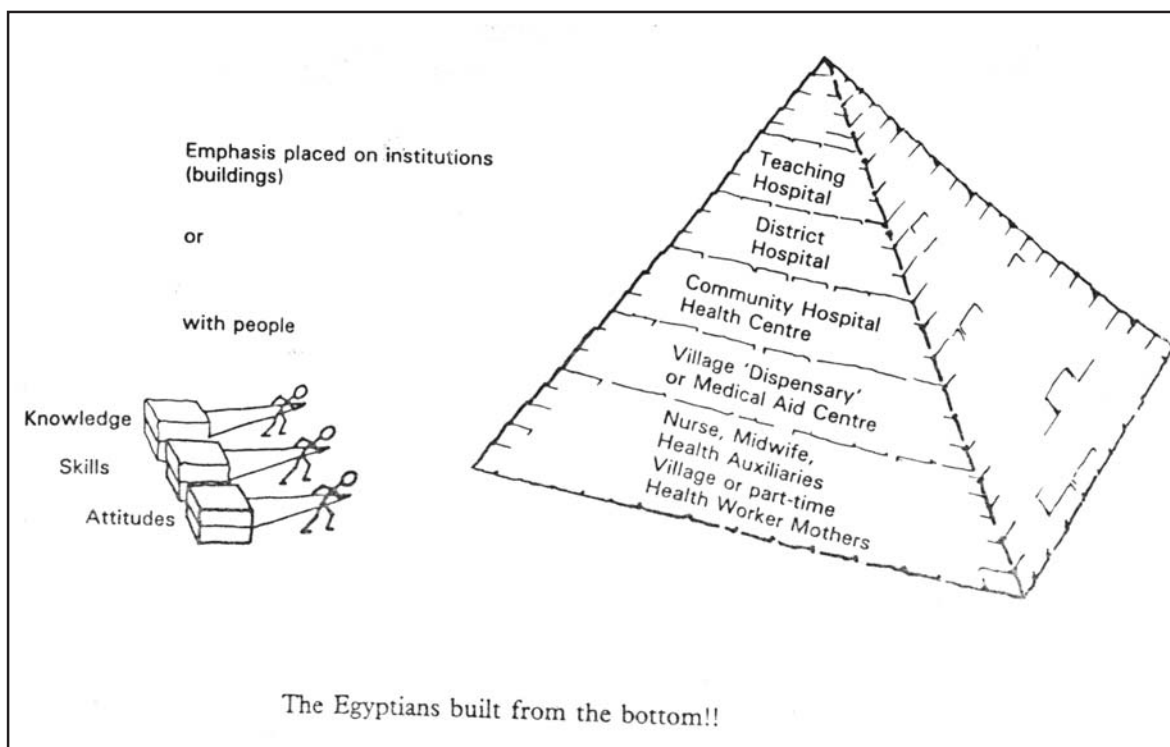
During the *balwadi/creche/* pre-primary school age of the child (1 to 6 years), the speed of brain growth is faster in the first half and slower in the second half.
 (From "The Hand book of Nursery - schools" by A. Avaiyan & A. Ebenezer, Sarvodaya Ilakhiyapannai, Madurai 1-1980.



53 p.c. of Children Malnourished (From a newspaper report)

It is in the area of immunisation against childhood diseases, that India has made rapid progress, covering a record of over 80 million children on one-day-against-polio through the oral vaccine. The drive against whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus and measles also continues with as many as 80 to 90 per cent children covered. This is expected to make a significant impact on child mortality over the next few years.

The disparity between what has already been achieved in some developing countries and India comes out sharply in the area of schooling for girls - in India 39 per cent girls are deprived primary schooling, whereas in China only 5 per cent are left out. In some countries of the sub-Saharan region as many as 90 per cent girls are denied primary education.



THE ROLE OF *AYURVEDA* IN CHILD HEALTH-CARE

VAIDYA SURESH CHATURVEDI

A *Yurveda*, the India system of medicine is fully enriched with the knowledge and experience of learned scholars. At least 1000 years before the development of modern paediatrics, *Maharshi* Vriddha Vagbhata had written a treatise on Ayurvedic Paediatrics known as *Kasyap Samhita*. Even before Kasyap, pioneers like Charak and Sushruta had also discussed this branch of paediatrics at length, if not very elaborate.

Ayurvedic paediatrics, named as *Kaumer Bhritya* throws light not only on the management of paediatric illnesses, but also deals with the health aspects of a normally growing child so that it could develop into a healthy adult individual.

CARE OF CHILD:

After the birth of child as it starts breathing its temperature decreases. Therefore the child should be covered with woolen clothes for atleast one hour.

FEEDING:

The child should have mother's milk for several weeks. If mother's milk is not available in sufficient quantity, then cow's milk should be given after diluting it. A healthy child having approximately 3 kg of weight should feed at least five times a day. The weight of a child decreases after its birth in the initial days. But, after some days the weight of the child again increases.

As the children in the first stage require nothing but milk of the mother or of wet-nurse, or milk-substitute, so long as the quantity of milk is sufficient in every respect, the child will continue to be healthy and playful. But if the milk is insufficient the child may have any number of diseases, the human constitution is heir to.

In the case of children sustained only on milk, if the child gets diseases, the mother or wet-nurse also should be treated along with the child. And if milk-substitutes

are used for sustaining it, the substituted milk should be properly purified with medicines, in addition to the treatment given to the child. A child is likely to get any number of diseases at the time of its teething. These, however, pass off when the teeth come out prominently. These ailments should therefore, be treated with mild remedies befitting children, by a proper physician.

Age as a whole has been divided into four phases viz. Childhood, early adulthood (Youth) late adulthood and senility. The term "childhood" is used for the age between the birth and sixteen years. This is again subdivided into three phases, which are:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>Shishu</i> | 0-5 years |
| 2. <i>Bala</i> | 5-12 years |
| 3. <i>Kishore</i> | 12-16 years |

The child should thus be looked after till it attains the age of youth. There are three stages of *Shishut* viz:

1. Sustenance on milk only.
2. Sustenance on milk and ordinary food.
3. Sustenance on ordinary food alone.

Massage:

For proper development of the child daily oil massage should be given with a lump of dough flour. This will make the baby's skin clean and soft. It also helps in providing nutrition to it. Give the child a wash

with lukewarm water after oil massage. Carry out massage and washing in a closed room to protect the child from the wind. Dry the child's body properly with a clean towel. Wrap the child in loose linens and let it sleep.

Eye:

For preservation from various diseases and to maintain normal-eye-sight it is necessary to use the Anjans from the child-hood daily at bed time. There are many ayurvedic medicines, which are useful in preserving and improving the eye-sight.

Exercise:

A Child does require any special exercise but his natural movements such as walking, running sports (indoor and outdoors) are enough for developing its physical strength and growth.

Sleep:

For a human body sleep is very essential for health-preservation, according to the person's age. The sleep balances the physical and mental strength, as it is a basic requirement of our body.

1. Baby requires sleep nearly about 16 to 18 hours.
2. Infants sleep about 12 to 16 hours.

3. A Child requires sleep from 10 to 12 hours.
4. For Age from 12 to 16, sleep requirement is from 8 to 10 hours.

COMMON DISEASES OF A CHILD:

The irregularities in diet and deeds create various diseases in a child.

Pain:

When the child feels any pain it starts crying. The degree of pain can be easily measured by the degree of crying. The location of pain should be ascertained from the place of his body where he/she frequently touches or cries when touched. It is therefore, desirable to keep the baby wrapped for at least an hour.

Eruption of Teeth:

When teeth begin to appear, there is a possibility of every type of ailment appearing in the body of the child. These should be temporarily treated, because it goes away when the teeth actually appear.

Memory:

It is having an important role in human life but right from the childhood, we should develop the memory, so that we can improve our remembrance for whole of our life. For this purpose, we have to maintain daily routines properly and nourishing diet is required in daily meal, specially milk, butter, curd, boiled butter. And fruits and dry fruits are helpful for the improvement of the memory.

The diet and deeds in daily routine are explained in *Ayurveda* in a very simple manner for the prevention as well as cure of diseases.



Factors influencing Infant-Mortality

C. Chandra Mouli

Director of Census Operations, TamilNadu

1. Introduction

The socio-economic conditions of a population are indicated by a sensitive index called Infant Mortality Rate (I.M.R) It measures the level and quality of health care and other social infrastructures.

India's socio - demographic goal is to reduce IMR to 30 per 1000 live births by 2010.

Tamil Nadu, West Bengal (IMR - 51) Kerala (14), Maharashtra (48) are the most successful states in India in this field.

2. Components of IMR

IMR's two components are a) Neo-natal mortality up to one month, influenced by biological and endogamous causes and b) post-natal mortality up to are year, influenced by nature and quality of environment. Neo-natal mortality accounts generally for 75% of the mortality.

3. Causes

a) Respiratory infection of the new-born b) causes peculiar to infancy c) prematurity d) congenital malfunction e) diarrhoea of the new born e) birth injury etc. account for 80% of infant deaths in Tamil Nadu. Other causes are a) accidents and injuries b) fevers c) digestive disorders d) disorders of the respiratory systems e) central nervous system-based disorders, f) circulatory system failure and g) cord-infection.

In Urban areas, slow foetal growth, malnutrition, immaturity, birth - trauma, hypoxia, birth asphyxia, and respiratorial conditions account for 75% of the deaths.

4. Factors

Socio - economic, cultural and demographic causes of infant mortality in Tamil Nadu are:

a) Infanticide: 100 blocks located in 6-7 districts practise female infanticide. One sixth of all female - infant - deaths in the state are due to infanticide.

b) Infant mortality: It declines sharply with increasing education of the mother. It is 89/ per 1000 live birth for illiterate mothers and 34/ per 1000 live births for mothers with high school education.

c) Medical attention: IMR for births with no care is 111 for 1000 live births. With antenatal and or delivery care, the IMR comes down to 65 per 1000 live births. With both antenatal and delivery care the IMR is 51/per 1000 live births.

d) Age of mother, birth order and spacing: Mortality risks are higher for very young and very old mothers, for higher order of birth, and for births occurring within 24 months of previous birth.

e) Birth weight: Many studies have found that low - birth - weight - babies (under 2500 grams) have a substantial increased risk of mortality.

5. Conclusion: Thus a complex set of biological, socio-economic, demographic and cultural factors influence the Infant Mortality Rate of a population. There are no quick-fixes to solve the problems. The Government and the NGO's are working out a multi-pronged strategy.





KERALA WORLD'S FIRST BABY-FRIENDLY STATE

K.P.M. Basheer

1. Unicef, Kerala health department, and Indian academy of paediatrics have together declared Kerala as the first Baby-Friendly state in the world.

2. Kerala gets this honour for its efforts to protect promote and support exclusive breast-feeding of infants for six months, and supplementary breast-feeding beyond.

3. This effort has led to substantial reduction in infant mortality and infant diseases.

4. 90% of the state's, hospitals are declared baby - friendly.

5. This tag is given to those hospitals which systematically and successfully promote breast-feeding.

6. Here health facilities do not promote Breast - milk - substitutes; free samples (of milk - substitutes) are not to be given to new mothers.

7. Breast - feeding reduces infant infection, diarrhoea and other diseases.

8. High levels of general and female literacy, health consciousness, regard for child's rights and gender equality have contributed to Kerala's success.

9. Tradition of Breast - feeding up to age one has helped.

10. Kerala already has the lowest infant mortality rate, (lower than some prosperous Western countries) the highest rate of institutional delivery and the highest life expectancy at birth in the country.

(Adopted from an article in the Hindu)

A SILENT EMERGENCY – MALNUTRITION IN INDIA

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1 - Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology, Madurai

2 - Family health and development, research and service foundation, Madurai

Introduction

In the public imagination the word “Malnutrition” brings vision of the emaciated child with sunken eyes and flies humming around the mouth seen on TV in conflict regions of Africa and in famine conditions. In India older generation-doctors will remember the emaciated child with thin legs and pot-belly or a child with the bloated and puffed face and swelling of the feet. Fortunately we do not see these extreme malnutrition-cases now. But malnutrition continues to be a problem in our country. To address this problem, India is the first country to have taken action to improve the nutritional status of children and emphasis was placed on Protein Energy Malnutrition and efforts were made to improve the condition. India has based its nutrition programmes on the following presumptions.

1. Nutrition of children is very important and it is the responsibility of the mothers.
2. For decades we have looked at nutrition with a welfare approach which has treated people only as recipients of welfare.



India is in the “Nutritional Transitional” stage and hence we have both undernutrition and overnutrition in the form of obesity. The poor eat less of all food items and the rich over eat the wrong food item and lead a sedentary life. The 1993-94 National Sample Survey (NSS) indicated that 70% of the adult population had a food intake of less than 2400 calories which have been recommended. This (the intake) is even less than 2100 calories in rural areas. On an average an adult consumes

1700 calories per day and 10% of the population consumes less than 1300 calories per day.

The welfare approach has not delivered any dramatic result. What we need is a “Rights Approach.” This Right’s Approach lends itself to seeing the poor in the development process and leading towards community involvement and ownership that will ensure sustainability rather than overriding the coping strategies.

India has the world’s largest number of malnourished children even though food production is more and the national income is better than some other countries in Africa which have smaller number of malnourished children. The nutrition programme in India was started 20 years ago and Tamilnadu has a very well planned nutrition programme. Today we do not see gross



malnutrition that we did in the sixties, however the number of children malnourished is still high.

It is estimated that the effect of malnutrition on productivity, illness and death in India costs the Nation, 10 billion dollars a year. Micro-nutrient deficiencies have come to dominate the thinking of the government and NGOs who have been concerned about this. However till recently most of them were involved in vertical programmes of individual micro-nutrient deficiencies and Vitamin A dominated the services of those organizations involved in eye-care. The major micro-nutrient deficiencies identified are Vitamin A, iron and iodine and Zinc also is emerging as a matter of concern.

Global scenario

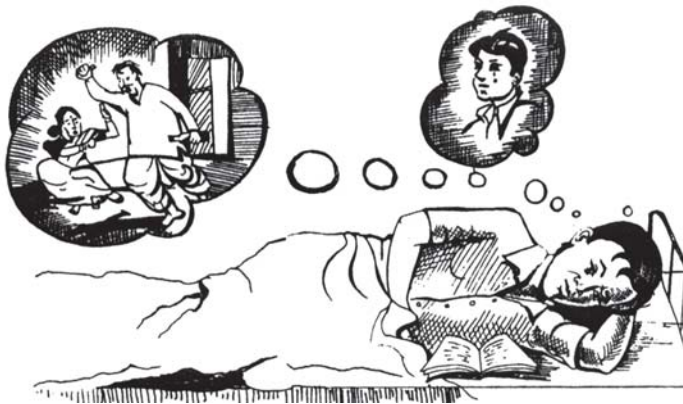
Everyone will be surprised to know that the worst affected region in malnutrition is not Africa but South East Asia with India and Bangladesh as leading countries. In Africa only 30% of the children are under-weight for age as against more than 50% in India and Bangladesh.



Among the total world child population, 20% of the children are living in India and among the malnourished children 40% of the children are living in India.

National scenario

In India, the prevalence of severe and moderate malnutrition in terms of weight of the age (in children aged 0 - 4 years) is 53%. Almost one third of the children born in India have a birth-weight less than 2.500 Kgs which is termed as "low birth-weight" and had adverse consequences in growth and some of the children started showing growth retardation before birth. The survival



chances of these children are less, when compared to children born with normal birth-weight, which is 3.000 Kgs. This malnutrition is a pure and simple consequence of inadequate intake of food and can happen in cases of famines or non-availability of food or lack of money. However India has not had any wide spread famines, or non-availability of food or lack of money when compared to other developing countries.

Nutrition-supplementation-schemes

India was one of the first countries in the world to initiate feeding programmes for children. A number of schemes are available to feed the indigent population. Other countries that have copied and adopted our feeding-programmes for children have overtaken us and have better nourished children and women. The Government of India spent Rs.5,100 crores on food-subsidies during the year 1994-1995 and Tamilnadu government's nutrition-supplementary-programme costs Rs.175.94 (Rs.168.63 incurred by State and Rs.7.31 by Central government) per child in the age group of 0 – 14 years during the year 1992 -1993. But the nutrition expenditure per malnourished child per year in Tamilnadu during 1993 - 1994 was Rs. 732.37. The total expenditure on nutrition by Tamilnadu government during the year 1994 – 1995 was Rs.302.50 crores. All

these facts indicate that malnutrition is not due to lack of government spending, or lack of food grains, or lack of per capita income. It suggests that it's not enough to spend money on various schemes to the population, equal efforts have to be taken to understand the customs and beliefs and eating habits of our population. The present condition reveals the fact that achieving the National nutritional goal for 2000 by the year 2010 itself very difficult.

Malnutrition is a problem across all social classes.

Following are the factors that contribute towards the nutritional status of the population.

1. Total calories intake of food is below recommended standards among the poor and far above the recommended standard among the rich with the added problem of sedentary life styles.
2. Also there are major micro-nutrient deficiencies which affect the health of the population. However many more micro-nutrients necessary for health are receiving attention.

The three major micro-nutrient deficiencies are:

1. Iron deficiency anaemia

This is a major problem among both women and children of all social classes. It is also a problem among men. Prevalence of Anaemia in

| | |
|---|-------|
| Children 1-5 yrs | - 53% |
| Adult Women | - 75% |
| Pregnant women | - 83% |
| Adolescent girls from affluent families | -60% |

The consequences of anaemia are poor productivity, loss of hair, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, irritability which contributes towards poor quality of life.

2. Vitamin A deficiency

Vitamin A deficiency has been reduced enormously due to the sustained government programme of providing vitamin A to children since 1971. However Vitamin A deficiency is still a Public health problem and in Tamilnadu it is 3.11%. Vitamin A deficiency not only

affects the eye but it also challenges the immune-response-system of the body. Thus a vitamin A-deficient-person is unable to cope—with the repeated attacks of infections to which the population is exposed. Vitamin A deficiency is seen in pockets and commonly found among the very poor. However, a vitamin A deficient pregnant woman complains of night blindness and is at risk of giving birth to a child that could suffer from nutritionally induced blindness after birth.

3. Iodine deficiency

Due to wrong agricultural practices we are seeing goiter in areas where it did not exist earlier and the prevalence rate of mild goiter in India is 21%. The effect of this is mild mental retardation.

Some suggested causes for persistent malnutrition

- Attitude - food is seen as a requirement to assuage hunger and not for health.
- Control of money – Even the wage earning woman has to hand over her earning to the husband or mother-in-law and she is given just sufficient money for food for the family. Hence the money she controls is money for food and when she needs something, she has to take it from the food-budget.
- Total lack of self-esteem in the housewife - The woman who brings a pay packet is more respected than the woman who is a house-wife and who meets the needs of the family. Hence she looks at cooking as a chore she would like to avoid or spend on it as little time as possible. The energy and time she spends in caring for the family is not quoted in

terms of wages that she would have received for services.



- In the Indian context of family-relationships, men are ignored in all the nutrition programmes.

- Last of all, and more important is that the woman has neither the energy nor the time to put the required balanced-food on the table for the family.

All the above factors have to be addressed to understand the problem to tackle malnutrition in the country.

Consequences of malnutrition

If malnutrition affects the child when the child was below the age of 2 years then the child fails to achieve its full physical and mental potential, leading to fall in productivity and now seriously retarding the child's development. As most of the children in India (under 2 years) are malnourished, when they become adults, they will not be able to exercise their mental capacity required at that time and thus we will have a huge physically and mentally under-productive population to cater for. The child who is malnourished is not only under-weight for a given age, but it also suffers from all the nutritional deficiency that is to be avoided for good health, mainly iron deficiency. The

consequences are enormous. When the low birth-weight infants become adults, they become vulnerable patients for getting all chronic illnesses like diabetes, hypertension etc.

Investment on nutrition and economic development

The present situation demands the government to invest more money on health and nutrition of the children in the country. The amount invested on these programmes should be viewed as an investment on the future human resources of the country that would contribute for the economic development not merely as a food subsidy programme.

- It reduces health-care-cost as children who fall sick due to undernutrition have a longer stay in hospital than the children well-nourished.

- It reduces the burden of non-communicable diseases – It has been established that diabetes, heart disease and cancer absorb a high percentage of health budget. It has been stated that preventing early undernutrition may reduce the risk of these conditions in later life.

- It improves productivity and economic growth – Undernourished children become smaller adults with reduced physical capacity. Productivity of adults who are undernourished even on seasonal basis is impaired. Better health leads to longer working life, reduces absence due to illness and increases the number of productive days. This contributes towards the economy of the country.

- *It promotes education, intellectual capacity and social development*

- Undernutrition in foetal life and infancy damages the child's mental development and impairs the capacity to learn. Undernutrition is associated with delayed schooling, absence from schools and thus hinders the opportunity for both social and economic development of the child.

Conclusion

Health is a human right and good nutrition for the people of a country is a national asset. It helps in economic growth and prosperity. Efforts have to be taken to create awareness among the younger generation who are driven by the fast-food culture. To tackle this, problem, health and nutrition-education has to be included in the school syllabus. We should bring out behavioral changes in the communities. A silent emergency is happening within the country affecting our future generations and this is the challenge that every citizen of India must accept to improve the situation.

Child - Labour, the other side of the story from Sivakasi

BACK FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH

S. Gurumurthy

We are not worried about the foreign competition in trade. We can face global business challenges." This was not a claim made by big business magnates of India, Tatas, or Birlas or Ambanis.

This claim was not made not in India's political capital Delhi or in Mumbai our trade - capital. Not even in Bangalore or in Hyderabad, world leaders in software business.

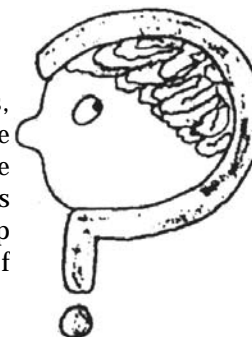
This claim was made in a conversation with me in Tamil Nadu, in Sivakasi, described by Jawaharlal Nehru as mini-Japan. The claimant was Shri Mariappan, Secretary of the association of cracker manufacturers in that town.

I was charmed by this voice of challenge raised in Sivakasi, at a time when our industries are being decimated by globalisation and despair marks the scenario.

In the year 2001, I undertook a survey - tour of Tamil Nadu, in connection with a Trade-Fair to be organised in Coimbatore.

In January, I visited Sivakasi and could participate in a seminar, organized by the chamber of commerce there.

Among other things, the talks veered round the present struggles the business community is facing there - rather a slip for the mini-Japan of Jawaharlal Nehru.



What is their problem? They are hesitant even to tell the truth or were they afraid to tell the truth?

The great sin the industrialists of Sivakasi have committed is that the majority of them are engaged in the manufacture of crackers. Crackers are closely associated with the Hindu festival of Deepavali. Crackers enliven the festival, children, youth and adults are charmed by the cracker - bursting - festival. This perhaps irritates some people.

This irritation gave rise in the past ten years, the problem of child - labour. It started in a small way and assumed gigantic proportions.

Some non-governmental organizations - NGOs seized this issue and attempted to malign the industries of Sivakasi and the industrialists and damn the town of Sivakasi itself.

I.L.O. appreciates India's Programme for elimination of child - labour

India has committed itself to implement the international programme for Elimination of Child Labour, by enacting a central legislation, providing for a minimum age, not less than 14 years - for admission to employment and work.

Compulsory education upto middle-school level, and non-employment benefit to parents for working towards abolition of child - labour, were other measures hailed by the I.L.O.

(From a Newspaper Report)

They even tried to torpedo the industrial set - up of Sivakasi. Behind these efforts were the Christian churches and priests who were and are engaged in converting people to Christianity. These evangelists assert that the child - labour problem is rampant in Sivakasi and try to get foreign - funds for studying the "problem".

NGOs go with begging bowls to foreign donors with the avowed mission of studying and 'solving' the child - labour problems. The traders - in - religion who abet and support the NGOs, together have succeeded in winning over government officials to their side. The collector's office receives a sum of Rs. 4 crores per year from foreign sources to 'manage' the problem of child - labour. Thus, every one concerned gets money, vehicle - facilities, telephones, cell - phones and the exalted status as social - workers, in the name of child - labour emancipation.



About the press, the less said the better. All print - media accord top - priority to the 'social - workers.' In the cacophony of their cries, the voice of the S i v a k a s i industrialist is lost. Once it is known that C h r i s t i a n priests are engaged in this work, which political party will dare to condemn this kind of vilification of the Sivakasi's society?

The politicians faded away. Money power, administrative - authority and publicity all aligned themselves against the Sivakasi Industrialist.

When they were feeling orphaned, t h e Swadeshi J a g a r a n M a r c h stepped in to revive Sivakasi's glory - that was in the beginning of 2002.



The best printing centre in the World, the home of the world - famous Nightingale Diaries - the hub of match - industry and cracker factories, Sivakasi's trade turn - over is more than a thousand crores of rupees a year. In a country where unemployment is a serious problem, Sivakasi is a welcome exception. Sign boards - 'workers needed' welcome artisans to work places. Such a centre of toil has its name tarnished with the epithet of "child - labour - exploitation - centre."

How did Sivakasi come to earn this dubious distinction? Two reasons combine to do so. One is that Sivakasi has attained world - wide fame because of its match and cracker factories. Second is its NGOs who send the hat around to collect money in the name of Sivakasi's child - labour problem.

When a Sivakasi Industrialist goes abroad on a business trip, he has to face the stigma - the foreign friends ask them: "Why do you exploit child - labourers?" He has to hang his head in shame.

But what is the truth? Statistics tell a different tale. Sivakasi has a population of 85,000 and 1,25,000 if the surrounding villages are taken into account. There are 42 schools here plus 3 arts colleges. A girl's college and an engineering college and two polytechnics complete the scene. The total number of

students in these educational institutions is 39,000. These schools, colleges and polytechnics were established not by government, but by the prosperous cracker and match factory owners. The government has declared Virudhunagar district (of which Sivakasi is a part) as a cent percent literate area. If the industrialists live off child - labourers, why should they establish educational institutions? How will their need for child - labourers be met, if they run schools? Here lies the truth.

But the maligners of Sivakasi, those who would seek to destroy that town claimed: "There are 45,000 children working in Sivakasi factories" They collected crowds and organized seminars. Out of a total population of 85,000 how can 39,000 children attend schools and 45,000 children work in factories? How do things add up? Every one including the press knew the truth. Knowing it fully well, the NGOs and priests went to schools all over the country, organised human - chains of students, mailed thousands of pre - written post - cards, and made thousands of students swear that they would not purchase crackers made by the 'tender hands of children.' They pressurised many governments to ban bursting crackers, and in this manner tried to annihilate Sivakasi, and its industries.

Last year, on 19-2-2002 the bubble burst. There was an uproar against this libel and infamy. The entire Sivakasi organized itself into a *bandh*. The world press began realising the truth. The NGOs who were making neat packets on the basis of false - propaganda received a jolt. The government was amazed. How did these people awaken? With politicians and political parties shying away from helping, how did the Sivakasi industrialists organise the *bandh*, revealing the truth to the press and to others?

The reason was Sivakasi's unity. The employer and the employee, the rich and the poor, sank their differences and rose in unison, forcing the maligners to retreat!

The end - result was that Sivakasi won! In the business season of 2002 Deepavali, sales ran as smoothly as the pre - scandal years and Sivakasi holds its head high today by the force of unity its sons and daughters have forged; by the fact they kept away politicians and parties and sought to solve Sivakasi's problems by the dint of its own strength.

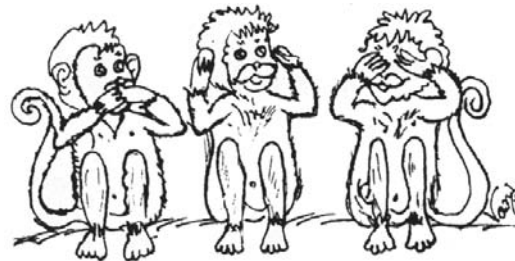
(Adapted and Translated from the Tamil article of Thuglak dated 19-20-2003)

Child - Labour (I.L.O. Report)

According to an I.L.O report, in developing countries alone about 250 million children aged between 5-14 years are forced to work on paltry wages.

Poor enforcement of laws in countries like India has emboldened unscrupulous employers to take full advantage of the cheap labour. Carpet-making, restaurants and small-business are the usual culprit-employers.

Child - labourers are the worst hit during a cyclical recession in the economy, especially in poorer states. Poverty alone does not push children to labour. Weaker sections become easy targets for recruitment of child-labour. The root - causes are poverty and social backwardness. Closure of factories employing child-labour is no solution to the problem. Children should go to schools and parents should have jobs. Expanding primary education facilities is urgently needed. **(From an I.L.O. report)**



National Child - Labour Project to be extended

[An I.L.O Press release]

The ILO-sponsored project, though identical to the NCLP, would have some more activity thrown in: the former envisages formation of women groups and self-help groups, sensitising employers, etc. Under the NCLP, the Central Government has so far spent an amount of Rs. 13.50 crores in the past 10 years.

According to a study conducted in 1991, the number of child - labour in Tamil Nadu is 5.78 lakhs, as against 7.13 lakhs in 1971 and 9.75 lakhs in 1981. The national figures for the corresponding periods are as follows: 1971-1.07 crores, 1981 - 1.36 crores and 1991 - 1.12 crores. While Andhra Pradesh tops the list with having 14.7 per cent of total child - labour, other States which closely follow are Uttar Pradesh, 12.5 per cent, and Madhya Pradesh, 12 per cent.

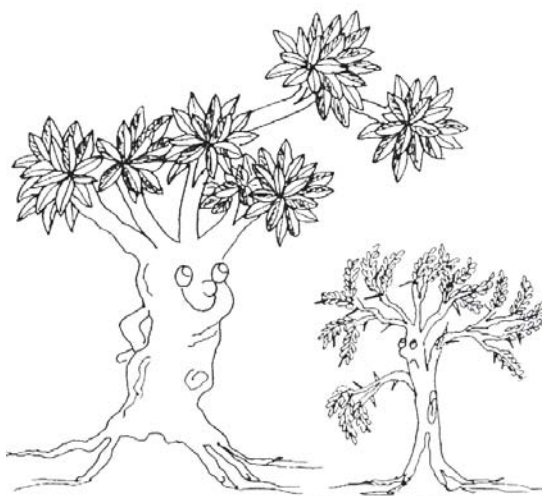
Tamil Nadu with 5.1 per cent is placed at the sixth position, and these children are found to be employed in various sectors such as agriculture, livestock, mining and quarry, gem-cutting, processing, servicing and so on. With a view to wean the child - labour away from factories and other work places, the NCLP is being implemented through the Child - Labour Eradication Project in eight districts such as Coimbatore, Trichy, Virudhunagar, Tuticorin, Vellore, Salem, Pudukottai and Dharmapuri.

Special Schools: Special schools too have been started in these districts with the primary objective of imparting education among child - labour so as to bring them into mainstream. Against the target of starting 377 such special schools in Tamil Nadu, 361 have already been set up with a total strength of 16,005 children. By way of encouragement, a monthly incentive of Rs. 100 is being given to either parent or guardian of the child, and Rs. 800 to teachers.

Free Trade and Child - Labour

From a Consumer Unity and Trust Society Report

1. The Globalisation of economy by India may aggravate poverty and increase the supply of child - labour in the market, if it affects the income distribution in an adverse fashion.
2. The capacity enhancing projects would also increase the demand for labour, including child - labour.
3. The simultaneous availability of free and attractive school in the area may limit the supply of child - labour.
4. The school option is non-existent unless some incentive is given to children to attend schools.
5. If free education to children does not ensure employment for children, alternative methods of skill building, in addition to conventional education may be evolved.
6. Children may be paid to attend centres for vocational training.
7. It would cost India Rs. 50,450 crores to 67,740 crores every year to eliminate both actual and potential child - labour.



A GIGANTIC JOB

(From a World Bank Report)

1. THE World Bank has published the report on a new study "Primary education in India".
2. At the current rate (without extra effort) of growth, in primary schooling in some of India's largest states, educational attainment will not reach an average of 4-5 years of primary education, until the middle of this century.
3. India has now the second largest education system of the world (after China). India has 67 million children aged between 6-10 years, attending primary schools.
4. Enrolment date and age-specific literacy rates show that India has made great strides in expanding access to education. In 1987, 85 million children were enrolled in primary school. In 1993 this figure went upto 100 millions.
5. Reaching full enrolment for 6-10 age group is a great challenge a distant goal.
6. Six states Andhra, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal account for 75% of the children not in school.
7. 95% of students are in the 15 major states. Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab provide almost all their children with primary education.
8. Within states, also vast regional variations exist.
9. India has reduced the disparities between boys and girls in primary education.
10. India has to address four issues in education, access, efficiency, learning achievement and school quantity.
11. Specific challenges in reforms are to be met.
12. Accommodating all children between 6-10 years in primary schools in the next decade would require:-
 - a) Building 1 to 3 million Class Rooms, b) recruiting 7,40,000 teachers
13. 80% of the resources needed will be available in a decade if he present trends continue.
14. Boosting budgetary contributions, local efforts and monitoring are needed.



CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD - LABOUR YIELDING DIVIDENDS

Mr. G. Athipathi, President, All India Chamber of Match Industries, says "We have stopped employing children about five years ago." The match units fetch adult - workers from as far as 100 km now. However, he concedes that children could be employed in cottage units.

The employment of children, vis-a-vis the fireworks industry, the officials concede, is "absolutely marginal." The manufacturers claim that no children below the age of 14 years is employed in the factories. However, they admit that adolescents, between 14 to 18 years, do work in the units. Major fireworks manufacturers demand that the minimum age for employment should be 18 and not 14, if employment of children were to be totally eradicated.

Mr. A.P. Selvarajan, president, Tamil Nadu Fireworks and Amorges Manufactures' Association, says the UNICEF personnel and journalists can visit the fireworks units to see for themselves whether children are employed in them. He claims that major fireworks units had become aware of the child-labour problem in the 1980s.

These units have regulated the manufacture of '*thukkada*' crackers and some of them have even stopped the manufacture forthwith. Because children were employed in the manufacture of '*thukkada*' crackers.

U.S. Labour Department report: A recent report of the U.S. Labour Department, "By the Sweat and Toil of Children", discusses at length the employment of children in agricultural operations, sports goods factories, glass, footwear and tanning industries, stone - quarries and fire-cracker units in India.

The firecracker employment is dealt with on a relatively low key by saying that "similar conditions", as in Guatemala where children risked "burns, amputation and even death", prevailed in the fireworks units. But the fireworks manufacturers are quick to point out that no child has been reported injured or deceased in the 1990s in any mishap in the fireworks units.

The decline or the "eradication" of employment of children in match and fireworks units can be attributed to various factors.

There has been an increasing awareness in the community about the need to send children to school, instead of to work.

The 1990s have seen the infusion of young and fresh minds in the management of fireworks units in the district.

The managers of the units are alive to the social concern over the employment of children. at the same time, the evil of child labour has shown a tendency to branch out to new areas.

(From The Hindu)



CHILDREN AT WORK

C. Rammanohar Reddy

Child-labour in India is numerically more common in the rural areas, but it is the issue of children working in a number of export - industries which has been attracting more attention in recent years. Whatever the motives in the West for turning the spotlight on this kind of child - labour the ILO report has some interesting facts to offer.

The ILO studied the carpet, bangle, diamond and gem-polishing, and mosaic - chip - quarrying industries in India, to investigate claims that "child-workers are, either for technical or economic reasons, irreplaceable in certain industries that would become uncompetitive without them." The studies seem to refute the "nimble fingers" argument as also the need to employ child - labour on economic grounds. First, the work done only by children in these industries is largely of the menial and unskilled kind, which adults can do just as quickly.

Situation in export-industries

The report notes: "Some of the best carpets, those having the greatest density of small knots, are woven by adults. If child dexterity is not uniquely necessary to knot the finest carpets, it is difficult to imagine the other trades for which the 'nimble fingers' argument could be valid."

What about the presumed economic advantages of using child - labour? The savings in labour - cost by hiring children rather than adults is small, - less than five per cent of the price of carpets. If child - labour is yet employed in spite of local and international criticism, then the reason-in the carpet industry-is that most looms are owned by

people who themselves are just this side of poverty and work on very slim profit margins.



The five to ten per cent savings in costs that come from employing child - labour can, according to the ILO, mean a doubling of the loom - owners' income. A finding is that since the incomes of the loom - owners are so low, "a very small levy on the consumer purchase price-one-third of the sales - tax in many industrialised countries-would be sufficient to subsidise the cost to the loom - owner of using exclusively adult - labour if the transfer payments could be targeted."

The larger issue will, however, remain even if the issue of child - labour in export industries is addressed. It is a truism that poverty promotes child - labour and that child - labour in turn, perpetuates poverty.

(The Hindu)

ENDING CHILD - SOLDIERING

Olara A. Otunnu

(From a UN report on Children and Armed conflict)

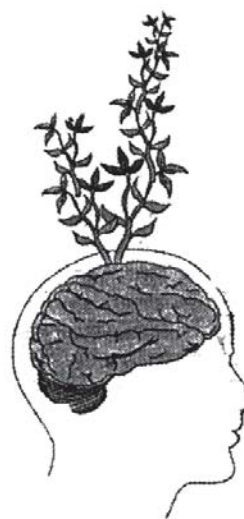
The problem of child-soldiers is immense and has been growing. There are now over three million children under 18, used as combatants, camp-labourers, sex - slaves, and runners in 30 armed combats world wide. Using children as soldiers is one of the worst forms of brutalisation and it is practised in every corner of the globe. A treaty is being signed to empower states and persuade people to desist from the evil, a cynical exploitation of children.

Long - drawn and intractable wars draw children into them. Thousands of children, often abducted from schools and refugee - camps, risking beatings and death, if they attempt to escape, become at times not only victims but also perpetrators. And once childhood is snatched from them, they are cut off from their normal development, education and relationships. Devastated by suffering and hardened against the suffering of others, these children require psycho-social rehabilitation, education and economic opportunities within their communities.

Why do youth end up in armed groups? Some are coerced or induced, some are abducted, some join them because, economic, social systems around them have collapsed. Still others join for ideological reasons, because they have been manipulated by religions and political forces.

Root - causes of war, such as poverty, repression and devastated economies take their toll on children as well adults. Children become susceptible and vulnerable, to being induced to bear arms before they can make decisions for themselves.

As the United Nation Secretary - General's special representative for children and Armed conflict, I have talked with many child - soldiers in many different parts of the world. These children have recounted to me, the committing of atrocities and being forced to kill their friends as proof of loyalty to their captors. Their nightmares never leave them, but they dream of returning to normal life.



The new treaty will help the children achieve their dreams. It out - laws the use of child - soldiers. It arranges for resources for their rehabilitation, reintegration, to disarm them, to break the cycle of violence. It seeks to educate and give the child training and psycho - social treatment.

Those war - groups that use children, cannot escape the glare of the world. They too seek legitimacy.

The basket of the carrots of financial aid and legitimacy, together with the new stick of the treaty and world opprobrium mean, that it is within our grasp to eradicate the use of child - soldiers for the first time in history.

COMBATING CHILD - LABOUR

The Indian Arena

DIPAK BASU

1. In India 25% of the children are workers.
2. 14.4% of the total number of workers are in the 10-14 age group.
3. In Central and Eastern Europe, U.S., etc. the number of child labourers is increasing.
4. The largest group of working children is the unpaid family workers.
5. A high percentage of children give their wages to their parents and guardians.
6. Rural children work more than urban children.
7. Labour by children is considered essential to maintain the economic level of the households as (a) work for wages (b) help in household enterprises (c) chores that free adults for economic work elsewhere.
8. Children work in hazardous industries skipping their studies.
9. Illiterate parents see no need to send the children to schools.
10. High cost of education, made higher by privatization of education, inhibits parents.
11. Schools serving the poor children are of poor quality. Children leave in frustration.
12. Majority of working children work more than 9 hours a day, six to seven days a week. Girls work for longer hours.
13. Hazardous life, industrial activity, farming work, exposure to harsh climate, sharpened tools, heavy loads, toxic chemicals and motorized equipment shape the working atmosphere. They degrade the lives the children.
14. Not being mature, the children get injured or fall ill. Agriculture, mining and construction sectors expose children to more risks.
15. Girls working as domestic servants run the risk of abuse.
16. Proper laws, enlightened government and trade unions, environment in schools, midday meals, increased salary for parents etc., help cutting down the number of child - labourers.
17. Pressure by other parents, force parents of child-labourers to send the children to schools.
18. Kerala and West Bengal have successfully reduced the number of child-labourers.
19. Opening up of imports by developing countries, making them dependent upon imported technology, World Bank credits with a number of anti-labour conditions, serve only to increase child - labour.



The Rights of Children

N.R. Madhava Menon
Member, Law Commission

1. Children constitute one third of Indian population (300 million). Of them, 50% live in poverty, ill health, and exploitation.
 2. Children form a vulnerable group. They are therefore given certain special privileges and entitlements. But even for accessing these benefits, children have to depend upon elders.
 3. Neglected, abandoned, delinquent, HIV - infected and drug - addicted children become a menace not only to themselves but to society at large too.
 4. India has 20m. child - labourers, 2 million street - children, 100m school - drop - outs, 40m. children with avoidable debilitating illnesses, and several million abused children.
 5. Family and gram-sabha, should be empowered, to deal with children.
 6. Health, education, environment and welfare of children should be ensured.
 7. Planning in these fields should be localized.
 8. The rights of the children in the fields of food, nutrition, health, education, recreation and security as a special class should be ensured.
 9. Prevention of abuse and exploitation, creation of monitoring and accountability systems should be arranged.
 10. Nyaya panchayats, should be empowered to deal with children's cases.
 11. Proactive and child - centred legal aid should be sponsored.
 12. The child - right protection - apparatus should be decentralized, locally-based, participative, proactive, non-adversarial and responsive to children's needs.
 13. Parents, and the community should be sensitized.
 14. NGO's should act speedily and efficiently.
- (Extract from an article in The Hindu)

THE W.T.O. AND THE CHILD - LABOUR

Dipak Basu

The arguments of the developing countries that inclusion of labour rights and environmental issues are meant to stop their exports to the developed countries do not cut much ice. Developing countries suffer much more when they open up imports which results in growing unemployment as domestic industries and agriculture are unable to compete. The acceptance of a new product-based patent system will also ruin many industries, particularly drugs and pharmaceuticals. These will make developing countries technologically dependent on the developed world. When a developing country accepts a loan from the World Bank for a project, it forfeits its rights to buy materials from domestic sources or to employ domestic contractors. Anti-dumping measures are being used against the developing countries to take away their comparative advantages.

If the developing countries face trade sanctions through the WTO, they will be forced to implement fundamental human rights of the workers and children. Progressive measures sometime come out of reactionary set-ups. Legislation implemented after the long campaigns of Lord Wilberforce against the slave trade, or of Abraham Lincoln against slavery in the southern United States are some of the examples. The WTO is an oppressive and reactionary organisation no doubt, but inclusion of labour rights, which may help to abolish - child labour and slavery, is a progressive act indeed.

(The writer is Professor in International Economics, Nagasaki University, Japan) This article is an extract from his article in 'The Hindu'

STREET CHILDREN

Vaasanthi

According to an estimate of an-NGO (in 1995) Chennai had street children between 5-19 years numbering 75,000. They are candidates for all kinds of abuses. They may carry life-threatening diseases. NGO's supply condoms to them (instead of rescuing them). Of these 75000 children, 43% chew *pan masala*, 36% smoke 17% drink and 13% are addicted to narcotic drugs.

It is true that the number of street children in large cities is on the increase the world over. Poverty, a sense of rejection, and anger against society, are what impel children towards violent gangs, and terrorist organizations according to sociologist, Devaki Jain. These are the youngsters that guerilla leaders so easily convert into human bombs in the name of religion and language dogma. With no goals in their lives, and no one to care for them, street children can easily become terrorists.

Surveys were conducted on the number of school going age children that do not attend schools in Tamil Nadu. While the NGO's survey says there are about 40 lakhs of children that do not go to school, the Government figures (according to a Tamil weekly source) say that it is less than 2.12 lakhs for the year 2002-2003. You can be sure you can trust neither.

The problem is that it hardly matters to the public whether the figures are right or wrong. The world at large is governed by market forces and economic viability. Is child-education a profit? Does mobilizing street children for better life profit? Is such investment profitable? Can children as mere commodities be used for the profit of adults?

The children are watching us! In Ranipet, I saw child-bonded-labourers rolling beedis at the rate of 2000 per day. They have to do so in lieu of some petty loans their parents have taken. (From the Sunday Express 27.04.2003)

Child - labour a global phenomenon

Extracts From An I.L.O report

1. Estimates of child - labourers below the age of ten and of girls who are engaged in full-time domestic work, are not available.
2. Global urbanisation has pushed up child-labourers in town and cities, but, 9 out of 10 child - labourers live in villages.
3. Even developed - countries have child - labourers, but fewer in number. Their working conditions are better.
4. In Southern Europe, a significant number of children are believed to work for pay in seasonal activities, street - trade, small workshops or in home settings.
5. In Central and Eastern Europe, where the economy is in transition from centrally planned to a market economy, child - labour is growing.
6. In the U.S. the growth of the service sector, the rapid increase in the supply of part-time jobs, and the search for a more flexible work - force have contributed to the expansion of the child - labour market.
7. Children work at the "suggestion" of their parents. Working children in India contributed 20% of the household income. Help in the household enterprise is an important occupation for the child.

Child - Labour in Chennai City

1. Hoteliers, tea-shops, liquor - outlets use child labourers.
2. Thousands of child-labourers, some of them bonded, are working near Red Hills area in rice-mills. They are exposed to the hot sun and dust pollution.
3. Child beggars are recruited and used in Chennai.
4. Chennai alone has 16,000 child-labourers.

(A State Human rights Commission report)

Global Convention to ban child - labour (From the I.L.O sources)

- 1) 174 members of I.L.O including India will participate in the convention.
- 2) The convention will target practices such as child - slavery, forced or compulsory labour, trafficking, debt - bondage, serfdom, prostitution, pornography and various other forms of hazardous and exploitative work jeopardizing the health, safety or morals of children.
- 3) The proposed new standards will prioritise the identified areas for action.
- 4) Focus will be on young children, especially girls.
- 5) I.L.O estimates: a) 250 million children (5-14 years) are in work in developing countries alone.
b) That is 25% of the total number of children in developing countries are economically active. 120 m. of them full time. The rest combine work and schooling.
c) In some countries 68% of the working children are engaged in hazardous work.
d) World over, 50-60 million children of age-group 5-11 work in hazardous circumstances.
e) Effective enforcement of laws, adequate prevention-measures, removal of children from work - place - hazards, rehabilitation and social integration of children are being legislated.

Remedial measures: The major recommendations include adopting national programmes of action, which identify, reach out to and protect the very young children, girls, children with special vulnerabilities and all children at risk; Raising awareness and mobilising societies; establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective application of the new legal instrument and determining and compiling data on most hazardous work and activities like criminal offences.

Unicef Slams Lankan War - group on child-Soldiers

UNICEF has accused a Srilankan war - group for breaking a commitment not to recruit children for combat in its war against the SriLankan state.

The situation for children has worsened after 1998.

The group has given an undertaking that it would not recruit children below 17. It would desist from using those below 18 for armed combat.

Some parents have reported to Unicef that their children have been recruited.

The war - group was recruiting children as young as 10 years and age was no consideration as long as the child was able to carry a gun.

Helpless parents no more protested when their children were taken away because of the terror - tactics and intimidation employed by the war - group.

(From Unicef report)



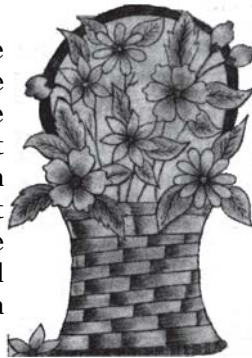
SATYAKAMA, THE TRUTH SEEKER

R.R.DIWAKAR

1. **Introduction:** Here is a young man eager to take the vow of a *brahmachari*, and go out in search of the Reality. His only qualification is that he is truthful. That makes the *guru* or the preceptor accept the young stripling as his disciple. Thrown on his resources in the forest, he communes with nature and arrives at the truth. He goes into the jungle as the common cowherd and comes back as a man of knowledge. The touch of perfection, however has to be given by his *guru*. That is the story of Satyakama Jabala.

2. **The Truthful Disciple:** Satyakama said to his mother "Dear Mother? What is my *gotra* or lineage? I wish to go to a *guru* and offer to live with him as a *brahmachari*."

She said "My son! To tell you the truth I know not your *gotra*. While young and wandering as a house maid serving here and there, I begot you. How then can I know? But I am certain of one thing and that is that your name is Satyakama and mine Jabala. Therefore go forth and fell your *guru* that you are Satyakama Jabala.



Satyakama Jabala approached *Guru* Haridrumata Gautama, known for his wisdom and informed him of his intention to learn at his feet.

As expected, the first question the *guru* asked was about his *gotra*.

Satyakama reported the whole conversation that had taken place between

himself and his mother. He finally added "Thus here I am, sir, known as Satyakama Jabala".

"O brave and truthful child" exclaimed the would-be-*guru*. "No one not born of a *Brahmana* would dare tell such an unpleasant truth. Go therefore and bring *Samidha*-or sacrificial fuel and I shall initiate you into *brahmacharya*. You have not departed from the truth, but cling fast to it, happen what may."

After the usual ceremony of initiation, Satyakama was enrolled as regular inmate of the *ashrama*. The *guru* seemed to be a very hard task-master.

One day he summoned Satyakama, and put him in-charge of four hundred lean, weak and poorly-fed cows. He told the young disciple to take the whole lot to the forest, and asked him not to return till they had become a herd of a thousand.

It was one of the duties of the disciple to serve the *guru* in the way that would best please him. So out went Satyakama as a cowherd, with his new charge and with a determination to carry out the *guru's* orders.

He lived in the forest, befriending nature as a part of a great reality.

One day the friendly leader of the herd, an aged bull whispered to him "Yes! All these four corners of the earth are one aspect of *Brahman*" Then the dancing flames of the camp-fire which he lit, told him that light and darkness, the solid earth beneath and the domed space above studded with stars were all part of *Brahman*.

The morning sun, the midday sun, the setting sun told him that the eye that sees all

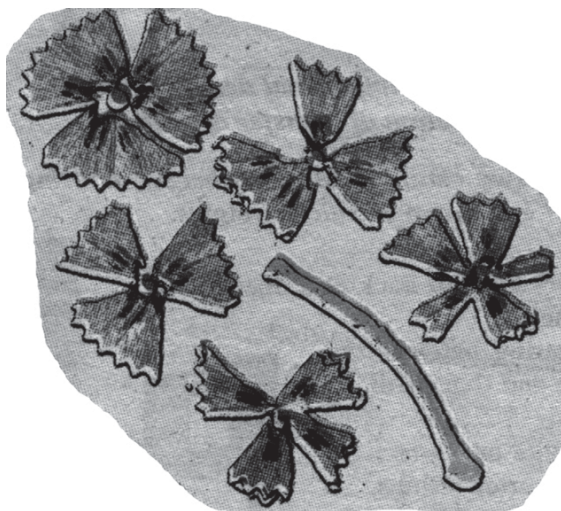
things, the life that pulsates in all things, the mind that wonders at beauty, these too are part of *Brahman*. His mind slowly realized *Brahman* in touch, hearing, speech, sight and taste, in the beating of the heart, in waking and in dreams.

Prompted by the leader-bull, Satyakama and his bovine encourage, now one -thousand - strong returned to the *guru's ashrama*. The dutiful disciple gladdened the heart of the *guru*. The master was also pleasantly surprised when he gazed at the brilliant face of young Satyakama.

Seeing a man of *Brahman* in him, the Master asked Satyakama "Who was it that taught you? You were in the forest only with the cattle and raw Nature?"

The *guru* realized that Satyakama was ripe and ready for spiritual instruction. Keeping him in the *ashrama* for some time the Master perfected his knowledge.

(From "Upanishads in Story and Dialogue" Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1975)



SATYAKAMA JABALA

Swami Vivekananda

I will relate to you a very ancient story from the Chhandogya Upanishad, which tells how knowledge came to a boy. The form of the story is very crude, but we shall find that it contains a principle. A young boy said to his mother, "I am going to study the Vedas. Tell me the name of my father and my caste." The mother was not a married woman, and in India the child of a woman who has not been married is considered an outcast; he is not knowing your family name; I was in service, and served in different places; I do not know who your father is, but my name is Jabala and your name is Satyakama." The little child went to a sage and asked to be taken as a student. The sage asked him, "What is the name of your father, and what is your caste?" The boy repeated to him what he had heard from his mother. The sage at once said, "None but a Brahmin could speak such a damaging truth about himself. You are a Brahmin and I will teach you. You have not swerved from truth." So he kept the boy with him and educated him.

UPAKOSALA

Swami Tattwananda

Gautama had initiated Satyakama Jabala into *Brahma Vidya* and made him a famous teacher in his own sight. Among the disciples of Satyakama was one Upakosala.

Upakosala had spent more than twelve years with Satyakama but in spite of his earnest service to his Guru, the graduation ceremony of the boy, marking his completion of the studies, was not performed. In spite of the pleas of his wife, Satyakama departed on a long pilgrimage, without performing the passing out ritual for his young student.

Perhaps Upakosala was to attain *Brahma Jnana* only by serving *Agni* the God of fire. To Upakosala, it was the darkest hour, but darkness preceding dawn. *Agni* took pity upon him and offered to initiate him into *Brahma Vidya*.

Agni told Upakosala that *Prana* is *Brahman*. *Ka* (pleasure) is *Brahman* and *Kha*

(space) is *Brahman*. Upakosala meditated upon *Agni*'s words and realised that the *Hridayakasha* (the cavity of the Human heart) is the abode of *Brahman*. *Agni*, *Aditya*, *Anna*, Earth, Water, Air all seemed to be permeated by a divine radiance. The truth dawned upon Upakosala like a flash of lightening that *Brahman* is life's emergent value.

When Satyakama returned home, he found *Brahma Tejas*, the light of spiritual wisdom shining on the face of his neglected disciple, Upakosala.

On Upakosala reporting to his teacher, his source of knowledge, Satyakama, realised that the hour of initiation of his disciple into full blast of spiritual wisdom had arrived, and the learned Guru completed the formality. By the removal of all diversity, the central being could be attained. The worthy teacher set the patient and young Upakosala on the path to wisdom.

(Adapted and condensed from: "Upanishadic Stories And their significance". The Bangalore Printing & Publishing Co.Ltd., Bangalore 18-1965)

A CHILD PRODIGY

By Swami Vivekananda (CW VOL.II)

This story belongs to Upakosala Kamalayana, discipline of this Satyakama, who went to be taught by him and dwelt with him for some time. Now Satyakama went away on a journey, and the student became very downhearted ; and when the teacher's wife came and asked him why he was not eating, the boy said, "I am too unhappy to eat". Then a voice came from the fire he was worshipping, saying "This life is Brahman, Brahman is the ether, and Brahman is happiness. Know Brahman." "I know, sir," the boy replied, "that life is Brahman, but that It is ether and happiness I do not know." Then it explained that the two words ether and happiness signified one thing in reality, viz. the sentient ether (pure intelligence) that resides in the heart. So, it taught him Brahman as life and as the ether in the heart. Then the fire taught him, "This earth, food fire, and sun whom you worship, are forms of Brahman. The person that is seen in the sun, I am He. He who knows this and meditates on Him, all his sins vanish and he has long life and becomes happy. He who lives in the cardinal points, the moon, the stars, and the water, I am He. He who lives in this life, the ether, the heavens, and lightning, I am He."

NACHIKETA

(From the Kathopanishad
of Krishna Yajur Veda)

Swami Tattwananda

There was a great sage called Vajasravas. His fame had spread far and wide on account of his charitable disposition. His son, who was also called Vajasravas, wished to perform the great *Viswajit* sacrifice.

He organized the sacrifice in a splendid sacrificial hall. But Nachiketa, the son of Vajasravas was not impressed by the splendour. Dry and old cows were gifted in the sacrifice which act was against the spirit of the occasion. He went and asked his father "To whom do you propose to give me as a gift?" Questioned twice, thrice, the enraged father said "I give you to Yama, the god of death".

Nachiketa felt that was no time to regret or to remonstrate. He saw in the whole turn of events an opportunity to pursue Truth. "All life is transitory and death triumphs over life. Why should then fear death?" so saying Nachiketa went to the abode of Yama.

Yama was not at home then; nor did any one else welcome him. For three days and nights, until Yama returned, Nachiketa remained fasting. Yama, on his return felt friend for this breach of hospitality. He received Nachiketa with proper reverence due to a guest and by way of atonement for having kept him waiting for so long, Yama offered him three boons, one for each day of waiting.

Nachiketa requested Yama as his first boon that his father might recognize him and take him back on his return from the abode of Yama. Yama granted the boon.

As the second boon, Nachiketa asked Yama not for himself, but for the sake of suffering humanity, the technique of the fire sacrifice which helps man to transcend the miseries of life and attain the felicity of heaven. Yama initiated Nachiketa into the secret of the technique. As Nachiketa was endowed with a

spiritual outlook and a bright intellect and was pure and sincere, he comprehended at once all that was taught. Yama was equally pleased with his young disciple; and he, as a token of good-will, offered to name the particular sacrifice after Nachiketa himself. He also declared that whoever performed that particular sacrifice would realize the *Virat Purusha*, manifested as *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aditya*, would realize all the benefits of initiation, from his parents and his

spiritual guide, would be liberated from the round of birth and death though not in an absolute sense, and would attain the peace that is born of meditating upon the *Virat Purusha*.

Now came the question of the third boon. Nachiketa felt that without the knowledge of the self, whatever happiness we have is only external to us; and therefore cannot be *Nitya*, our own and eternal. He requested Yama to let him know, if there is an Atman apart from the body and the senses; and if so, what is from the human end, the great enigma of life.



This was more than Yama has bargained for. He never expected a boy of such tender age would raise such a metaphysical problem. But the *Guru* does not impart knowledge to all and sundry. Yama wished to test the mental calibre of the boy before imparting to him the supreme secret that transcends both life and death.

Yama raised all kinds of difficulties. He said that even the *Devas* are in doubt as to the ultimate reality; that it is too abstruse for human understanding, and that he might as well choose something else.

But Nachiketa was firm in his resolve. He will never have a better teacher; one more eminently fit to solve the great mystery. Although Yama was pleased within himself, he still wished to divert the attention, of the boy by holding before him, all kinds of attractive objects, with which men, grown up children as they are, enjoy themselves. Wealth, youth, beauty, or whatever else satisfies the sense of power, were held up before Nachiketa. But Nachiketa declined all that with thanks. To him, they were merely in the nature of temptations. He did not wish to miss his supreme opportunity. He remained firm in his original resolve. He sought that supreme knowledge, which would throw light on life's great problems, the value and destiny of the individual from the point of view of the Absolute.

Nachiketa came out successful in the test which Yama imposed upon him. Even sages and *Devas* have at times succumbed to those temptations.

Highly pleased, Yama told Nachiketa, that the young lad has chosen the path of virtue and rejected the path of enjoyment.

Then Yama instructed Nachiketa on *Brahmavidya*, the art of distinguishing the self

from the body, that which lies beyond all pairs of opposites, and which is life's supreme value.

This is the story of Nachiketa, who made his fathers' words come true. He dared to meet Yama-Death incarnate, and put away all temptations, which tried to deflect him away from the path of Supreme knowledge-
"Samparaya Vidya."

Editorial Note : It is from the dialogue between Yama and Nachiketa, that Swami Vivekananda chose the inspiring phrase: "**Uttishthata Jagrata Prapya Varannibodhata**": (Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached)



BHRIGU LEARNS THE HARDWAY

R.R. Diwakar

(The spirit is, as it were, encased in five sheaths (*kosas*), one within the other. We first come across the gross material sheath, and then go deeper to more subtle sheaths, the last being the sheath of joy or bliss. This teaching occurs in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and forms the subject of a conversation between Varuna and his son.)

Bhrigu was the son of Varuna. He once approached his father and said, "Father, impart to me the spiritual knowledge you possess."

The father said, "Matter, vital airs, eyes, ears, mind, and speech are the things that you daily come across. You must now know that Reality from which all these things issue and live, towards which all these move and in which they finally merge. That is the *Brahman*. You can know him by *tapas* or concentration and meditation."

The son obeyed the father and after some meditation came to the conclusion that gross matter itself is the *Brahman*. He went and told his father so. But the father was not at all satisfied with his son's finding and he exhorted him to go again and perform more *tapas*. "Meditation alone will give your real insight," said the father.

Then the son went away and began to meditate further.

Next he realized that *Prana* or the vital power was *Brahman* and that it was out of *prana* that things took their birth and into *prana* they finally merged. *Prana* indeed is the life-giving principle.

But that too was not a satisfactory conclusion. His father asked him to go into meditation again. His father asked him to go into meditation again. He then found that the mind or the psychic plane was the thing from which all manifestation emerged and merged again into it at the end. It was subtler than gross matter and *prana* and could pervade both of them.

He reported this experience to his father. But the father sent him back again with the old advice to perform more *tapas*.



Bhrigu again meditated and found that the power of understanding (*vijnana*) was the thing from which all things issued and towards which all things moved. But the father was not satisfied and repeated his advice to his son.

The son again meditated and finally came to the conclusion that bliss or pure joy was *Brahman*—the source and the goal of the creation. All the beings are verily born in bliss, they exist by the power of bliss, and they all move towards bliss and into bliss they all merge in the end.

When Bhrigu told his father about this conclusion of his, he was overjoyed and said, "Dear child, this indeed is the highest term of existence. All these five sheaths are there, one more subtle than the other, but the finest and the subtlest is bliss eternal. These are not all mutually exclusive. They are inter-penetrating. But the basis of all is bliss, the bliss of Brahman, pure spiritual happiness. He who knows this and realizes it, goes beyond all sorrow and death." This is known as the *Bhargavi Varuni Vidya*.

(From "Upanishads in Story and Dialogue" Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1975).

SVETAKETU, SON OF AUDDALAK ARUNI

R.R.DIWAKAR

1. Introduction:

Arunis' power of expression in the Chandogya Upanishad is very refreshing. He is easily the most brilliant *rishi* in that Upanishad. By a number of homely illustrations, he conveys to his son Svetaketu, the subtle knowledge of the Atman and impresses upon him the fact that in essence he too is the Atman. That you are the burden of the talk. The affectionate father repeats it at the end of each of his illustrations and through this pregnant phrase, he preaches the gospel of one God, transcendent and immanent in all things.

2. At the feet of the Guru:

"No idiot has yet been born in our line nor has any in our family neglected the study of the *Vedas*. So young soul, go to a *gurukula*, be a *brahmachari* and learn the *Vedas*." The sage Auddalaki Aruni thus addressed his young son Svetaketu, when he attained the proper age to go to a preceptor for study.

The dutiful son obeyed his father. After studying all the *Vedas* for twelve long years at the feet of his *guru*, he came home. When the father saw him, he could at once perceive that his son had become a man on learning but that he had missed spiritual training at teaching. Instead of humility he had developed conceit and instead of peace, there was turmoil in his mind.

One day Aruni asked Svetaketu 'Son! Do you have that mystic wisdom which is the key to all other knowledge, to all other thought and that wisdom which unfolds the unknown to man?'

Svetaketu's surprise was great! "Dear Father! what is that wondrous knowledge you talk of? Do teach me that yourself. Obviously my *guru* did

not know what you refer to, otherwise he would not have failed to impart it to me!"

Aruni taught his son that mystic wisdom. He explained to his dear son, how, understanding the essential nature of the clay, of which all earthen pots and toys are made, Svetaketu can know and understand all those things too!

Then all these are mere names and forms which the clay has assumed. Similarly with steel or metal. "You should get to know the essence of



things, the one thing that underlines this vast and multitudinous mass of name and form", the affectionate father said.

Aruni explained to his son, how out of a Pure Being, the many have come. He narrated to him. "When a man sleeps he becomes for the time being one with the Spirit or one with the one eternal Being. He is merged in himself as it were. The subtle power that pervades the universe is the Truth. That is the spirit. That you are O'Svetaketu."

The father further explained to his dear son: Honey drops lose their individual identity when they fall into the hive. Individual living beings lose their separateness when they merge in the ocean of Being. Merged in the ocean of consciousness, each animal or a worm loses its individual identity. Rivers loose their individual identities, when they merge into the ocean. That power by which life lives eternally, is the spirit. That you are O'Svetaketu".

"Just like a huge banyan tree which comes out of a minute seed, which the human eye cannot see, the power that is the spirit unseen, which pervades everywhere and everything. Have faith. It is that spirit which is at the root of all existence That you Are O 'Svetaketu'!

Thus the wise father explained to his son, the unity of all that exists and the glory of the Atman.

(Extracted from "Upanishads in Story and Dialogue-Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan , Bombay ,1975)

SHUKA THE PERFECT CHILD

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Shuka, was born perfect. Vyasa taught his son wisdom; and after teaching him the knowledge of truth himself, he sent him to the court of King Janaka. He was a great king and was called Janaka Videha. Videha means "without a body". Although a king, he had entirely forgotten that he was body; he felt that he was a spirit and this boy Shuka was sent to be taught by him. The king knew that Vyasa's son was coming to him to learn wisdom: so he made certain arrangements beforehand. And when the boy presented himself at the gates of the palace, the guards took no notice of him whatsoever. They only gave him a seat, and he sat there for three days and nights, nobody speaking to him, nobody asking him who he was or whence he was. He was the son of a very great sage, his father was honoured by the whole country, and he himself was a most respectable person; yet the low, vulgar guards of the palace would take no notice of him. After that, suddenly, the ministers of the king and all the big officials came there and received him with the greatest honours. They conducted him in and showed him into splendid rooms, gave him the most fragrant baths and wonderful dresses, and for eight days they kept him there in all kinds of luxury. That solemnly serene face of Shuka did not change even to the smallest extent by the change in the treatment accorded to him; he was the same in the midst of this luxury as when waiting at the door. Then he was brought before the king. The king was on his throne, music was playing, and dancing and other amusements were going on. The king then gave him a cup of milk, full to the brim, and asked him to go seven times round the hall without spilling even a drop. The boy took the cup and proceeded in the midst of the music and the attraction of the beautiful faces. As desired by the king, seven times did he go round, and not a drop of the milk was spilt. The boy's mind could not be attracted by anything in the world, unless he allowed it to affect him. And when he brought the cup to the king, the king said to him, "What your father has taught you, and what you have learned yourself, I can only repeat. You have known the Truth; go home."

(FROM THE COMPLETE WORKS)

BALA BHARATAM

[Phylosophical considerations]

N.KRISHNAMOORTI

1. Introduction: Bharata Varsha worships its children as gods and goddesses. At the same time some of its children are neglected and abused and left to suffer terribly.

In free India, tremendous efforts have been made to improve the lot of children. More schools and pre-primary institutions, integrated mother – child - care systems, better nutrition facilities, post-natal care and steps to eradicate polio and other ailments to which a large number of children fall victims, have combined to save the child and bring down the rate of infant mortality. The effect of these steps in bringing down birth-rate has also been very encouraging.

Unfortunately, the large initial numbers with which the modern – child care system in India had to contend and initial poverty and centuries old accumulated social inertia, have made the task most challenging. Nearly a thousand years of colonial and alien exploitation, unconscionable neglect of rural areas and collapse of the social network were enough problems. Added to them were the failure of free Indian governments to bring education nearer to women, and the impossible unemployment situation. Education and employment were essential for distributing food and wealth among the masses in the country. The result was great inequalities in income, and failure of the benefits of development to reach the poor and the down-trodden.

In any social system the children are worst affected and the evils and inadequacies of the system visit the children first. Rural mothers and families are interested in getting more children who can go to work, so that they can

earn more. The problem of child labour is acute enough without the press contributing to the confusion. Today nine out of ten references in the press about children harp only on child-labour. All the other efforts made in the field of child - development are totally neglected or have only received a light treatment. The first thought the common reader of a newspaper gets when he hears the word 'child' is child-labour. This kind of obsession in the media, makes the position of the constructive workers very difficult.

2. The child – god: The innocent child, totally guileless, the “monumental – alabaster” – is likened to god in Indian tradition. The child is not only pure, it is held to be ideal in its awareness. The *Upanishad* compares a *Brahma Jnani* to a child – “*balawat, unmattavat.*” A child is spontaneous and free from inhibitions – *vikalpas* -. Such pure and happy childhood and its memories are being sought again and again by human beings throughout their adult lives. Childhood is the path to one’s earlier lives. Writes Mirce Eliade a great disciple of Prof. S.N. Dasgupta,:

“Like *Samanas* and *Brahmana*, the Buddhist monks attempted to recollect their earlier lives. With the heart steadfast clarified and purified, it was thus that they applied their hearts to the knowledge which recalled their earlier existences. They called to mind their diverse existence in the past – a single birth, then two, and so on to a hundred thousand births, many an aeon of disintegration of the world, many an aeon of its re-integration. Buddha attached great importance to **memory** as such; the gods lose their divine condition and fall from their heavens when ‘their memory is troubled.’

Even more: inability to remember all of one's former existence is equivalent to metaphysical ignorance. Buddha enlarges on the case of the gods who fall from their heavens because of their defective memories. Some of these gods, born as men, practise asceticism and meditation recover a part not all of their memories. In other words they do not remember the **beginning** of their series of lives – because of this forgetting they have a false view of the eternity of the world and the gods. The Buddha then, set a very high value on the ability to remember previous lives. This mystical ability made it possible to reach the 'beginning of time' – which implied 'emerging from time'

Ananda or other disciples 'remembered their births,' were among the rememberers of their births (*jatissara*). Coomaraswamy has shown that the epithet *jatissarso* suggests Agni's epithet *Jatavedas* for Agni too knows all births (*Visva Veda janima*) and is the All knower (*Visvavit*). Vamadeva in a famous *Rig Veda* hymn, said of himself. "Being now in the womb (*garbhe nu san*), I have known all the births of the gods." Thus spoke Vamadeva, lying in the womb. "Krishna knows all his births" says the Gita. Hence for *Brahmanism* as for the Buddha memory, in short knowledge was a divine and most precious faculty; he who knows, he who recollects proves that he is concentrated; distraction, forgetfulness, ignorance, fall are causally connected situations and modes of behaviour.

The Buddhist text describes how, catching hold of a memory just nearest to the present moment, one can travel through time backward in order to arrive *at originem* when the first life 'burst' into the world setting time in motion; thus one reaches the paradoxical moment beyond which time did not exist because nothing was yet manifested. The meaning and the end of this yogic technique, which consists in unrolling time in reverse, are perfectly clear. Through it the practitioner obtains the true super knowledge, for he not only succeeds in

recognizing all his former lives, but he reaches the very "beginning of the world"; proceeding backward against the stream, one must necessarily come to the point of departure, which, in the last analysis, coincides with the cosmogony, with the first cosmic manifestation. To relive one's past lives is equivalent to understanding them, and, in a certain measure, to "burning" one's "sins" – the sum, that is, of the acts *performed under the domination of ignorance and transmitted from life to life by the law of karma*. But there is something still more important; One arrives at the beginning of time and one finds noontime, the eternal present that preceded the temporal experience begun by the first fallen human life. In other words, one "touches" the non-conditioned state that preceded man's fall into time and the wheel of existences. This is as much as to say that, setting out from any moment of temporal duration, one can succeed in *exhausting* that duration by travelling through it in the reverse direction, and will finally reach noontime, eternity. But to do so was to transcend the human condition and enter *nirvana*. This is what led the Buddha to declare that he alone had recognized all his former existences, whereas the arhats, while they knew a large number of their past lives, were far from knowing them all; as to the *samanas* and *Brahmans*, they hastened, as we have seen, to formulate certain philosophical theories on the reality of the world and the Self, instead of penetrating deeper into the past and beholding the dissolution of all these "realities" (for the one true reality, the Absolute, could not be formulated in the language of the current philosophies).

It is easy to see the importance of this memory of former lives for the yogic technique whose aim was to emerge from time. But Buddha did not claim that this was the only means. According to him, it was perfectly possible to get beyond time – that is, to abolish the human condition – by

taking advantage of the “favourable moment” (*ksana*), by obtaining “instantaneous illumination” (the *eka-ksanabhisambodhi* of the Mahayanist writers), which “broke time” and allowed “egress” from it by a rupture of planes. The reader will certainly have noted the correspondence between the yogic technique for recollecting former lives and the psychoanalytical method of reconstituting and, through a corrected understanding, assimilating one’s memories of earliest childhood.”

(Yoga, Immortality and Freedom)

The essence of the argument is that according to the Vedas, Yoga and Buddhism, turning the mind inward, searching for one’s childhood memories and trying to go beyond are all part of one’s spiritual *sadhana*, with the compelling aesthetic and moral dimensions of the efforts.

3. Vatsalya Bhava: The purity, innocence and broad consciousness of the child have moved mystics to see god in children and god as a child. Writes Vinobaji.

“If we learn to see the Lord in little children how we should rejoice! Dhruva, Prahlada, Nachiketa, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, were they not all children? But the authors of the Puranas, Vyasa and the rest, did not know where to place them, what to do with them. Shukadeva and Shankaracharya were free from desires even since childhood. And so too was Jnanadeva! All of them were children! No where is the Lord manifest in such clear, pure form as in these children. A saint loved children dearly. Once His disciples asked Him “you speak so much about the kingdom of god. Who can enter it?” He lifted up a child standing by and set him on a table and said “Of such is the Kingdom of god. To enter therein, one must become as a little child.” What he said is true. Swami Ramadasa was once playing with

children. Some grown up people who observed the saint, romping with the children, were surprised. One of them asked “What has come over you today?”

Samartha answered:

“Those who remained young became great,
Those who grew up became great rogues”

As one grows up one sprouts horns, one develops self-will. Then one never thinks of God. The hearts of little children are unspoilt, their minds pure. We say to a child, “Don’t tell lies.” He asks, “What is a lie?” Then we expound to him the doctrine that statement must correspond to fact. The boy is puzzled and begins to wonder whether there is another way of speaking than saying what is. How can one say what is not? This is like telling one to call a square a square and not a circle. All this only surprises the child. What are children? Images of purity, of God-head. Grown ups teach them all wrong. The truth is; if we cannot see the Lord in mother, father, teacher, saint and CHILD, in what other form can we see Him? There is no nobler form of God than these. Learn first these gentle and familiar forms of the Lord. In these the Lord is written in bold, clear letters.” (The talks on the Gita)

That is why in *Sanatana Dharma*, God is worshipped as Ganesha and Kartikeya, the children. Sri Rama and Krishna are portrayed in the writings of Suka, Surdas, Tulasidas, Periyazhwar and Kulasekhara as Godly Children. *Vatsalya bhava*, treating God as a child is glorified in our literature. It is easy to practise. It ennobles the practitioner. It is open to all.

Taking this attitude further, Kumaragurupara and others have treated Goddess Minakshi and Lord Kartikeya as Ideals of childhood and have created a new genre of literature called ‘*Pillaitamizh*’ (Glorifying God as a Child.)

4. Mother worship as a psychological corollary of child endearment:

Carl Jung has dwelt on the Universality of the Mother aspect in his "Four Archetypes." In worshipping Mother, we revere the child too. Sankara, Abhirama Bhatta and a host of Mother - worshippers have composed devotional verses, positioning themselves at the emotional vantage points of children – children of Divine Mother. The ideal Motherhood goes with the ideal childhood. Lalita the Mother along with Lakshmi and Saraswati, the Goddesses of power, wealth and wisdom bestow on their children the best of grace. The worship and service of Motherland as the ultimate has been a very old tradition in Bharat and that type of devotion received a new impetus during the freedom movement from the writings of Bankim Chandra, Bharati and Sri Aurobindo. Sister Nivedita has recorded how Swami Vivekananda used to pronounce the word 'India' with great reverence and love due to The Mother. All that is best in a child is brought out in the presence, physical or mental presence, of its mother. Bharat's tradition portrays Mother as *Janani*, *Mata*, *Prasavitri*, *Dhatri* and *Amba*. Each term has a special functional significance to the child and its development.

Jung records: "The qualities associated with the Mother Archetype are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltations that transcend reason; and helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign all that cherishes and sustains, that fastens growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth together with the underworld and its inhabitants are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything that devours, seduces (purely a Western concept – Vivekananda Kendra Patrika editor) and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate. The ambivalence of the attributes "the loving and the terrible Mother" has been recorded by me. In India,

"the loving and terrible Mother" is the paradoxical *Kali*. Sankhya philosophy has elaborated the mother archetype into the concept of *Prakriti* (matter) and assigned to it the three *gunas* or fundamental attributes – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*."

The mother archetype presupposes a child and functions in the context of the child. It has the child as the focal point.

As a foil to the Mother archetype is the universal feature of the Trickster – figure. Carl Jung writes:-

"(In celebrating the Trickster image) there is a reversal of the hierarchical order. Something of this contradictoriness also inheres in the medieval description of the devil as *simian dei* the ape of god and in his characterization in folklore as the 'simpleton' who is 'fooled' or 'cheated'. A curious combination of trickster motifs can be found in the alchemical figure of Mercuricus, for instance, his fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks, his powers as a shape – shifter his dual nature, half-animal half – divine, his exposure to all kind of fortunes and his approximation to the figure of a saviour."

From poltergeists, to Sri Krishna, the entire spectrum of negative and positive mischiefs are represented in the trickster characters across civilizations. They are worshipped, adored, idolised in art and caught in performing artistic forms. Child Krishna is the most popular theme in devotion, *dharma*, philosophy, religion and art.

5. Child as the father of the man:

Another aspect of the child is that it is born with a very expansive consciousness and by a series of indoctrinations by the society, teachers, home, tradition, school etc, it gets a definite identity and a limited amount of consciousness.

The journey from childhood to adult stage is described often as a narrowing down of sensitivity and loss of divinity. A very touching account of this loss is given by Wordsworth in his immortal ode. "The ode on intimations of immortality from reflections of early childhood." The lines go well with the Indian ethos.

*There was a time when meadow,
grove and stream
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem,
Apparell'd in celestial light
The glory and the freshness of a dream
It is not now as it has been of yore; -
Turn where soe'er I may
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see
no more.*

Modern researches in the educational psychology of a child confirm this idea of the poet. A child is able to learn very fast (an 'absorbent mind' it is called by Dr Maria Montessori). The capacity to learn and change decreases as the child grows. A chimp for example is born almost with all the faculties developed, leaving little scope for training or improvement after birth. Whereas a human child is born with just one fourth of its intellectual faculties developed. This leaves the human child amenable to manouvring, acculturation, training and adjustment. Some biologists feel that all human births are premature deliveries, the process of growth being completed long after the birth of a child. In fact it takes years to complete the process.

6. The original debate: In the beginning of the 19th century, a great controversy raged among psychologists. A section of this branch of scientists said that all cultural values are imprinted on the mind of a new - born human baby from outside and the inborn traits have little or no bearing on the adult human personality. Another school pleaded for some

importance for instinct, or inborn knowledge. Among the Western scientists especially of Marxian thought, the earlier mentioned ideas prevail. There is nothing natural about the human mind. All its culture, spirituality, social relations etc. are learned or imposed from outside and a child can be manipulated to grow in a particular way. This led the Western societies to organise a number of creches which weaned the children away from their mothers, much before they were biologically ready to leave the safety of their Mothers' laps. In Australia, the new settlers took away the babies of the Natives in order to bring them up as "True Christians." In Russia the same mindset led the educationists to wean the children prematurely away from the 'corrupting influence of the parents and their traditional cultures.' In government - run crèches, the children could be brought upon as ideal products of the Revolution – the true communists. Among the missionaries who converted the indigenous people to Christianity, the same attitude existed. They found that tribal people have their own community- centres, where the distinct qualities of the tribes are ingrained in the personality of the children. The missionaries cut this cultural – umbilical cord and segregated the children from the parental society.

It took Sanatana Dharma, so ably represented by Swami Vivekananda, to play up the role of *Atman*, *Samskaras* and *Karma* in the evolution of a child. Swamiji declared emphatically that drawing nourishment from the environment, a child grows according the laws of its own being. He emphasised the *karma* theory. He said the history of evolution of an entire species is summarised and repeated in the life of one individual. He underscored the limits to which the environment can influence the growth of a child. He talked about involution, the process by which the personality of a person and all his *karmas* are encrypted in the form of *samskaras* in the *sukshma – sarira* – subtle body of a child. He

discussed the untenable nature of the hereditary theory. In this manner Swami Vivekananda summarised the position of *Vedanta* in the controversy between “instinct and environment.” History has proved that science is moving towards *Vedantic* concepts though habits of the old fashioned theorists die hard. Theories such as atavism (resemblance to remote ancestors rather than to parents in plants and animals; reversion to earlier type) have given the lie to environmental origin of human qualities and have forced scientists to search for origins of traits at some deeper level.

7. Maria Montessori: She shook the Western world from its lethargy and made it wonder whether the Bharatiya concept of the spiritual perfection of a child was after all correct. The mind or the spirit of which the mind is an expression, is in the form of an all embracing continuum in a child. There is a natural cohesion between children, a connection which is lost as a child grows into adulthood. This is the position Bharat would take. Says Dr Montessori, “The society of New children is a society of *Cohesion*.” By this she meant to imply that it was something formed by an attraction, among the children and not imposed from outside. Respect for the right of others, a capacity to share and an ability to solve problems by mutual consent and agreement, the readiness to wait for one’s turn, mark the children. “These little ones live in a higher plane. Theirs is a truly cooperative society. There is a reciprocal help. The older children help the younger and the younger help each other. They show respect for and interest in each other. There is no envy, there is only admiration among the children when are newly succeeds in a task. The admiration is spontaneous. The child is very sorry when it happens to break something. It is not naturally destructive. They are concerned and they handle the material with care. (From an essay on Montessori by Vasantha A. Natarassan in the Hindu dated 13-4-1999). These are the qualities one would like to term spiritual. A child is truly spiritual.

8. Preprimary Education: The knowledge of the ability of the child to learn fast in early childhood has spawned a plethora of crèches, Nursery schools, pre – primary institutions and LKG, UKG classes in schools. In fact the education of a child starts even in the mother’s womb. Modern research talks about providing stimuli to the brain cells of a child in the mother’s womb. The connectivity between cells (called synapses) is improved and the child born is more intelligent. This Abhimanyu factor works well it seems. In Indian tradition, the rituals, food restrictions and cultural practices to be observed by a pregnant women are very well codified in our literature on “*Samskaras*.” Modern science is able to see much sense in these traditional practices. Parent – education as a part of child’s early education has been talked about by Mahatma Gandhi, Zakir Hussain, and a number of teachers in India and abroad. Apart from non - formal education, play - education in the pre – primary age group and primary and secondary education of formal nature, the children continue to require parental guidance until they are 18 years old. Sociologists believe that the mother’s and the father’s are gender-specific roles. And talking about the convergence of the roles of the mother and the father is not science. It is pure politics. The parental emergency the child undergoes, calls upon the father and the mother to play their respective roles in the life of the child.

9. The role of parents, family, community and environment: The part played by the parents and family in nurturing a child, tells not only upon the physical, emotional and sociological development of a child. Even the spiritual and psychological developments of the child are impacted. The effect of family - planning on the psyche of the surviving children is tremendous. Children feel they are born in spite of the attitude of society, its health machinery, census enumerators and a whole host of others trying to stop them from being delivered from the mothers’ wombs. Children are no more god’s answers to prayers said in Rameshwaram or Gaya. They are not

there to save the parents from a hell called 'PUT.' They are accidental products who have beaten an inefficient family – planning procedure. Such children may not be expected to revere the family system, love the society or continue the tradition. Therefore the family planning system has to be administered with great care and sensitivity.

Economic activities of each generation have come to be evaluated in terms of their effect upon future generations. Sustainability is the buzz word for measuring such activities and overall development. Sustainability presupposes, development and exploitation of nature's resources and life – support systems, in a manner, that a comparable life – style is assured for future generations. Enough raw materials should be conserved for our children. Environmental experts pontificate. "You have not inherited the Earth and its resources from your parents. You have borrowed them from your children." For the first time in human history, environmentalists, sociologists, economists, development workers, ethical and spiritual thinkers have concurred, on a point. It is that for a couple of generations now, people have become utterly selfish spending resources upon their sense pleasures, disregarding the sacredness of the environment, ignoring their loyalty to their children, loosening the bonds of family and community and endangering the collective life of the Nation and of the world.

10. Remedial measures: 1. A study of the lives Spiritual, National and environmental heroes and heroines with special reference to

their childhood. accepting them as the society's role - models.

2. According priority for human development with children, youth and women getting the special attention.

3. Giving special care for women of productive age group 15 – 44, care for pregnant women and new born children.

4. Emphasising, nutrition for survival and development and health as different from fashion - based fast-foods.

5. Taking to positive health programmes instead of a disease - and medicine - based approach. Stress on Indigenous products and practices.

6. Education that brings out the best in every human being, education that helps each person in identifying his/her niche in the family, society, Nation and world, instead of education that makes each person treat the rest of creation as a competitor or a threat, Education that celebrates cooperation and co-existence. It should take advantage of our Bharatiya - tradition which has done so much for humanity.

7. A family – planning philosophy that worships life, reveres life, instead of that which destroys and devalues life.

8. A clear understanding that each person, child, youth, adult or old person has childhood memories lingering in him/her. This memory is the stimulus for all ethical, moral, spiritual, social and environmental values. The aim of the society should be to make the life of every child memorable, worth remembering.

