

# ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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The sessions of the All India Conference of Social Work were held from the 6th to 9th November, 1947. Mr. Jamshed Nusserswanjee, ex-Mayor of Karachi, presided. The presidential address is printed below.

With the honour and privilege of presiding at an important gathering like this All-India Conference of Social Work, goes also a sense of responsibility. And this weighs heavily for *two* reasons: First, because one feels keenly conscious of one's own shortcomings for the task. Secondly, there are around experts with All-India reputation in the field of social sciences, men and women, more competent to fill this noble chair. However, the choice is made and has been gratefully accepted.

Social work in our country in modern times is a stupendous task. Many factors have contributed *to* the complexity of the problem. And yet it is one that demands immediate attention, especially in these days of social insecurity created by so many events in the country. In a time of upheavals whether political or social, social services constitute as important a national unit as fighting forces in the ordinary sense of the word; for while one battles on geographical frontiers to keep out the enemy, the other has its work on social frontiers to preserve human values without which life would not be worth living. Hence the convening of a conference like the present one is opportune and not a day too early. For the country needs the strength, love and service of all its people, to help it to tide over difficulties with the minimum of pain and misery. The task of re-installing security demands a steady co-operation between the State and the people, it needs a right social outlook, a practical technique, human understanding, strong organisation and dedication. Emo-

tional waves do not constitute the strength in social work, for very soon this enthusiasm cools down and is followed by feelings of tiredness and indifference.

What does social work imply in India? What is its scope? What type of agency does it need to work its details? What has so far been done in this field in the country? What is the next step? These are the questions which need urgent attention and study.

To think of social work in India is to come to grips with numerous problems that are staggering. Indeed it seems as if all the ills of society have aggregated in their intensity amidst us. There is the appalling poverty giving rise to disease, malnutrition, and moral degeneracy. There is the problem of insanity and juvenile delinquency, enfeebled motherhood, neglected, unwanted children, the disabled, the crippled, the illiterate, the beggar, the criminal, the oppressed and the innocent in the hands of the profiteer, the black-marketeer, and the blood-sucking money-lender who loans out at 100, 200 and 500 per cent interest. There again is the problem of the unnoticed, unencouraged youth who could be made a useful citizen but who is neglected and denied the opportunity to be trained into useful citizenship.

For so stupendous a task we need a strong agency to work out various schemes. And this can only be supplied by the State and its local bodies. Individual effort at its best can but fall far short of the requirements, and can only be useful as a strong co-ordinating unit. As things exist in our

country, there has been little or no co-ordination between the State and private endeavours. This is so because the State and local bodies believe that social service is outside their scope. A State is ordinarily supposed to be an institution of administration for the safety, defence and prosperity of the country. A local body is expected to be at its best, a means of water-supply, road-cleaning, an administration for sanitation, some dispensaries and hospitals, to extinguish fires when they occur and last, but the most important, an institution of tax collection to meet all expenses. This has been a very unfortunate one-sided development of both—the States and local bodies in our country. The fundamental fact has been missed that States and local bodies are meant to be Temples of Social Service, not machines to manage certain well-defined departments of necessary human needs. No doubt we need administrators but an administrator who is not, or cannot be, a devotee in the Temple of Service can never play the right role in the rhythmic organism of life to bring joy and happiness in the hearts of the people. Our modern social work is more artificial, half-hearted, mechanical, emotional and therefore temporary and patronising. Many a time it is irritable and irksome to those to whom it is offered.

While the State has worked thus mechanically, the individual has had a different approach. To help, to be useful to their brothers and sisters is a natural aptitude of the individual. With these instincts, institutions have grown up here and there, some few for serving the country as a whole, some to serve people of different provinces and districts and more to serve particular communities and sections because the donors have built, established and donated such institutions for the benefit of their own communities.

The city of Bombay has played a very great part in building such charitable institutions and have always led the whole country. It has produced charitable and philanthropic women and men and some servants of the country whose names will ever be remembered with gratitude. There also exist other institutions offering scope for social work in other cities and parts of the country—now the two Dominions—and in several States, carrying out useful work. A fairly good number of social workers are employed all round the country of whom only a few are wholly and fully dedicated to the service of their fellow-men.

The questions which arise out of all the social work of the past and present and out of experiences gained, are "Is it enough?" "Is social work in our country on the right track?" The answers to both these questions are quite clear. What has been done and is being done is very very little. It is also obvious that social work in our country needs a totally different method, a new approach.

If the statistical figures of the amount of money and energy spent in last 30 to 40 years in our country are worked out and measured and the results calculated and recorded, it would be easy to find out where we have erred, where we need to apply changes and what are our real needs. It would be revealed to us that we have as yet only touched the problem superficially.

In this vast country of two Dominions, several Provinces, so many States, municipalities, local bodies, charitable institutions, trusts and thousands of individual social workers, we yet find ourselves in the midst of poverty, ignorance and dirt so rampant that the problems appear out of control. This is because the work is unor-

ganised, uncoordinated and undertaken by untrained workers. The donor believes that with the giving of charity his work has ended, but there is no effort to see that the inflow of wealth continues to keep the institution running. The worker labours for some time in enthusiasm, and when funds run low and no more is forthcoming, he is discouraged and his enthusiasm is damped. The huge buildings remain—monuments of noble work undertaken so warmly but with weak foundations.

Can private charities and institutions built up here and there solve or tackle these huge problems? The present methods of charity and social work can go on for two centuries, but miseries will never cease, will continue to increase. Millions and millions of rupees will have been spent and tons of energy will have been wasted. Poverty, feebleness, ill-health, infirmity will increase and the world will be a human wreckage for many, and a place of reckless pleasures for the few.

The Parsee community gives a clear illustration of this state of affairs. It has charitable institutions of various types in almost every quarter of this city. It has donated, for a small community of not more than 75,000 persons in Bombay, between 15 to 40 lakhs per year on an average for the last 20 years or more. With what result? There is no visible decrease of poverty or misery. It is all the time only 'Relief and Relief' from this or that, escaping from one ill to another. To give in charities, to supply essential needs is not the main object of social work; but to give opportunities, amenities and right guidance to those who lack these to enable them to take a step forward in life is the true aim.

If there had been inspired and genuine social work throughout the country, the

present day communal struggles, labour problem, profiteering and black-marketing would have been very much less and the country could have been saved from considerable misery. But there is no time to mourn or shed tears. No thing short of organised and trained social work with a large band of devoted and dedicated missionaries of social work can bring the country out from its present chaos. Who is to begin it? Present legislative machinery to administrate states and local bodies protect chiefly the capitalists. It will and must bring ruin and chaos.

The British rule failed because it administered and legislated mostly for the capitalist of the country without giving any impetus to social work leaving it entirely to private organizations and satisfying large donors here and there with titles and praises. The new Governments of our two Dominions must realise, and realise very quickly that a large scale intelligent drive has to be made to co-ordinate Governments, States, local bodies, private efforts at social work and dedicated missionaries of social work to save the country from greater miseries. If not, their failure will be greater than that of the British rule.

Today, rajas, maharajas, nawabs and capitalists are busy manipulating their capital where they can save income tax or keep their investments more safe. They fly their capital from one dominion to another, from one country to another in expectation of its safety. Little do they realise that nature quietly smiles and plans exactly what is to be the final end of that capital. It is time for all to open their eyes more widely.

## II

The scope of this conference is very ably drafted and split up for discussion in 8 sections, which cover several problems of

social work in the country. A hurried glance at some of these with some personal suggestions and views is the subject of the second part of this address.

### Section I

*State and social service.*—A total state planning and co-ordinating is the only way if the country is to remain in peace and prosperity. Having achieved "Liberty" it can only be kept up and maintained by "equality and fraternity" without which liberty has no meaning, no purpose. If this is not done, our liberty itself is in danger. For social work in total and complete form, all problems have to be taken into consideration—wages, earnings, housing, clothing, feeding, infirmity, old age, insanity, health, education, nutrition, leisure and relaxation, motherhood, infantile diseases and mortality, cattle welfare, milk production, food production and several other vital needs of the country. All these can be catalogued and considered carefully. It will be necessary to have these different problems discussed and full reports obtained through a central committee of experts for the whole country, and provincial committees for each Province simultaneously as was done some years ago for the banking problems. A co-ordinating policy for the Central and Provincial Governments with a scope for local bodies and municipal corporations, and allowing therein the fullest opportunities also to private charities to fit in with the scheme, will make ideal planning for practical social service and work. In our country there are brains and hearts. The new liberty has created imagination and will for the happiness of the country and the present stage full of enthusiasm is the best opportunity.

Side by side with this co-ordination the country should be prepared to realise its duties. Capitalists, the rich, millionaires and multi-millionaires have to be persuaded

and trained to part with a portion of their wealth in the form of taxations or duties to provide for this total social work of the country. They must be made to realise that this is the safest way to safeguard the remaining portion of their capital and a right royal middle path to balance the affairs of life.

*How shall we set about the task?*—One of the methods should be a special monetary fund or bank where an initial sum from a capital wealth levy of 5 to 25 per cent from each citizen, graded according to recommendations of a special committee, be deposited and an annual income both from Government realisations and special taxes can be added. Those who have more than they need, have to see the "Signs of the Times." Only a few days ago our great Premier, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, said at Allahabad that social democracy was the ideal of Hindustan. Pakistan has the same ideals. If this can be fulfilled by willing co-operation, it will avoid chaos, struggles and will safeguard capital sufficiently and more for the comfortable needs of those who have it. If it has to be forced, it will not lead to social democracy, but to communism. Many feel that this is far away, it cannot happen. But when things happen, they happen suddenly. An exodus from one province to another of 20 to 40 lakhs of persons was never dreamt of a week before 15th August, 1947. A complete change of property, of wealth, a complete turn in life from richness to poverty for thousands and lakhs of people was not even imagined. Yet it has happened. Sitting in Bombay it can never be realised what chaos, miseries, pains, sufferings, bitterness it has meant. Capital, wealth, trade, business, palatial houses, furniture, cars and all such modern comforts of life lost almost overnight. When one sees institutions built with love and hard labour, destroyed, devastated, empty, thou-

sands and lakhs homeless, jobless, rooted out of employment, trade and profession, motherless, fatherless, without relations, friendless, aimless,—all this happening within 3 weeks, one is dazed. Only total social service can save our countrymen from such calamities in future. Communal or sectional work, howsoever noble, must separate and one day collapse through hatred, bitterness and wars. Those who can see, let them learn to be human and help to bring about social democracy willingly, happily, joyfully admitting the right of each human being to live happily in the world.

*Health services.*—Health services have a prominent place amidst total State services. Yet in this country so little has been done and so much yet remains to be done. The vitality of most of our countrymen and women is sapped and low, millions die young, suffering and ailing from diseases which could have been avoided by care, knowledge, education, and treatment. So far it has been left to the individual to find out the best means he can to get educated, to safeguard himself from diseases or to find out means to be cured. Few municipalities here and there have certain laws of sanitation, some dispensaries and hospitals.—Health has been commercialised and belief in drugs has spread everywhere opening a field for a number of companies to advertise and sell their drugs at 20 and 50 times more than the cost. To give wide knowledge how to secure good health does not seem to be the duty of the health department of the municipalities. "We have now begun to recognise compulsory primary education as a minimum for the child. But what about his health? There ought to be a recognition of a minimum at least for health services throughout the country, where a well-planned health programme will cater first to the education of every citizen in personal hygiene. A systematic plan for treatment

of defectives, crippled, disabled has to be made and last but not the least we must be vigilant about the problem of infectious diseases. At present vaccination and inoculations to 'prevent' epidemics or not to allow them to spread are supposed to be the best health services which are being rendered in our country and that too in a few places here and there. It is necessary that a minimum adequate should be fixed for all-round health services in our country, beginning from antenatal period, maternity welfare, defects and disabilities of children and should be continued for different periods of life. For each period a minimum adequate should be prescribed. Health agencies should be increased all round for treatment and care of the sick with hospitals and clinics made freely accessible and economical to our people. Education on health in schools through charts, movies, exhibitions, and also to mothers is essential. Cheaper, simpler and natural methods of cure are more important. Modern civilisation is dragging us to such costlier methods of treatment of diseases and the sick that it will become impossible for any State in the world to afford it. Our country is too poor to accept completely modern researches in drugs and treatment. If our ancient science of *Ayurvedic* and *Unnani* is revived and if education is given on these methods with science and research added, simpler and less costly methods of cure could be evolved, and universally accepted. Homeopathy and nature methods of cure and treatment have also a great scope in our country, because they are much cheaper and no less effective if properly and scientifically offered. Much has been said and written about health insurance in our country both voluntary and compulsory. In other countries it has been practised with much success where medical, sanatoriums, sickness, maternity and disablement benefits are being offered. The masses

in our country too will benefit from similar advantages. Here also it will be necessary for a special committee to work hard and give us a report on what lines our country could take up for health insurance. There are arguments against provision of health insurances, but in the end the country will demand what men and women in other countries are enjoying and no time should be lost by us to put our minds together and evolve a rational human system of health insurance.

*Prison reforms.*—The problem of the criminal and prison reforms is one where much advance is made by research and study and where psychology is used to its utmost advantage. This has brought about a new attitude towards the criminal and the law-breaker. It is now realised that there are many social factors which contribute to criminality besides hereditary weaknesses, such as unhealthy environment in early childhood, unhappy home, lack of education resulting in moral and mental under-development and hard economic conditions. This outlook has brought the criminal within the pale of human consideration and sympathy, and prison reform is very slowly but surely, tending more towards reformation of the criminal, than his punishment, at least in other countries. This brings the question under two heads:

- (1) To utilise this new knowledge and understanding in dealing with the criminal.
- (2) To eradicate those causes, hereditary and environmental, which encourage criminality.

To this let the man-in-the-street add his humanity and kindness. For it is the individual's attitude towards the prisoner both when in and after he leaves the prison-house that will count a long way in

his improvement, and his return to a cultured and civilized society. Very little of all this is yet introduced in our country, but it is hoped that these new reforms will soon find a place both in the prison-house and prison legislation.

*Adult education.*—In a country like ours with illiteracy so widespread and ignorance sitting at the roots of all our problems adult education appears to be a salient remedy, and yet, its application in this, as in most other fields, has been unsystematic and haphazard, making the experiment costly and fruitless. What we have not realised is the fact that the problem of adult education in India is not necessarily the same as the problem in other—especially western countries. While the fundamental need is the same, the social structure, mental development, range of receptivity, level of emotional and intellectual progress differ and hence must differ also the method. A great difficulty that has been experienced by the social worker in this field is the unwillingness of the adult to be educated or made literate. That is because the adult does not feel that education will touch his interests in any way, that his effort will have some real value in his improvement and well-being. The worker therefore must study the adult and find out his interests and begin the education in that subject which interests him. It is only then that the adult will realise the value of such education. The brain-trust of the country must tackle the problem efficiently and yet with sufficient simplicity and speed to meet its extent in numbers and urgency. Psychology will play an important role in its success in its application as a method and system.

*Social security.*—Social security is catching the mind of the people more seriously than any other phrase in the present time. The reports of experiments with various

schemes, statements of leaders at conferences, etc., are widely read with greater interest by men and women throughout the world. In a country like ours mainly inhabited by poor men, it must attract considerable interest and create feelings of hope, at the same time making us realise that nothing has been done by us for the millions living in ignorance, poverty and disease. Figures and facts about the needs of our country in this direction have been worked out by well-known authors by diligent research. In an address like this, it is difficult to quote facts and figures, but the country is looking forward keenly and it must be forcibly realised that the success of the Governments of both our Dominions and States will depend upon such schemes as can be made to meet unemployment, sickness insurance, old age pension or assistance, compensations for workmen, supply of necessities for dependent mothers and children, and such other services enforced by legislation wherever necessary.

## Section II

Rural community development.—Professor K. N. Vaswani in one of his pamphlets—*Agricultural Economics in India*—gives a true picture of our villages and the rural community.

"He who has been producing for all, has been left nothing that he may eat; he who has been clothing all has nothing to clothe himself with; the source of wealth to others, he is without wealth; the son of the soil, he is without a patch of land that he can call his own; indebted as we all are to him, for food and cloth and the raw materials of our industries, the commodities for our trade and commerce, it is he who bears the great crushing burden of debt on his bent shoulders; taxing himself to the utmost to make both ends meet, with toiling and seeking to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, he, is it again, who is

taxed most, paying duty even on his bit of salt, while we enjoy exemption from income-tax, if we earn but Rs. 2,500 a year, as though he earns more."

We have about 7,00,000 villages in this country as against only about 1,800 cities and towns. It is apparent therefore that the real India exists in our villages, fortunately uninfluenced yet by western civilization, and yet so neglected as to call forth the above picture. The village is an important factor in India's economic development. It is also the custodian of our culture and traditions. Any scheme therefore of India's betterment can only begin in the villages. And it is only when the rural community is protected and well-looked after that India's regeneration will truly begin.

To tackle a single village in India means to put total social service into practice. There will be the question of health and cleanliness, removal of filth, sanitation, child education, housing, roads, veterinary aid, water supply and, above all, means of livelihood—one of the major problems of the villages due to economic exploitation of the peasantry. Herein social workers will find scope for all sorts of experiments. Greater agricultural facilities, co-operative marketing, handicraft, weaving, cottage industries, growing vegetable, fruit and flower gardens, dairy farms and manufacturing of pure milk products, all these will help to improve the villager's economic condition and make him self-supporting and hence self-respecting.

The problem does not end here. For there is the question of leisure which if not well-utilized can be made ill use of. Public libraries and reading rooms, playgrounds, recreation clubs, education through the movies, folk-song and folk-dance, these must formulate the life of leisure of our village communities if we

are to drag them away from gossip, superstition and wrong habits.

So far we have been tinkering with the problem, applying haphazard methods, under untrained and often vain social workers. The State must now step in and begin, with whatever resources available, experiments in total social service in our villages.

*Aboriginal welfare.*—The problem of aboriginal welfare has now come up in front, like most of our other social problems which lay festering below till tyranny and exploitation brought them on the surface through revolution and aggressiveness.

Researches in this problem reveal that aborigines, far from being criminal and low class as is believed to be due to the mistakes of a few, are a community possessing ancient and distinctive culture, religion and traditions. This culture is something superb in many respects, colourful, artistic and in social status and freedom, extremely democratic.

One may ask how these tribes are so enslaved and exploited politically. Extremely simple-minded, living in secluded colonies, happy and contented, they gradually lost ground to land hunters and oppressors who with their dominating attitude and grabbing methods soon overpowered their mastery of land. Ignorance of language, laws and modes of their invaders kept these classes subdued, while the selfishness and intentional neglect of their oppressors did nothing to ameliorate their condition.

Recently social service efforts have again been directed to their welfare with outstanding results. The problem needs above all a sympathetic and friendly approach, and understanding of aboriginal culture and an appreciation of his art and traditions. Patient efforts and a close

brotherly contact will soon stir up sentiments of friendliness in these vast numbers of our countrymen.

*Labour.*—The problem of labour is in everyone's mind these days, but unfortunately not because we have become conscious of its rights and needs, but because a long-term injustice and exploitation have created a world-wide labour revolt, thus thrusting the problem on unwilling ears. Strikes and hartals spring up periodically, demanding economic and social reforms of various kinds.

A time has come when we must give a rational and well-planned reform to this department of society, and not leave the problem to the fads and whims or scrappy compensations of some directors, zamindars or industrialists. A satisfied industrial and agricultural labour is essential to production in our manufacturing concerns and agricultural fields. A minimum of all amenities of life must be gratefully supplied to a class by whose toil and sweat we enjoy the luxuries of life.

Many labour problems confront us today, wages, and women and child labour being the outstanding ones. Nothing but understanding and sympathy of the haves, for the have-nots will bring about a satisfactory solution. Those who believe that by exploiting power through central and provincial legislatures and through placing supporters in ministerial seats and other high offices they will succeed in continuing to exploit labour must remember that "the tears of the poor undermine the thrones of kings." They must realise that labourers are also human beings whom we cannot drive too far without reaping fatal results. By supplying their 'minimum budget' and by constant and humane touch with his employees, an employer will succeed far more in gaining his co-



operation in work than by use of force or through legislation. It is only then that there will be no room left for the agitators who are so often criticised by employers.

Let a just legislation and wide sympathy unite to solve this imminent peril in the country.

### Section III

*Family and child welfare services.*—The main problems which are to be considered by this section of the conference are maternity and child welfare, education for marriage and family life, child guidance, juvenile delinquency and the problem of the dependent and neglected child. These are problems accentuated by the modern civilization (or uncivilization). In ancient India these problems did not exist. Simple as people were in those days, they were yet cultured and refined and possessed sound knowledge on many subjects given from generation to generation. Maternity to hard working mothers was not a problem. Marriages and family life were happy and produced mainly happy children who were brought up and trained amid healthy surroundings. Juvenile delinquency was rare and children were not at any time kept dependent or neglected. All this was due to simpler, economic, friendly and cheaper ways of life. The troubles have started since the last 200 years and have increased to such proportion that all these problems require careful handling. The percentages of deaths during maternity and infancy, unhappy marriages increasing day by day resulting in quarrels, separations and divorces, children with defects and peculiarities and mentally retarded, unwanted children created through passions of men and women, are increasing to such an extent that these problems have become major and important subjects in the city and town life. These problems are tragic and have caused youths to shrink from marriages and family life. If they do marry

and have family life, they take them as unavoidable evils. Psychology and medical aids are being recommended and tried and legislation in different countries is being enacted to enable people to face these problems. But much more is required, — to educate men, women and children to understand the responsibilities and needs of family life, and the place of the family unit in society. Most of these evils exist because of economic conditions in cities and towns where the standard of living is much higher than the income of the people and where a good income is wasted on reckless pleasures and so-called comforts, which create additional problems, resulting in abortion, maternal sickness, unhappy married life, super-sensitive children, delinquent juveniles and last but not the least, dependent and unwanted children. These problems can only be solved by ancient methods newly applied, of right living, taught by sages and *rishis*, helped by the light of science, medicine and psychology. To meet the problem scientifically alone is not enough. Where emotions have a strong play, faith and noble thoughts play a greater part.

### Section IV

*Youth organization.*—Youth organizations to utilise their capacities in the well-being of a nation are increasing. Many attempts are being made to create youth movements, to bind youths together in friendship, to afford them health and vitality and make them useful for the service of humanity. Youth is our greatest asset. It is unfortunate that in these days neglect of the youth has instilled in them racial discrimination and communal feelings. One sees this in colleges, in schools and on the play-ground. This unfortunate tendency has created a very great problem. When communal feelings started some years ago, it was hoped that a new generation will change that aspect, but that hope has been completely shattered,

There is no time here to enter into reasons, but it is vital that leaders of the country and various communities view this subject with some gravity and make earnest efforts to build fraternity of youths which will bring to the country friendliness and brotherliness which are so sorely necessary in our country. Our outlook hitherto has been narrow, each community desiring for their youths good jobs, comfortable life, and good earnings with or without merit; schools and colleges are built for individual communities, sporting teams divided on communal lines, places of recreation separated for different communities, special cups and scholarships marked for separate faiths, bitterness created in speeches of elders, *moulvis* and priests against communities other than their own are all ugly signs which create perverted youths. Another youth problem is ignorance of the knowledge of the functions of body and mind. This is so colossal that it is creating problems beyond control. Another problem is that of frustrated youths, who see with their own eyes that their brilliancy in education, hard work, the time they gave to studies in apprenticeship have all been in vain, and the opportunities which should be theirs by right, were given to others of much less education and genius because they had money or influence to help them on. We must save the youths from frustration and disappointment, and harness their enthusiasm to create a beautiful world. But who has got the time to look into these matters and feel for them? Everyone feels for his son and daughter and some for his community youths. Let youths themselves solve the problem with the slogan "Youths of the country, unite, for your sake, for your country's sake."

#### Section V

*The handicapped and the maladjusted.*—We now come to the problem of the handicapped and the maladjusted, those who

through various factors in life like wrong or no education, heredity, unhealthy environment, national crisis like wars, accidents and economic conditions find themselves physically and mentally handicapped to pursue their normal occupations in society. In other countries where problems like these have cropped up due to the last two World Wars and other causes have made useful experiments in rehabilitation of these unfortunate people. For what is urgently needed is not to supply these people with livelihood in the form of pensions and compensations, charity and housing but to readjust them in social functions of life and livelihood, giving such aid as is required in each case.

Some of these such as lepers have to be segregated, and yet helped intelligently and sympathetically. Others with physical handicaps of another kind like the blind, lame, crippled have to be fitted to some work where their physical disability does not hamper them. Mentally deficient brethren need an educational and psychological approach.

Simple and wise ways of life propagated through right education to parents and children, minimise the increase of this class of society's unfortunates.

*Prostitutes.*—The problem of prostitutes is truly tragic. Prostitutes are the creation of our civilization and so-called society. No woman would dream of entering into such a profession unless she has been driven to it by man with ill-treatment, indifference and misguidance. It is not enough to segregate this class. What is needed is society's right attitude towards women. In the city of Karachi once a move was made to remove them and take them outside the city. A protest came from these unfortunate ladies and an opportunity was taken to meet and record statements of 118 of them. This experience revealed

facts that some day will make a useful publication for study. An instance may be quoted here—in actual words:

J: Sister, why are you here?

L: Jamshedji, a murderer convicted stands at the gallows; a king sits on his throne, you are sitting in your bungalow; I am sitting here; each one sits and stands where God wills him or her to do so.

J: Sister, God who has sent you here has now arranged for you to come out of this.

L: Jamshedji, where will you take me?

J: Do not be afraid, everything will be arranged for you. You will get your food, clothing and a home. Do come out of this life.

L: But Jamshedji, clothing, food and house are not my problems. I am getting these comfortably even now. Will you take me back into society, to your sister, and allow me to sit down by her side? Will you treat me as a friend?

Jamshedji had no answer to give. He knew how impossible this was with modern society. Friends, these are hard facts. Prostitutes are made by society, driven out, made to suffer and are then offered bits of food or clothing. But is the society prepared to take them back as friends? Will society forget their past? Will society offer them its sons in marriage? Society creates prostitutes, drags them down and then takes pride in its own superiority against these poor uncared for ones, left to the viciousness of men who use them and then make them haggard and unfit for life. The problem and cure both are not in these unfortunate ones, but of and with the society.

*Beggars.*—We have in India about 15 to 20 lakhs of beggars and they constitute a vast problem which is keenly felt but about which very little has been done. Various causes have played their parts in this vast problem—men driven away from work constituting the able bodied beggars, the handicapped forced to these means through lack of any other employment and care provided for them, the waifs and orphans left on streets without orphanages to shelter them, children sold to professional beggars by parents due to economic conditions, *sadhus* and *fakirs*, real and faked, who live by begging and last but the most menacing to society—the idle man, the professional beggar taking these means to earn livelihood without effort.

This classification makes it clear that the problem is not one by itself but is the result of the neglect of the rest of our problems, and solutions speedily applied to this problems will automatically reduce the beggar evil to a minimum. Social neglect has produced the beggar, social vigilance must absorb him back again to healthy conditions of life and livelihood. This seems to be the fundamental remedy. All other remedies—so far suggested like segregation, poor houses, employment, education of beggar children, making begging a legal offence, all these will but temporarily mitigate the evil. They are useful to a degree to solve the present problem but only a total social service will contribute an ultimate remedy.

#### Sections VI and VII

*Private philanthropy.*—Naturally a question will arise as to what place private philanthropy and social service efforts have in a total state-organised social service organism. The rightful place will be seen when one can learn to offer these gifts as a part of one's duties to the State. It will take a long time before human mind can

forget the words "Charity," "Donations," "Subscriptions," "Monuments," "Memorials." Feelings in this country especially are much attached to these words, perpetuating names, gaining fame, giving charities as good and holy deeds to earn rest and peace in Heaven, or as religious duties towards one's community or humanity, to please God and his Prophet and to satisfy one's conscience. Yet, it has to be realised that to offer one's surplus wealth to one's State for total social service is more noble, religious and preferable to any other way of parting with one's wealth. Instincts of charity and donations are not to be killed. Only they are required to be diverted to a higher level. A day will come and must come, when this will be understood by all. Then alone private charity, social work and private philanthropy will get a rightful place and fit in the larger national welfare scheme.

One of the functions of a provincial committee suggested in the first section of this address will be, to make a scheme for total service in the province, and so divide the scheme into small sections of work, that a private donor or philanthropist may be able to take up one of the sections and make his philanthropy useful in that direction. Even a humbler and a poorer man can have scope in offering his mite to any of these sections where money is needed and will be needed. Today there are several philanthropists and charitable persons who desire and even have reserved large sums of money for giving away, but they grope in the dark; they are afraid, they do not know in whose hands to entrust their money. They get confused with different suggestions from friends. In certain instances rich persons have died without carrying out their desire of giving large sums in charity in absence of proper planning.

## Section VIII

*Training and equipment of social workers.*—Within this address, suggestions have been made that universities should take up as early as possible the training of social workers. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences has shown the right direction of the usefulness and potentialities of such training. The importance of this education has not yet been realised in our country, and the result is that the nation is suffering without planning and without trained social workers. There are yet a large number in our country who feel that no training is necessary for social work and only feelings of devotion and sympathy are required, but that is not true. Not only education in sociology is necessary, but organising social welfare with scientific treatment, research bureaus, federation of various societies are all necessary steps. Dr. Kewal Motwani, a well-known sociologist, has suggested that all these should be brought under the aegis of one central organisation, an Indian Academy of Social Sciences, which should have annual sessions in the capitals of the Dominions. All high school teachers and college professors should be made to join this academy. His further suggestion is that this academy should have two sections, Research and Training, in permanent sessions, and above all at the top, in the Central Government, there should be, under personal direction of the President or of the Premier of the Dominion, an Indian Science Foundation, comprising of the cream of experts on physical, biological, social, medical and other applied sciences for purposes of quick and efficient mobilization of all social services, for the service of the nation. This training and education of social workers should no longer be delayed, because a large number will be required in the service of the country very soon, if the country has to be saved from tragic con-

sequences of under-social mentality in which a large number of people flounder and collapse as we have seen during the last two months. Indeed one realises now with full intensity how beneficial it would have been had our country some such social service agency in this hour of great crisis. A good deal of this misery brought about by fear, mistrust, selfishness and hatred could have been avoided.

### III

*Missionary spirit.*—Today in this country a large number of men, women and youths exist with earnest longing to dedicate themselves to the cause of human betterment. They yearn and long to find a scope where they can get a simple livelihood and be enabled to work hard not for themselves, but for others. We have proofs of this in abundance. When the call comes, when leadership attracts, when feelings and emotions of service are raised to the highest pitch a large number rush forth to offer help. Today in this country such youths are scattered, leaderless, spending their energy in aimless work which they feel is the cause of the country. These men, women and youths are politically and socially-minded and in them exist a missionary spirit which if well-guided and directed would be a valuable treasure to the social work of the country. They will make the work less costly and more useful being dedicated to the cause of humanity. A number of them are detached, or can be detached from the ties of worldly pleasures, if there are leaders who can lead such lives themselves and can call others to this vital need of the country. In history, social workers with missionary spirit have played a wonderful part and it will be a great mistake on the part of the country to allow such a spirit to be subdued, depressed, curbed and wasted. If they call men, women and youths to serve the country

socially, devotedly and permanently, bands of monks and nuns, *sevaks* and *sevikas* could be gathered not only in hundreds but in thousands from all faiths, castes and creeds. Such missionaries are born and not made. But the selfishness of the world kills such noble instincts from very childhood. Late Dr. Vail, a well-known missionary surgeon of the Miraj Hospital, once questioned, said that missionaries were not obtained in adult age. The eyes of those who sought them fell on children and youths during their school life or in colleges. Such children and youths were selected, trained and guided by the mission and all the expenses were paid for their training and upkeep, and such youths became missionaries giving up everything, devoting all their life to service. Such missionaries are needed in our country, regardless of castes or creeds. The elders could select, guide and become the heads of such missions in different groups in different provinces. These *sevaks* and *sevikas*, and monks and nuns, in whatever circumstances or place they may be called to serve, will be the shining social workers in the cause of humanity. Such missions from our country then can go even to other countries where there is sickness and suffering and make India great, in name and fame all round the world. Such an opportunity of dedication for men, women and youths of the country will create a mighty spiritual force for true Blessing or Grace. This creative spiritual force is our vital need today. Our country cannot become international merely by political links. International means inter-human and our country must achieve that goal. A quotation from Allama Iqbal will be a fitting end to this address. Said the Allama in a New Year's message, "Remember, man can be maintained on this earth only by honouring mankind, and this world will remain a battleground of ferocious beasts of prey

unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed towards inculcating in man respect for mankind. National unity is not a very durable force. Only one unity is dependable and that unity is Brotherhood of Man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinction of race, colour and 'geographical' nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life, and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialise."

Total social service and work, planned for the country, is the only solution. Governments are too keen today to save private enterprises and industries, trade and capital lest these may sabotage the prosperity of the country. The capitalist,

wealthy industrialists, and traders have a place in the country. But let it not be forgotten that there is a limit beyond which wealth and capital should not be allowed to accumulate, treasured or used for fancy and luxurious living, aimlessly wasting man's power and energy. Governments and capitalists both have to see the "Signs of the Times." They cannot be blind to the forces which are mustering strong. The path of the country can only lie on the principle of "happiness of all" and "happiness to him through whom happiness to others."

Years ago the Mantram given to this country was "*Purna Self-Government.*" It took 41 years after its proclamation to achieve it. Let the slogan now be changed, to "*Purna Samaj Seva,*" total social service for the country, and let us pray that it may not take 41 years to achieve, and that it may much sooner be achieved to bless the country with its many gifts towards attaining true and lasting happiness. Amen!