

ADULT EDUCATION FOR INDIA

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Mass education is the scaffolding on which real democracy exists. India has a very low percentage of literacy in the world and yet no satisfactory attempts are being made to make her millions of adults educated. The writer, in the following article gives a comprehensive scheme of adult education to make every countryman an intelligent and independent citizen.

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Adult Education Movement in India is yet in its swaddling clothes. Even today it remains predominantly a mass literacy movement. Before the British rule, India, it is said, had a high percentage of literacy maintained by indigenous systems of educational institutions, like Maths, *Pathashalas*, *Madarsas*, *Maktabas*, *Ashrams*, etc. Though the education thus imparted was not of a high standard yet it fulfilled the fundamental needs of education. It is quite possible that Adult Education was carried on through religious discourses, reading of holy scriptures and roaming ascetics who inculcated at least some type of moral education. With the advent of British rule in India, these indigenous systems died out and lost their significance and appeal due to the introduction of English education. Literacy figures have a sorry tale to tell, about the neglect of the rulers regarding general education. From the table below it will be seen that between a period of fifty years 1881 to 1931, literacy figures increased only by 4.5% and in the next ten years 1931-41, it increased by 4.1%. This phenomenal rise during the last decade can safely be attributed to the growing consciousness of Indian people in social, political, and educational fields, as also to the effects of popular (Congress) ministries in various provinces.

Year	Percentage of Literacy
1881	3.5
1891	4.6
1901	5.3
1911	5.9
1921	7.3
1931	8.0
1941	12.1

Compulsory primary education has a direct bearing on the literacy of any nation and from this point of view it is worthwhile noting that G. K. Gokhale moved a bill for compulsory primary education in the Central Assembly in 1910-11 which was unfortunately defeated. By this time people were already thinking on these lines and we find the existence of the first night school in Rajahmundry in 1907. This may be an isolated case but it is likely that many such institutions were in existence, though no records are available. The real phase of the movement started after the World War I 1914-18, when the Y.M.C.A., and Poet Tagore showed active interest. By 1921 the upsurge of national consciousness and national struggle stimulated the movement. Many students left schools and colleges due to political reasons and naturally the need for National Educational Institutions was felt and *Vidyapiths* grew up. Among the provinces, the Punjab took the lead by launching a campaign against illiteracy in 1922-23. The Servants of India Society made an isolated beginning in

1916 and took it more energetically from 1923 onwards. In 1926 the Bhagini Samaj of Bombay undertook education of adult women and the very next year they resorted to visual aid for the purpose. In 1929 and 1931 one Mr. Subba Rao started two schools for training rural workers in South India. The decade that followed is very significant from the Adult Education point of view, because the biggest jump in literacy figures took place during this period. But it is not possible to trace here the provincial achievements in this field.

Among the efforts in the direction of Adult Education on an All India scale, the first and foremost is the establishment of The Indian Adult Education Society in Delhi in 1937. At the first instance, its field of activity was only limited to Delhi, later this Society convened an All India Conference of persons interested in Adult Education in 1938. The main objects of the Society as expressed at its second conference were to spread knowledge among peoples of India on all subjects relating to their welfare and culture, to initiate adult education activities wherever necessary ; to serve as a central bureau of information and to co-operate with bodies carrying on adult education work.

Membership was classified under two heads—institutional and individual. The Committee also set up a literacy standard. As regards proper adult education it recommended some 13 types of activities. Proposals were made to set up a central bureau of research, experimentation, and information. It also proposed a separate programme for women.

Another effort on an all India basis was by the Adult Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1938. This Board was set

up under the Chairmanship of Dr. Syed Mahmud to consider the question of combating illiteracy. It made valuable recommendations on the following points :-

1. The sphere of adult education in the general field of education.
2. Adult education and other forms of continuative education (e.g. of vocational character).
3. Attendance of pupils.
4. The problem of utilizing and developing existing agencies.
5. New ways of attacking the problem.
6. Leadership training.
7. Methods and technique.
8. Library and adult education.
9. Women and adult education.
10. Taking help of voluntary agencies.
11. Organization of Adult Education Movement.
12. Establishment of Information Bureau in every Province.

On the basis of these recommendations the Sargent Report on Education was published. The sixth chapter of the Report deals with Adult Education. Though the Scheme realizes the new role of Adult Education, viz., to give reality to the ideal of democracy, yet it lays greater stress on achievement of literacy, because it argues a child must be able to walk before it can run.

The Scheme envisages compulsory primary education of all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. But it embraces all persons between the ages of 10 and 40 years in its fold as it will be wasteful, when the whole Scheme comes into operation, to admit children. The plan hopes to make India 100% literate in 25 years out of which 5 years will be devoted to experiment, research and planning. Adult Education proper will take

its rightful place only after the seventeenth year; till that time only 10% of the finances will be utilized for this purpose. The whole Scheme will cost about 60 crores of rupees spread over a period of 25 years.

Though technically the Adult Education Movement started after the World War I, the real beginning was made only after 1938 as a corollary of political and social consciousness of the people. At this time Provincial Autonomy had come into force and in many provinces, an honest effort was made, towards Adult Education. In India, unfortunately, the real aim of Adult Education, namely, a continuous growth of the human personality leading to a better and useful life and resulting in an all round adjustment of the individual to his society and to his work, has been lost in the woods of literacy. Today the word Adult Education is synonymous with 'Adult Literacy.' The one organization which is free from this confusion is the Bombay Presidency Adult Education Association.

The Indian States, with few exceptions like Travancore, Cochin and Baroda, are very much behind the rest of India in literacy. So it is necessary that a central organization tackling the problem throughout the country should be formed. But considering the attempts made on an all India basis we find that the Indian Adult Education Association established in 1938, has miserably failed to arouse public support and sympathy for its cause. It has also failed to cater to the needs of the adults effectively. Adult Education Movements abroad were products of the predominating social forces in the country which reflected the sentiments of the people. Thus the Russian Movement was a weapon against Tsarists ; Danish folk schools were started to be spiritual fortifications against Germans ;

the English movement was a defence against Social Revolution apprehended to result from the Industrial Revolution, while the American movement sprang up to give every youth opportunity to be a potential President of the United States.!

No doubt, the time when the Indian Adult Education Association was formed was psychologically ripe for the Movement. It was the time when political and social consciousness was surging. But once out of the shell the Movement failed to tune its steps with the need of the time. It deliberately moved away from political associations and tried to shape it on the model of Adult Schools Union of Great Britain—a totally undesirable model ; for the counter-revolutionary ideals might have succeeded in England in the initial days of the Industrial Revolution by giving spiritual dope to the people, but to expect the same to flourish in India of 1938—days of great political consciousness—is amazing !

The problem of education and literacy is intimately associated with the babel of tongues that India is. According to Dr. S. K. Chatterji, there are in all 544 dialects in India, but fortunately for us, there are 15 major languages with literature and which are used as media of instruction. Therefore, the problem has to be tackled on the basis of these fifteen linguistic regions. This will conduce to cultural integration leading to social and political solidarity. Since more than one of the languages are used in more than one province or state, a central organization, independent of provincial or state jurisdiction and boundaries, must be created. The central organization will divide the country into five major zones with one or more language regions under its aegis. The division will be as follows :

- (a) North Zone : Consisting of Balochi, Pushto and Punjabi linguistic districts.
- (b) Central „ : Consisting of Hindustani and Nepali lingual districts.
- (c) East „ : Consisting of Oriya, Bengali and Assamese lingual districts.
- (d) South „ : Consisting of Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam lingual districts.
- (e) West „ : Consisting of Marathi, Gujarathi, Sindhi and Rajasthani lingual districts.

This will facilitate education of people in their own mother tongue and uniform attack on illiteracy and help research and experimentation.

These zones will then be sub-divided into suitable district zones, and here an attempt must be made to synchronize the boundary of these districts to the boundary of administrative district. These district units will be sub-divided further into various local territories which will directly execute the programme of the central organization.

Functions of Various Organizations :—

The four main tasks of planning, co-ordination, control and execution will be done by the central, zonal, district and local organizations. The main functions of the central organization will be to effectively plan Adult Education for the whole of India. It must also prepare a comprehensive plan of action laying down initial methods, techniques and programmes.

Among other important functions will be, leadership training, supervision, research and experimentation, publication of materials for adult education, carrying on propoganda and lastly maintaining an efficient information bureau, and also maintaining vital statistics to check up the progress of the movement from time to time. This body should be controlled by an executive of 15 persons who must constitute a "Brain Trust" representing various fields of arts and sciences. And there should be an Executive Director who will be responsible for the day to day administration of the organization. Under him will be departmental heads for each of the departments *like*, research, information, propoganda, etc.

Zonal Organizations.—The main function of these organizations will be to co-ordinate the various agencies available in the respective zones and harness them according to the policy laid down by the central office. They will also have almost all the functions of the central organization, only that their feild of activity will be limited to their respective zones. These will be devided into districts and local units.

The district units will exercise control over local units and be responsible to the zonal organization in executing the policy of the central organization, and the local units will be directly responsible for the execution of various schemes and programmes.

Agencies for Adult Education.—The agencies for the purposes of Adult Education can be divided into three major heads.

- (1) Government.
- (2) Local Self Government.
- (3) Voluntary.

(government.—There are so many departments in the Government that have direct contact with the people and these

contacts can be utilized for furtherance of the cause; chief among them are :

- (a) Education.
- (b) Public Health.
- (c) Department of Industries.
- (d) Co-operative Department.
- (e) Prisons.
- (f) Rural Reconstruction.
- (g) Agricultural Department.

- (g) Cultural Education.
- (h) University Extension.
- (i) Worker's Education.
- (j) Rural Education.
- (k) Women's Education.

Local Self Government.—Corporations, Municipalities, District Boards, Local Boards, Gram-Panchayats can also carry on the work of Adult Education through their various agencies.

Voluntary Agencies.—These are such agencies as are not directly concerned with Government or local bodies and among them may be included :

- (a) Universities.
- (b) Colleges.
- (c) High Schools.
- (d) Social Service Agencies.
- (e) Trusts.
- (f) Employers
- (g) Co-operatives.
- (h) Community Centres.
- (i) Settlements.
- (j) Libraries.
- (k) Museums.
- (l) Work Camps.
- (m) Religious Institutions.
- (n) Hospitals.

Types of Adult Education.—As we have already seen, if adult education is to be a real programme for adult life it should cover the following types of Adult Education :

- (a) Literacy.
- (b) Post Literacy.
- (c) Education for Citizenship.
- (d) Parent Education.
- (e) Health Education.
- (f) Vocational Guidance and Adjustments.

(a) *Literacy* : Literacy is the basic content of education. But Literacy by itself can never be education. It is at best the capacity to decipher words and figures and to write them with some dexterity ; but education is the capacity to comprehend life situations, using past experience crystallized into knowledge. From this point of view the Indian villager too is educated though in his own way. The knowledge he has acquired, however, is traditional, tracing its origin to antiquity. The world has changed and is changing. It has made stupendous material progress, revolutionized the means of production and distribution of communication and contact. The question of isolation is out of the question. With the impact of this new culture and contact the village isolation is shattered, new situations, new challenges, face the masses which hitherto were unknown to them. Their traditional life fails to save them from resulting maladjustments. Thus a vicious circle around a maladjustment is spun and the backbone of the community is broken.

It is here that re-education of people is needed. Psychologists hold that man is not born human but is made so through social interaction. If a person is made he can be remade. Thorndike has also proved that adult learning is in no way inferior to child learning.

Now it must be remembered that it is difficult to reach crores of people through the word of mouth. Moreover, expression of ideas, ideals and thoughts can only be concretized through literacy which facilitates efficient dissemination of knowledge.

It is essential that literacy primers should be based on adult interest rather than on antiquated "King Lessons." Dr. Labauch's method has proved useful and till some other alterations are found suitable, it should be utilized to the full. The Bihar Mass Literacy Committees have produced material with a right outlook and are bound to prove useful for others to follow.

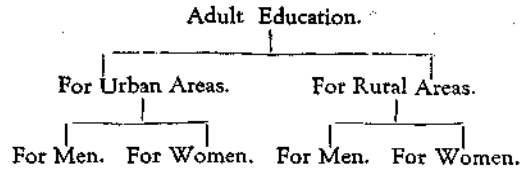
Regarding the methods of Campaign for Literacy the following points must be remembered :

A survey of illiterates and their subsequent classification, based according to sex, age, profession, residence, etc., should precede the enrolment and training of teachers and volunteers. Next will come intense propaganda, through literacy day celebrations, exhibitions, films, slides, talks, posters, etc. After enrolment of students allotment of classes to teachers should be made, and then work may begin. Wherever possible a course of study and proficiency tests should be devised, time limit fixed and " Each One, Teach One " slogan should be promoted for the purpose of intensive drive.

(b) *Post Literacy* : Creation of literacy without a follow up programme is futile. The main task at this stage is to supply, enough and more, interesting reading material to the newly made literates and thus prevent their relapse into illiteracy on the one hand and teach them something useful on the other.

An elementary education in a simple way on subjects, like arithmetics, geography, history, civics and economics, should be given. Village libraries, public libraries and reading 100ms form an integral part of this stage of adult education.

And from here the whole adult education programmes can be classified into four major heads.



Each of these groups will have sociological problems of its own and no rough and ready method can either be devised or course of study laid down. Much will depend on interests, aptitude, likes and dislikes. All this is important to make any programme interesting.

(c) *Education for Citizenship* : Success of any polity, and especially of Democracy depends on the civic sense of its components. This is based on a healthy balance of rights and duties. The trouble arises when people exercise their rights without fulfilling obligations that they owe to society. Another type of crisis crops up when people are too ignorant to realize their duties and rights and vested interests exploit. Franchise is a dangerous weapon in the hands of an ignorant people who are unable to decide whether persons and policies are in their interest and welfare. Through Adult Education we have to develop a body of citizens " alert to the facts of Government, vigilant in the scrutiny of the conduct of Government, able by reason of training and knowledge to decide on persons and policies."

The modern concept of citizenship is composed of two elements—a sense of liberty and a membership in a political unit. In times of crisis conflict arises between individual liberty and loyalty. It is in this clash of the self with the group that the one allegiance that is more firmly established in emotion triumphs, and reason is thrown to the winds.

The question now is how to impart education for citizenship. It is indeed difficult to set down definite devices for

such training. In earlier times, tradition, and later, folk lores and mythology shaped the civic sense of the individual. The faithful observance of these was based on fear, force and custom. Social control in earlier simple society was easy. In our modern complex society it is difficult. The tendency today is to avoid conflict by developing unitary political loyalty through schools, the press, parties, ideologies and through crowd psychology. All this is broadly based on education. Citizenship then must begin with formal education in civics, politics, economics and local self-government. But what is needed is a conscious effort at socialization of the individual, which must be an inseparable part of adult education. Through moral education, human values and tolerance must be inculcated in the minds of the adults in order to develop a new outlook to face challenges and situations of life effectively. Once his personality is thus moulded without any specific training he will prove to be a useful member of society.

(d) *Parent Education* : Parenthood is a special responsibility of adulthood and it needs preparation which can be imparted through Adult Education alone. If properly given it can ensure properly adjusted personalities in this as well as coming generations. In this century of the child, the child must be given a healthy heredity, scientific upbringing and wholesome growth. Parent education is concerned with the development of the individual in all his family and social relations. In America the whole content of parent education has shifted from the child to the whole family since social conditions do affect the emotional needs of the child.

In America parent education is carried on through teaching parents in groups or singly ; training professional

and non-professional leaders; preparing material for parents education ; and research, etc. The subject matter varies from child care to vocational guidance. In Russia it is imparted through health centres, and nursery schools, which are also responsible for improving the home environment in everyway. In Germany it is carried on through Parent Teacher Associations.

For the development of this type of education, India must have an army of psychiatric and mental hygiene workers,

(e) *Health Education* : The dictionary meaning of health is " State of being hale, sound, or whole in body, mind or soul ; specially the state of being free from physical disease or pain." This negative definition of being free from disease is insufficient. The positive aspect of health would be the promotion of superior level of living conducive to the highest ends of life. Thus it is to live most and serve best.

Health education should then first consist of knowledge of fighting sub-health, fighting of communicable and preventable diseases and other physical maladjustments. It will thus be, to a large degree, propaganda for health.

Russia has a very comprehensive plan of health education. At present it is a part of proletarian culture and is conducted under the supervision of the health education departments which work in co-operation with agencies, such as the Maternity and Infant Welfare Society, the Society for Combating Alcoholism, nursery schools, unions, clubs, mothers organizations, trade unions, etc.

(f) *Vocational Guidance and Adjustment* : Vocation is any pursuit of remunerative occupation. In the present industrial era thousands of types of vocation are possible. Efficiency can only be promoted and wastage prevented if right

persons with right aptitude are selected for the right job. If a person with higher or lower calibre than required by a particular job does it, maladjustment is bound to occur. In either case there is wastage. Vocational Guidance is therefore concerned with furnishing counsel to persons who seek to discover their occupational interests and abilities, and to learn about problems and opportunities of employment. In most countries this is done by the educational system while in England through the Ministry of Labour. In India this task will have to be started from the scratch. Though giving vocational guidance is the function of education departments, in the absence of these Adult Education will have to take up the work which will be more in the nature of vocational readjustment rather than guidance.

(g) *Cultural Education* : Culture means acquaintance with and taste for fine arts, broad knowledge of humanitarian aspects of science as distinguished from vocational, technical or professional skill or knowledge. Cultural education in the setting of Adult Education would include aesthetic education through pursuit of fine arts, like poetry, music, painting, sculpture, drama, architecture. This is necessary because Adult Education aims at life beautiful. Only those who have a sense of beauty can create beautiful things. Creative urge is present in every person, though in a varying degree, and it is active in some and dormant in others. The work of Adult Education is to cultivate this tendency. An attempt should be made to secure mass consciousness of beauty. Art gives pleasure, and perfect craftsmanship evokes satisfaction. A work of art requires a deep understanding of elements represented and an emotional urge to create. Through Adult Education we can instil a sense of appreciation of

art which, in the long run, is bound to lead to the spontaneous enjoyment of other forms of artistic expression. Thus the task of adult educators is to interest their pupils in music, drama, painting, etc., and to give them opportunities to express their emotional urge, or in the alternative, to give an understanding of noble expressions.

(h) *University Extension* : This type of Adult Education is meant for those who do not belong to the University and yet desire to have university education. In England and America, this type of educational activity grew out of extra-mural curriculum of the universities with a view to democratize higher education. In illiterate India to think of diffusing higher education amongst masses may appear comic. Moreover, the usual criticism that our university education is highly theoretical makes it difficult to spread it among the masses. But once it is planned and started it may be possible to judge of the value of such education and mass reaction may even provide a valuable lesson for the reorganization of the system. Owing to the higher cost of university education it is not possible for all to have it through the usual ways of colleges. Education must be democratized and it can be done thus alone.

To start with, such extension centres can be established only in places where there are universities or colleges. It can also be arranged in other places where the intelligentsia is willing to shoulder the responsibility of leadership and organization.

(i) *Worker's Education* : The Royal Commission on Labour opined that most of the handicaps of the working class in India are due to overwhelming illiteracy, and laid special stress on education of industrial labour. The worker's education

is fundamentally important in the schemes of Adult Education as it attempts to better a social class and not an individual. It should therefore give him a better understanding of his environments and his handicaps. It should also prepare him to provide Trade Union leadership. It must give him a basic knowledge of political science and economics, so as to equip him with an insight into the problems of his class. It must endow him with agitational leadership for awakening the masses of workers to safeguard their rights.

In earlier times, Adult Education for workers implied technical education only. Later these new items were introduced as a result of the awakening amongst the workers. Labour Colleges flourished in England but failed in America where the conflict of labour and capital was not pronounced. In India, Prof. Ranga started a Socialist School for worker's education. The courses dealt with in this School appear to be too ambitious to be intelligently followed by average workers. The curriculum of worker's education should include topics and programmes of current interest, and also cover the entire field of his normal life and activities.

Recently the Nuffield College published a pamphlet on 'Industry and Education' in which exclusively technical and mechanical education to workers is outlined without covering the human side. This is bound to fail; for, workers are human being and their interests are multifarious and interrelated. And as such no system of education which entirely excludes the human topics can succeed for long. Such mechanical education is sure to further emphasise class distinctions. It is difficult to wipe out centuries of class hatred except by arousing in the workers social consciousness and this can be done through a

comprehensive programme of workers' education.

(j) *Rural Education* : The Royal Commission on Agriculture declares that "illiteracy presents the greatest single obstacle to rural development". It is estimated that about 80% of our population resides in villages. The social and economic condition of Indian peasants has been gradually deteriorating for the past fifty years. The entire structure of rural India has to be rebuilt or else the economic back-bone of the nation will crash. A government sustained and maintained on rural economy could nowhere be so callous to rural welfare as in India.

Conditions in America afford a striking contrast. In America the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, apart from improving agronomic conditions and agricultural engineering, has also established '4H' clubs in almost every village ('4H' stands for Health, Heart, Head and Hands). These words summarise the activities of the club. The main aim of this department is to grow 'two blades of grass where one grew before'. The department utilizes all the techniques known to Adult Education for the purpose. Demonstrations have broken the scepticism of the workers and tens of thousands of young farmers have learnt scientific agriculture. Through education they have begun to think in national terms rather than local. It has stimulated their thought on many controversial issues and trained them up for leadership within a short span of time. In America education is being treated as a large co-operative and democratic undertaking.

Side by side with promoting rural literacy we must devise a type of rural education on these lines suitable to our rural life and conditions. This type of education will centre round improvement

of agriculture, cattle stock, farm engineering, soil erosion, irrigation, etc., dairy farming and poultry farming, domestic economy, family, nutrition, child care, clothing, housing, home health and sanitation; parent education, study groups on general affairs, recreational clubs and leadership training.

(k) *Women's Education* : Women have a unique place in society as guardians of children and as home-makers. Hence, if women are educated the task of general enlightenment becomes easy. According to the census of 1941, only 4% of India's womanhood is literate. "The value to the community of its women's education lies particularly in its effect upon the lasting literacy amongst the young", says the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The Manshardt Committee on Adult Education appointed by the Government of Bombay says, "The committee regards the education of adult women as of more than ordinary importance, for there is little hope of attaining literacy on a wide scale without the co-operation of mothers".

Indian women by sheer force of tradition feel that education is not a part of their job and as such they are indifferent, if not actually antagonistic, towards it. This resistance must be broken through regular propaganda in women's clubs especially organized for general recreational purposes and which can be later converted for educational purposes. Classes in these clubs may begin by teaching handicrafts, knitting, cottage industries, etc., and gradually the interests of the club members should be stimulated. Literacy programmes should follow these activities and then adult education should be imparted on such subjects like—health, cleanliness, general sanitation, child welfare, nutrition common diseases and their infection, their prevention, civic responsi-

bilities, laws of inheritance, social evils like child marriage, polygamy, and *pardha* should be discussed. A working knowledge of post offices, railways, tram services, road rules should also be given. Later on with the co-operation of women's organization and other social service agencies the programme may embrace such fundamental subjects as domestic science, child psychology, mental hygiene, sex education, etc.

Methods of Adult Education.—Let us now examine all the possible types of methods that can fruitfully be employed for the purposes of Adult Education. The methods can be classified into the following main heads :—

1. Written Words :

- (a) Books.
- (b) Magazines.
- (c) Pamphlets.
- (d) Newspapers.
- (e) Correspondence Courses.
- (f) Libraries and Reading Rooms.
- (g) Wall Newspapers.

2. Spoken Words :

- (a) Class Rooms.
- (b) Forums.
- (c) Lectures.
- (d) Councils.
- (e) Panel Discussions.
- (f) Study Circles.
- (g) Debates.
- (h) Visiting Teachers.

3. Visual Education :

- (a) Cinema.
- (b) Exhibition.
- (c) Museums.
- (d) Demonstrations.
- (e) Magic Lantern.
- (f) Pictorial Education.

4. Cultural Activities:

- (a) Music.
- (b) Folk Songs.
- (c) Drama.
- (d) Fine Arts.

5. Radio.

Written Words.—Printing has revolutionized the communication of knowledge and learning. In pre-printing days learning passed from generation to generation through the word of mouth. Permanency under such conditions was limited. Wisdom could not be concretised for the use of posterity. To-day through the printed word we can reach millions of people with ease. Again continuity of knowledge can be maintained through the printed method. Every year thousands of books are published and if by means of control, these books could be produced for the explicit purpose of Adult Education, then half the worry of the adult educator will be over. It is worth while to know what a readable book should be according to modern conceptions. Mr. Percy W. Bidwell in his article : "How to write a readable book", gives the following prescription :

1. Study your reader.
2. Select a topic that will interest him.
3. Catch a first class author.
4. Join to him a capable editor.
5. Simplify your material, but—
6. Don't forget your flavouring.
7. Sprinkle liberally with illustrations.
8. Make your prose march".

Though common place, this advice is bound to prove very useful in the publication of any Adult Education material.

Newspapers are a very important source of forming public opinion. Civic education and education on current affairs

can be imparted very usefully through them. It is worth while considering the proposition that large newspapers and publishing concerns should finance liberally the literacy campaigns as it will ultimately increase their clientele by thousands and will be a good investment from their point of view.

The *Correspondence Course* has now earned a place in the educational movement. As a part of Adult Education it aims at providing formal or even technical education for the adult in this home, at his leisure and under the best teachers of the country. It has no longer remained a merely commercial proposition. The universities in the West have taken to it as a powerful method of diffusing knowledge. The University of Chicago offers no less than 450 different subjects for correspondence courses. In our own country where educational facilities are so scanty the possibilities of the correspondence course should be explored.

The *Library* is not merely a collection of books, but it is one of the most potent weapons of Adult Education. Libraries have come to be a living organism constantly growing with the new knowledge and culture. As a part of Adult Education the libraries in America undertake larger types of *activities* like home-crafts, parent education, by means of mailing a bibliography of books or even books at times, to the newly married persons or to parents of the newly born children.

Our first need will no doubt be to plan for village libraries and not large public libraries. The Bihar Mass Literacy Committee was recently maintaining about 4,000 libraries at a cost of Rs. 6,973-2-0 only and about 5 lacs of books were issued. This is evidence of the good work which well organised libraries can do in our rural communities.

Reading *Rooms* are usually an appendage to the libraries. The maintenance of such reading rooms is very cheap and all the same very useful as all people are eager to read current affairs.

Wall Newspapers are used in Russia to teach the people to give expression to their ideas. Every factory, and village should have its own wall newspaper. Thus the people get accustomed to make public their feelings which can always improve understanding and power of one's own expression. This idea must be taken up by us as a part of our 'Adult Education programme.

Spoken Words.—Spoken word may not be very useful from the point of view of permanence but certainly when it comes to imparting knowledge to contemporaries this method is very impressive as the living word has a different appeal to the mind than the printed word. Assimilation of ideas is much easier and simpler through the spoken word. There are many techniques in which the spoken word is used.

Class rooms form one of the ancient methods of imparting learning and instruction. Here pupils of the same mental calibre and attainments are put together in a room where a teacher teaches through lectures and lessons. This method is essentially associated with the rigid discipline, authority, etc., of the class room; hence, this method may not prove very useful. But so far as literacy is concerned this is the only method that can be used with efficiency, only the teacher should keep in his mind the fact that he is teaching ADULTS. If he does this he is bound to adapt his teaching to the needs of his adult pupils and thus make his class interested in what he has to say.

Forums are open places where Greeks and Romans used to transact business. Later, it was adopted for the education of the adults or rather for academic discussions. In forums the members of the group contribute their several experiences towards the expression of a common will or end. Any group discussion can be called a forum and through these the thoughts of the members can be stimulated for mutual enlightenment.

Panel Discussions are, comparatively speaking, a new method of adult education. In this form of discussion there are about six leaders and a chairman. They sit round a table facing the audience. The discussion is usually on a topical or controversial subject. The chairman presents the subject in brief and each speaker discusses it extempore from the various points of view. Then the general public discusses it in the light of questions developed by the leaders of the panel and announced by the chairman. These discussions have an advantage over the debates where, due to natural timidity, only a few persons participate.

Study circles are meant rather for the learned types of students who wish to pursue knowledge jointly. One member of the group undertakes the study of a particular subject and reads an informative paper on it and after this a discussion follows. Another member reads a paper on some other subject and thus co-operative learning flourishes !

Debates are wordy battles, where two sides contest a political, social or some other controversial subject. Such a method throws a flood of light on the pros and cons of an issue and presents both sides of the questions before arriving at a decision. It also develops understanding and gives excellent training in

public speaking which is so essential in a democratic age.

Councils which are of recent origin are not without historical background. Since the dawn of civilization men interested in the same cause have formed into councils. Their Indian replica, is the village or the community council popularly known as *panchayats*. Through these the members of a particular community strive to solve the common problems that face them, and share mutual burdens and responsibilities.

Visiting teachers should be widely used in India for educating the adults. At present we cannot afford to have teachers with specialized knowledge in many subjects in large numbers. Even to start with, many practical subjects like parent education and vocational psychology are comparatively less known in our country. In order to disseminate knowledge on such topics the few teachers that we have will have to undertake visiting teachers' work. This is only a tentative arrangement to last till we have a large supply of teachers in every branch of knowledge.

Visual Methods.—It is common experience that the impressions we have of things *seen* are more lasting than of things *heard* or *read*. The failure of the spoken and the written word to compete with the visual form of expression in conveying an experience or an impression lies in the difficulty of finding vivid expression of many complex situations through the former methods. "Visual impressions play a more important part than sensations of any other mode in guiding the interpretation of the external world and our orientation therein". Thus a pictorial exhibition on the evolution of machinery, for example, will be better appreciated than a learned lecture on the same subject.

Of the various techniques in this method the following have a place :

Motion pictures. Today millions of people throughout the country visit motion picture houses more for recreation than for education. Motion pictures have become a commercial proposition and producers refuse to include anything which they feel will not be popular or paying. They resist any encroachment on their freedom of business and put forth cheap and sensational films without educative value. Learning is a matter of organization of various sense impressions into a logical sequence ; and enjoyment of visual phantasies far removed from realities may create sense impressions which may disorganise volitional faculties. Therefore, educational control of films is a matter of great social importance. Creative direction of visual education should counteract the negative values and stimulate positive ones.

Educational films, specially designed to illustrate selected topics in formal education, are now being used by many schools. But this is not enough. Three principles of control of motion pictures should be attended to :

1. A committee of expert educationists and scientists should plan and supervise each film.
2. Films should be planned so as to fulfil the purposes of Adult Education.
3. True representatives of the people should exercise control.

Adult Education is, in a sense, self education where an individual is helped to seek facts and draw conclusions for himself. This can be done by documentary, historical, biographical, and informational films. Thus the film can serve the purpose of a newspaper, a library,

museum and exhibition all at the same time.

Exhibitions used to be merely commercial propositions some years ago but today their educational value has been recognized. The beginning was probably made by health exhibitions consisting of posters, charts, etc. Today every type of education can be imparted through exhibitions, in which people really take a lively interest as they powerfully appeal to them.

Museums too are very important in Adult Education.

Demonstrations have a peculiar advantage over other visual methods. Here people have an opportunity of seeing how a particular method or a thing works and hence a demonstration carries conviction with it. Lectures, books, cinemas, magic lanterns, may fail to convince a peasant of the value of scientific farming, but if by actual demonstration its utility is shown to him he is sure to accept the conclusions.

Similarly, among the other useful techniques magic lantern and pictorial education may be included. The point is that though all the visual methods are more or less equally useful the suitability of each will depend on the theme to be illustrated and the locality in which it is to be used. So the adult educator must be able to discriminate between methods before finally selecting them for his use.

Cultural Activities.—Though the word culture has a wider significance in relation to Adult Education, we shall take it to denote aesthetics or fine arts like, drama, music, painting, folk lore, etc.

All these fields have a great appeal to the human mind as they are vitally related to the emotions. In ancient India

moral education was effectively imparted through melodious *Bhajans*, *Kirtans*, etc. If properly marshalled, these activities can be channelled for educational purposes with great advantage. Drama presents many life situations on the stage, skilfully knit into a story ; it is, therefore, not only interesting but of great educational value. Painting, like music, satisfies the creative urge in man, and gives tone to his thoughts and ideas. This helps in the healthy growth of personality. Folk songs are often treasures of ancient cultures, and their revival is full of educational possibilities. These various activities should be designed to foster in the adults a sense of beauty and taste, leading to their refinement and culture.

Radio.—This method of education is one that overlaps with all the preceding ones with the exception of visual method. But that too will be covered by Television when it comes to be widely used for educational purposes. Radio is the cheapest and speediest means of communication with the masses over a wide area, but it has not yet reached that stage in India. Educational broadcasts are also still in their infancy. It is used at present only as an instrument for propaganda and recreation. The present writer had an opportunity of interviewing a number of radio listeners last year and he found that people studiously avoided listening to educational talks. It is the duty of the broadcasting authorities not only to make educational talks more interesting but also stimulate a taste for them in their listeners. A great deal of experiment and research is needed in this direction.

Financial Aspect.—In any enterprize, finances are the most important factor. The question becomes still more difficult when it is a matter of dealing with millions

of people. It is difficult to give a correct estimate of the sums of money needed for the organization of Adult Education ; but a fairly approximate estimate is here attempted.

During the year 1941-42 the whole of British India spent Rs. 30,85,79,543 on education of which Rs. 18,04,512 were from public contributions. The percentage of contributions from various sources worked out as follows :—

Government	43.8%
Municipal and District Boards	14.7%
Fees	27.7%
Endowments	13.8%

Thus Government bears less than half of the total expenses. All told we are spending annually about a rupee *per capita* and of this only seven annas represent government contribution. Provincial expenditure *per capita* are as follows :—

1944-45 Budget.

	...	Rs.	0	6	3	<i>per capita</i>
Assam	...	0	6	3		
Bengal	...	0	5	0	''	''
Bombay	...	1	1	6	''	''
C.P. and Berar.	...	0	5	0	''	''
Madras	...	0	11	4	''	''
The Punjab	...	0	11	4	''	''
U.P.	...	0	6	5	''	''

Contrast with this, Great Britains' expenditure of Rs. 33/2 *per capita* during the prewar period. Figures of the American and Russian Governments are not available or we would have shown how miserable our Governments' contribution to general education is ! And as far as Adult Education is concerned, it is doubtful if a pie *per capita* is spent !

Mr. John Sargent, who proposes to cover 9 crores of adults in his Scheme

to be spread over a period of 25 years, estimates an expenditure of 3 crores per year for twenty years. The total amount to be spent is Rs. 60 crores spread over twenty years. This works out at Rs. 1/8 *per capita* spread over a period of 20 years *i.e.* about *one anna per capita* per year !

If a very elaborate machinery for adult education is to be set up, at least one rupee *per capita* per year should be set aside by the Government and another eight annas *per capita* raised by tax, donation or loan, etc., from the public. Thus, sixty crores of rupees will be needed for the entire country to organize a plan of real adult education. This may appear to be fantastic but considering Rs. 33/- and odd *per capita* of Great Britian our estimate is modest. The central committee should receive this sum from various provinces and States and then re-distribute the amount after deducting annas 2 *per capita* for its maintenance. Similarly, the zonal committees will keep 4 annas *per capita* for their organization and annas 2 *per capita* will be kept by the District Committees for their upkeep and the balance of Re. 1/- *per capita* should be spent on Adult Education. No claim of scientific accuracy is made for this estimate ; it is given merely to stimulate thought on ,the financial aspect of the problem.

Whatever the financial costs, we should not be deterred from forging ahead with the plan of educating all our adults. Adult Education is a bulwark of democracy. It will convert a mob into a nation, will give creative leadership and intelligent following. It will preserve culture and lead to uniform progress in the body politic, making its members not only good citizens, good men and good friends but also good fathers and good mothers.