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Primary education

Both the spread and quality of primary education are increasingly engaging our attention for some obvious reasons. In the first place, we are trying to make it universal, meaning that all children of school going age in the country ought to be enrolled as pupils. At the same time, the education imparted to them, whether in the rural or the urban areas, has to be of a quality that can make them truly fit for higher learning. It needs also to be self-contained and purposeful, curriculum-wise, so that those who might be leaving school on completion of primary education or secondary education would be functionally able, with basic skills, to cope with the demands of an adult life. In fact primary education holds the key to the spread of literacy in the country.

Now what are the problems requiring to be addressed so that primary education can be universalised? Admittedly there is lack of motivation among many rural parents to place their children in a school. There is a high percentage of drop-out, partly induced by the economic necessity parents may have felt to get the services of a boy or a girl afield or at home, respectively. Partly it is the disappointment with the ward's frequent failures at the examinations that makes his guardian decide on a quittal. A small portion of the school-leaving may be the result of malnutrition and disease. These socio-psychological hindrances cannot be washed away overnight. That is why we need to integrate the economic uplift activities in the rural areas with a motivational campaign to increase school-mindedness among the parents. It is good augury that an education week is going to be observed in January to infuse a greater sense into the rural parents about the need to put more children in schools and to let them continue primary education to the end.

Taking note of the prevailing conditions in the field of primary education it is worthwhile to suggest that the curriculum should make learning a joyful and practically beneficial experience for the pupils. Simultaneously, it should be ensured that books to be made available free of cost to students from Class I to V under a government programme to spread education, do reach the boys and girls, especially in the rural areas, on time.