

**THE CHALLENGE TO QUALITY OF  
EDUCATION IN THE  
AGE OF GLOBALISATION**



**COUNCIL FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE 2000  
(1-6-2000)**

***By:*  
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Head & Dean  
Department of Education  
University of Delhi, Delhi.**

*Organised by*  
Assam Higher Secondary Education Council  
Bamunimaidam, Guwahati-781021

The Council for Higher Secondary Education, Assam, established in 1984, started the practice of organising a Lecture on its Foundation Day which falls on 1st June every year. This practice has been started from the year 1998.

This year also the Foundation Day Lecture has been arranged accordingly and the Guest Speaker is Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Head & Dean, Department of Education, University of Delhi. The topic for the Lecture of this year is 'The Challenge to the Quality of Education in the Age of Globalisation'. This is the third Foundation Day Lecture.

We are happy to bring out the full text of the Lecture by Prof. Sadgopal in printed form for the benefit of the learners, the teachers and the general readers. The speeches delivered by the Hon'ble Education Minister of Assam while inaugurating the Lecture, the welcome address given by the Secretary of this Council and the Presidential Remarks made by the Chairman of this Council are also included in this booklet as they throw some light on some important aspects of + 2 stage of education.

P. B. LAHKAR

*Dy. Secretary (Aca)*

Assam Higher Secondary Edn. Council  
Bamunimaidam, Guwahati-21

## Welcome Address by the Secretary in the 3rd FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE, 2000

Respected Chairman, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Assam, respected Guest speaker, Prof. Sadgopal, Distinguished Guests, my esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great privilege to welcome you all to this 3rd lecture on the 17th Foundation Day organised by the Council on 1st June, 2000. Though Council was established in the year, 1984, the Foundation Day was not celebrated till 1997. It was under the able stewardship of the present Chairman of the Council, Sri Dinesh Ch. Baroowa and at the initiative of the Employees' Union of the Council that a programme was chalked out to celebrate the Foundation Day every year on 1st June and the family of the Council decided to organise a talk on educational issues by an eminent educationist as the main agenda of the celebration starting from 1998.

In the last two years the Foundation Day Lecture was delivered by Prof. A.K. Sharma, the then Director, NCERT in 1998 on the topic "Higher Secondary Education in a Futuristic Context" and by Prof. Amrik Singh, Former Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala on the topic "The Transition from School to College". Today we have amongst us Prof. Anil Sadgopal, Head and Dean, Department of Education, University of Delhi to deliver a talk on the topic "The Challenge to the quality of education in the age of Globalisation". I heartily welcome him once again. A man with vast experience in the educational scenario of the country and with his deep

involvement in several NGOs we believe, Prof. Sadgopal will be able to inspire us and give enough food for thought.

Respected ladies and gentlemen, I feel, it will not be out of context, if I dwell upon briefly on the history and development of the Council.

The Assam Higher Secondary Education Council was established on 1st June, 1984 by an Act (Assam Act No. XVII of 1984) called the Assam Higher Secondary Education Act, 1984, to 'Regulate', 'Supervise' and 'Develop' the system of Higher Secondary Education (+2stage) in the State of Assam. After the establishment of the Council, all the Institutions imparting +2 stage of education in Assam have been brought under one umbrella.

The seed of the Council was germinated by the founder chairman, Dr. B.C. Lahkar and founder Secretary, N.Kalita and two other employees Sri Monhari Medhi and Sri Mohendra Roy as office assistant and peon respectively. The Council first started in a Govt. building near Rabindra Bhawan with a meagre loan of Rs.3.00 lakh taken from SEBA which was subsequently refunded. The office has shifted to this present site in November, 1993. As on today, the Council has its own multistoried building with 103 officers and employees on its pay roll.

As the time of establishment, the Council inherited academic control over 192 H.S. Schools from SEBA and 165 Colleges from Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University. The number of Institutions grew up since then and in 1999-2000 academic session the number of H.S. Schools is 583 (Arts-522, Science-203, Commerce-39, Vocational-100) and

Colleges 314 (Arts-294, Science-76, Commerce-49). The enrolment of students was 68,400 in 1985 and today it is 1,31,100.

The Council conducted the H.S. Examination in 1986 and the number of candidates was 67,826 and in the H.S. Examination held this year (2000) the number of candidates is 1,28,671.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Council is not only a body for conducting examination at +2 stage, but also acts as the guardian for academic development of this stages. Some of the programmes, we have undertaken for the qualitative improvement of Higher Secondary Education in Assam are-

1. Periodical revision and updation of syllabus.
2. Organisation of Teacher Training in the form of Orientation Programme and Refresher's Course.
3. Preparation and Publication of quality text books.
4. Regular academic inspection.
5. Result analysis.
6. Pool of Resource persons.
7. Development of laboratory infrastructure and library.
8. School mapping.
9. Educational survey.
10. Foundation Day Lecture.

11. To prevent the forgery of Mark-sheets and Certificates the Council has decided to affix hologram in the Mark-sheets and certificates for the examinations of 2000 and onwards. Incidentally, the Council is the only body in the N.E. to adopt this practice.

Over and above these, we also organise workshops, seminars etc. on different issues pertaining to burning academic problems.

Before, I conclude, I once again welcome you all to this Foundation Day of the Council.

1-6-2000

BAMUNIMAIDAM

**Md. M. Ali**

*Secretary*



## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By : Prof. Thaneswar Boro

Minister of Education, Assam

It is indeed a unique opportunity for me to be able to associate myself with today's academic exercise which is going to be started with the lecture of Prof. Anil Sadgopal of Delhi University on the most relevant topic of **'THE CHALLENGE TO QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION'**.

The Assam Higher Secondary Education council deserves accolade from all of us for giving us the opportunity of listening to thought provoking lectures from renowned educationists of the country every year on its Foundation Day which falls today, the 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2000. I wish all well of the Council.

1. The main theme of today's lecture is quality education vis-a-vis globalisation. Indeed, the implications of globalisation for societies around the world is at the heart of our concerns to improve and upgrade the education system. Though globalisation is most often than not defined in terms of its economic dimensions, the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the twenty first century - the Delors Report has identified the most important consequence of this complex phenomenon to be its socio-cultural and ethical dimensions as regards the growing interdependence and inter-relationships between peoples and

cultures the world over. The same report has stressed that **'LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER'**- One of the pillars of education - will only be erected through the possession of self knowledge and understanding and appreciation of ones own origins and culture. In order to achieve the high ideals of the Delors Report, we will have to have a very scientific curriculum. Educational contents would require adaptation here and there to meet both national demand and international concerns. I urge upon the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council to formulate such a scientific curriculum in consultation with the experts and by tapping all available resources both at the national and the state level which would meet not only the national demands and international concerns but also cater to the needs of the adolescent learners.

2. The wave of change that has swept the world in varying degrees consequent upon the technological revolution has also knocked at our doors. We must adapt ourselves to the change, otherwise we would be lagging behind. Realising the importance of information technology, our Government has formulated an Information Technology Policy of Assam, 2000. The policy envisages an awareness among the schoolchildren in computer technology and for that purpose all school going children will be provided with necessary facilities within 2004. The programme is proposed to be started from the current financial year i.e. 2000-01. As per the policy, during this year students of class IX onwards will be covered. 504 schools shall be covered under this programme (4 schools per LAC area). The programme shall be conducted for a period of one year depending upon the course content. This would be a continuous process and more and more schools will be covered within the next few years.

Under the policy, every school should have at least three computers, one computer with colour monitor with CD ROM/ Multi media Kit and others will be with monomonitor without multimedia kit. In addition to this one UPS and one Inkjet Printer shall be provided to each school. I understand, this is only a humble beginning and every big thing has a humble beginning.

3. The academic health of the Higher Secondary Schools imparting Arts, Science, Commerce and Vocational Education in our State is not very sound. Many Higher Secondary Schools have not reached the optimum level of admission. Reasons are many. Without going to the details of the reasons one thing could safely be said that mushrooming of Higher Secondary Schools is one of the main reasons. I know that Assam Higher Secondary Education Council has conducted a detailed survey on the matter and on the basis of that a set of educational maps is in the process of preparation. Once the whole set of maps is available, we would be able to take judicious decisions on the matter of upgradation of existing High Schools to Higher Secondary Schools, establishment of Junior Colleges etc. I congratulate the Council for this laudable effort.

4. The Vocational Stream is also leaves much to be desired. Apparently there is a mismatch between the selection of schools and allotment of subjects. For removing this mismatch, Government Policy will have to be re-examined, which I assure you, would be done in consultation with the Council soon. Personally I feel, the Vocational Stream has a tremendous potentiality and when the world has accepted learning to-

(a) Know

- (b) do
- (c) be, and
- (d) live together.

As the four pillars of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no one needs to wait to decide that the focus of all education is VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR ALL. Any delay, therefore, in seeking and sequencing the priorities will be disastrous, more so, because we live in a century where speed is the watchword in everything. In order to make Vocational Education meaningful in the new millennium we would have to take a pledge that we all who are associated with the different stages of implementing the scheme of Vocational Education, would be faithful to the system. Let us take that pledge today.

5. The North-East in general and the State of Assam in particular, shall not remain outside the policy of globalisation, liberalization and privatization. The area will also not remain outside the onslaught of information technology. In the new scenario that would emerge within the next 2-5 years. Some new Commerce-based Vocational areas would have to be added to in this part of the country to enable our young boys and girls of +2 level to compete with their counterpart in other parts of the country successfully. Some such subjects are indicated below:

- (i) Software development and accounting procedure for different types of firms and companies;
- (ii) Export-import practices and documentation;

- (iii) Insurance;
- (iv) Travel and Tourism Management;
- (v) Food Processing and Preservation etc.

This is only my loud thinking. I leave the matter to the council. In consultation with proper experts they would identify such new areas where Vocational Education could be imparted to our students.

I would also like to make another request to the Council. The Council should examine whether in place of full two years Vocational Course, some modular courses of six months or one years duration could be introduced after which the pass outs could self-employ themselves.

6. Another point of loud thinking, I would like to mention. I feel, in order that our educational institutions run efficiently and managed properly, the involvement of the community is most essential. The institutions must feel that they belong to the community and the community must also feel that the institutions belong to it, So, I would urge upon every Head of the Institutions to try to involve the community in all possible ways by doing which, they would be able to sort out many a problem without running to Dispur of looking at Dispur.

I hope, I have not unduly taxed your patience and I do not want to stand between you and Prof. Sadgopal. You are all eagerly waiting to listen to Prof. Sadgopal.

I once again congratulate the Council for organizing such a

function and hope that this would continue. With these words I inaugurate the lecture.

Thanking you all.

**GUWAHATI**  
**01-06-2000**

**SRI THANESWAR BORO**  
**MINISTER, EDUCATION, ASSAM**



## INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKER PROF. ANIL SADGOPAL

- \* Prof. Anil Sadgopal was born on 14 October, 1940 at Lahore presently in Pakistan.
- \* He obtained his M.Sc. Degree in Plant Physiology & Bio-Chemistry in 1962 from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.
- \* He obtained his Ph.D. Degree in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology in 1968 from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, USA.
- \* In 1968 he became a Fellow in the Molecular Biology Unit of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay and he continued in this position till 1971.
- \* During 1989-92 he was a Senior Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research at the centre for Science Education & Communication, University of Delhi.
- \* In 1993 he was a Special Fellow at the Centre for Science Education & Communication, University of Delhi.
- \* From 1994-98 Prof. Sadgopal served as the Professor of Education and Co-ordinator, Maulana Azad Centre for Elementary & Social Education in the Department of Education, University of Delhi.

- \* Since 1998 onwards, Prof. Sadgopal is holding the prestigious post of Dean, Faculty of Education and Head, Department of Education, University of Delhi.
  
- \* During 1971-91 he organised a voluntary organisation called Kishore Bharati in village Paliya Pipariya, District Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh with the objective of experimenting with new ideas in rural education and social change, created facilities for vocational training in farming, horticulture, social forestry, dairying, repair of agricultural equipment, well construction, appropriate technology etc. During this period he also conceptualised and organised a programme of teaching Science through experiments and inquiry approach in rural upper primary schools of two Blocks of District Hoshangabad on a pilot basis. This he started in 1972 and by 1978 he was successful in extending the programme to all the schools of the district numbering to about 225. He also organised a variety of non-formal educational programmes with children, youth and women with the objective of enhancing their learning skills, social awareness and capability to deal with socio-political obstacles in their development. He also established ways of pedagogically and structurally linking formal and non-formal systems of education.
  
- \* During the period of 1980-81, Prof. Sadgopal was deeply involved in organising marginal farmers and agricultural labourers of the same village Paliya Pipariya to struggle for their rights to land, forest, employment, potable water, health and education.

- \* During the same period of time and extending upto 1985, he helped organise the Madhya Pradesh unit of People's Union of Civil Liberties and several investigations of violation of civil liberties and democratic rights in tribal regions.
- \* Simultaneously during 1982-83, Prof. Sadgopal played a pivotal role in setting up Eklavya, another voluntary organisation in Madhya Pradesh for the purpose of evolving innovative programmes in formal and non-formal education.
- \* During 1984-86, Prof. Sadgopal organised Bhopal Gas Disaster victims to struggle for their scientific medical treatment, better relief and rehabilitation and also their Right to Information against Union Carbide. He also set up a people's health centre for the treatment of the gas victims. Because of his deep involvement on this issue he was made a member of an expert committee constituted by the Supreme Court of India to recommend effective measures for the treatment, relief and rehabilitation of the gas victims.
- \* From 1979 to date he is interacting with a large number of people's science groups across India working towards building up an alternative vision of Science & Technology from the standpoint of exploited sections of society.
- \* From 1993 to date he is holding the post of National Convenor of Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha, an all-India People's science network.

- \* From 1995 to date, Prof. Sadgopal is the National Convenor of Lokshala Programme for Universalisation of Elementary Education- A Nation-wide process.
- \* Besides, Prof. Sadgopal is a member of a large number of Committees constituted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, University Grants Commission, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Department of Science & Technology, All India Council of Technical Education etc.
- \* He was also a member of the Synergy Group on Primary Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Govt. of India in 1995.
- \* In 1978-79 he was a member of the National Adult Education Board of the Govt. of India.
- \* In 1981-83 he was also a member of the National Children's Board.
- \* Prof. Sadgopal was an important member of the Committee for Review of the National Policy on Education in the year 1990 popularly known as the Ramamurti Committee constituted by the Govt. of India.
- \* He was a member of the National Commission on Teachers constituted by the Govt. of India in 1983-84.

- \* Prof. Sadgopal has also edited a 680-page book entitled 'Sangharsh aur Nirman' (Struggle and Reconstruction) in Hindi on the Chhattisgarh People's Movement (movement of unorganised workers and tribals) led by Shankar Guha Niyogi and published by Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, 1993.
- \* Prof. Sadgopal has also won many awards and honours because of his academic brilliance.
- \* In the year 1980, he won the Jannalal Bajaj Award for 'Application of Science & Technology for Rural Development.
- \* In 1981, he delivered the Vikram Sarabhai Memorial Lecture under the auspices of the Indian Council of Social Science Research on 'Between Question & Clarity - The Place of Science in a People's Movement.
- \* He also delivered a Special Lecture at the Asiatic Society, Bombay in their 'Science and Society' series.
- \* In 1983, Prof. Sadgopal won Shanti Niketan's Rathindra Puraskar for popularising Science & Technology in rural areas.
- \* Since 1986 he has been enjoying the status of National Lecturer in Education of the University Grants Commission.

This versatile genius has been invited by us today to deliver the 3rd Foundation Day Lecture of the Council. I hope, he would inspire us all by his illuminating speech.



## THE CHALLENGE TO QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALISATION\*

### **Preamble**

The educational debate I am going to refer to as preamble to my Foundation Day Address this forenoon is probably as old as the advent of formal education in human civilisation. During the second half of the previous century, the protagonists of the two opposite views have articulated their respective positions repeatedly from various academic and public fora. The Marxist perspective has only helped sharpen the debate as well as focus attention on the fundamental issues. I was personally made aware of the sharply contradictory, if not irreconcilable, positions in the debate as I was about to resign from my job in 1971 as a Fellow of the Molecular Biology Unit of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. This was in the context of my projected move to Hoshangabad District, Madhya Pradesh, with the aim of setting up a rural education institution called KISHORE BHARATI. I also became conscious of the reflection of this debate in the political arena where the Marxists and the non-Marxists had for long strictly adhered to their ever-hardening and bitterly antagonistic stands.

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\* Third Foundation Day Address delivered under the auspices of the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council, Guwahati, Assam, on June 1, 2000

The introductory brochure of KISHORE BHARATI (1971) talked about the need to experiment with the Gandhian ideas of *Nai Taleem* (Basic Education) i.e. integration of the 'world of knowledge' with the 'world of work', the latter referring to productive work relevant in child's environment<sup>1</sup>. The basic premise of the proposition was that the Gandhian pattern of education will help catalyse social change, eventually leading to elimination of poverty, reduction in socio-economic disparities and finally creation of a more just society. Several people, especially the Marxists, questioned the premise itself. It was argued that, unless social change i.e. transformation of social structure takes place, education can not be changed. After all, education, being controlled by the State, merely reflected the concerns of the ruling social forces and was inevitably designed to fulfil their vested interests. It was the State that determined the social and pedagogic character of education and not the other way around. It was difficult to refute the argument logically. Nor could any historical experience or evidence be cited in support of the basic premise on which KISHORE BHARATI was naively founded. The next two decades witnessed a whole range of educational interventions in Hoshangabad District, both within and outside the school system, which brought out the potential as well as the limitations of educational change. The experience of the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme initially in sixteen (1972) and later in all of the 220 odd (1978) Government middle (i.e. upper primary) schools of Hoshangabad District, the productive work-based non-formal educational experiment with school drop-outs in *Nai Taleem* framework (1973), the youth camps on developmental and health issues (1978), the educational initiative for the conscientisation of landless peasants and marginal farmers in the Paulo Freirian

perspective (1980) or the reproductive health work aimed at women empowerment (1985), revealed the contours of how education interacts with various social forces. The experience showed that educational intervention partially and to be sure, only transiently, influences the sensitive balance prevailing in the society. However, in the process, education is also impacted upon and is either modified or constrained by its interaction with social forces.

Gradually, a new perception was emerging. Neither of the two politically hardened positions referred to above, were tenable. To hold the view that educational change can by itself bring about social change amounted to ignoring both the role of various social forces and the hegemony of the powerful vested interests. At the same time, the view that social change must necessarily precede educational change essentially amounted to a self-defeating, if not also a pessimistic stand, which only justified inaction and, by implication, even maintenance of the *status quo*. Nor was the latter view in fact Marxist, though majority of its protagonists claimed to belong to the Marxist world-view. Indeed, the protagonists of this view ignored the dialectics which must be operating between education and social reality - education impacting on social reality and *vice versa*.

At this juncture, I am tempted to share this personal narrative with you. In 1985, a Chinese delegation of educationists led by someone equivalent to our Director, NCERT, visited India. During its tour of Madhya Pradesh, the delegation was sent on an official visit to see the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme. On its return to Bhopal, the delegation shared its impressions at a meeting with the officials of the Directorate of

Education, Madhya Pradesh, where I was also present. The Chinese were obviously impressed by what they saw - village children sitting in groups on *katcha* classroom floor and conducting scientific experiments with local inexpensive kit, recording their observations as young scientists in tattered notebooks, getting engaged in an in-depth discussion for a collective process of inquiry and finally drawing inferences and gaining a conceptual understanding of a natural phenomenon. However, in spite of what they saw, the delegation members had a discomfiting doubt. They observed that rural Hoshangabad is still dominated by feudal land relations and it was surprising that such a massive scientific exercise could be undertaken in such backward socio-cultural conditions. In contrast, the Chinese society had undergone a major social revolution, breaking away from its feudal past, leading to significant transformation of social structures. Yet, several attempts to introduce scientific ways of learning science in classrooms had been resisted both by the teachers and the educational bureaucracy alike. The delegation members were baffled. In this particular sense, social change in China did not adequately prepare ground for educational change, whereas in Hoshangabad, educational change had taken place without any obvious social change ! This is a complex issue. One needs to be cautious in not being tempted to draw any oversimplified inferences. However, it might suffice to add in this context that the role and the character of subjective intervention in a given social reality (in this case, Friends Rural Centre Rasulia and Kishore Bharati in rural Hoshangabad) in initiating educational change needs to be properly analysed and understood.

One can cite many examples for illustrating the dialectical

relationship that exists between education and social reality. For instance, consider the impact of the feminist movement and the slowly but steadily rising assertion of women in society in many parts of the world. This phenomenon persuaded the Indian policy makers in 1986 to include a special Section called 'Education for Women's Equality' in the National Policy on Education, though the policy perception on women's education suffered from several lacunae and internal contradictions<sup>2</sup>. In spite of this weakness in perception, the relatively enhanced stress on women's education in the 1986 policy gradually built up pressure on both the society as well as the Government to at least design programmes which purportedly attempted to make education accessible to the girl child, transform the ethos of higher education institutions in favour of women and subject curriculum and textbooks to scrutiny from the standpoint of gender equity. Similarly, the rising *dalit* assertion, especially in Maharashtra, persuaded the textbook writers to review their presentation of the role of *dalits* in Indian history, re-construct Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to the making of contemporary India and to include selections from the *dalit* literature in language texts. This change in textbooks is bound to have an impact on the distorted perception the children carry about the *dalits* and their contribution to society.

### **Globalisation and the Old Debate**

Now, what does this preamble have to do with the central theme of my Foundation Day Lecture? Normally speaking, one would tend to take a position that, in the face of the powerful forces of globalisation, there is no option for the educational system but to accept the situation as *fait accompli*. It is with this mindset

that the policy makers and the educational bureaucracy in India have unquestioningly accepted the hegemonic role of trans-national corporate forces, the global market system and the powerful international organisations such as the Brettonwood institutions (World Bank and IMF) in directing the structure as well as the quality of education (and also health). A significant initiative towards this end was taken at the first World Conference on Education for All (popularly known as the Jomtien Conference) held at Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. Sponsored by the World Bank, the Jomtien Conference lay the groundwork for intervention by the international funding agencies in national educational structures and processes. By the time of the Jomtien Conference, the education policy (or policies) formulated by the successive Indian Governments since independence had failed in ensuring Universal Elementary Education as well as in transforming secondary and higher education to serve the goals of social development of the Indian people. This collapse of the education policy and the continuing evidence of lack of political will on the part of the ruling Indian elite to rectify the situation, ironically provided the rationale for giving space for global intervention in Indian education. The Jomtien Conference proved to be a turning point in the history of education in India. The Government of India gave a hasty concurrence to the Jomtien Declaration<sup>3</sup>, without even consulting the Parliament on its major Constitutional and policy implications. The Jomtien Conference marked the beginning of the phase of increasing abdication by the Indian State of its Constitutional obligation towards education of nation's children in favour of the forces of the global market. It also marked the beginning of the erosion of the role of the Parliament in policy formulation as well as of the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Human

Resource Development in formulating the agenda of Indian education and its priorities. Taking an early cue from the Jomtien Declaration and foreseeing the political, historical and educational significance of this turning point, this author proposed to view the post-independence history of education in India in two separate phases for the purpose of analysis viz.

#### **Post-Jomtien and Pre-Jomtien phases<sup>4</sup>.**

The New Economic Policy giving primacy to the market forces in national development and 'integrating' India into the global economic order was enunciated by the Government of India in July 1991. The stage for this declaration must have been in preparation for quite some time, probably since the mid-eighties, for it took the newly elected Government of Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao *less than a week* to take this policy initiative. Along with this, however, another declaration made by the same Government in July 1991 itself did not attract much notice. This was with regard to a decision of not giving effect to the major education policy changes recommended by the Acharya Ramamurti Committee (National Committee to Review the National Policy on Education-1986)<sup>5</sup> for rectifying the elitist orientation of the 1986 policy and ensuring universal access to education of equitable quality. Obviously, such policy changes would not have resonated with the New Economic Policy. The Parliament was, therefore, told that yet another Committee (i.e. the CABE Committee or what is now also known as the Janardan Reddy Committee) to purportedly look into the feasibility of the Acharya Ramamurti Committee recommendations was being constituted. Thus the Government managed to avoid taking steps in fulfilment of the Constitutional directives

and to keep doors open for international intervention in Indian education, especially school education. The political and economic framework for subjugation by the global forces in the educational sector emerged soon after the announcement of the New Economic Policy when the Indian Government was persuaded by the IMF and the World Bank to accept the twin concepts of **Structural Adjustment** and **Social Safety Net** in planning and budgeting for social sectors. There was no choice, the Government told the people, justifying its apparent 'helplessness' since these were the pre-conditions set by the Brettonwood institutions (i.e. World Bank and IMF) for extending further loans. Plainly speaking, these twin concepts implied that the Government will successively reduce public spending on social sectors such as health, education and social welfare i.e. Structural Adjustment. Recognising that such a reduction can lead to severe socio-political tensions, the IMF and World Bank 'offered' to create a Social Safety Net by extending loans for the social sector on certain terms and conditions.

No more shall the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Planning Commission play any critical role in determining the direction, content or resource allocations in education. Increasingly, the Government will be willing to abdicate its Constitutional obligations in the area of education and let the market forces have an unbridled play (also known as 'free' play in the language of the globalised world). The social needs of various segments of society shall no more be the determining factors in educational decision-making. It can be easily established that, since the inception of the New Economic Policy in the early nineties, the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992) has progressively lost its pre-dominant status in directing

education in response to national or social needs. The World Bank and the market forces have already been given so much of 'free' play that even the Parliament can be ignored while shifting the policy focus and educational priorities, as it happened in shifting the policy focus from *eight years of elementary education* to only *five years of primary education* or from ensuring *three teachers per primary school* under Operation Blackboard<sup>6</sup> to *Multi-grade Teaching* (e.g. in World Bank's DPEP). Increasingly, educational decisions are being orchestrated either by the World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC or the corporate capitals of the northern hemisphere.

The East India Company along with its Macauley is back, this time with a much more powerful and universal presence, than its early nineteenth century Calcutta-headquartered presence in the Indian sub-continent ! To be sure, the 21st century 'East India Company', realising the risk of still prevailing 'old-fashioned' patriotism reacting against its naked physical presence, has acquired highly subtle ways of intervention in the sub-continental affairs, using the ruling elite, academics and the teachers.

In this backdrop, let us re-examine the issue referred to in my preamble in the following terms:

*Does globalisation imply that the very direction and the quality of education will henceforth be determined by the corporate forces and the market system ?*

*If one answers the above question in the affirmative,*

*educationists as well as the policy makers will then have no pro-active role in education. They will instead be left only with the role of docilely accepting and executing the dictates of globalisation. Our role would then be limited to fulfilling the aims of the global capital order viz. expanding the horizons of the market economy. The global economic order perceives a critical role for education in fulfilment of its aim. Accordingly, all aspects of education would have to be moulded to prepare a market-friendly, consumerist-cum-pro-hi-tech (esp. Information Technology) and competitive mindset amongst children. Each child will then have to be viewed as a significant resource as well as a tool of the global capital, rather than as a human being with a fundamental right to education for holistic development of one's inherent potential. It is a matter of the very philosophy and aim of education being challenged under globalisation.*

*Alternatively, we may prefer to assert that education does have a transformative role, as discussed in the Preamble, especially if it is designed to have a dialectical relationship with the forces of globalisation. For this, it will be necessary to reiterate that the primary role of education is to help build 'an enlightened and humane society', as elaborated in the Acharya Ramamurti Committee Report<sup>5</sup>. The entire curriculum and pedagogy would have to be re-designed such that the children and youth **learn to analyse, question and eventually challenge** the apparent universal acceptance of the hegemony of the forces of globalisation in moulding society. Instead of being made to subjugate itself to the need (as well as, greed) of the corporate forces*

*to control the global resources, both natural and human, education will have to be consciously developed into a tool of liberation of the mindset. The transformative role of education will remain incomplete if it is limited to merely challenging the hegemony of globalisation forces. It must also include the agenda of re-construction of society (which in turn includes re-construction of knowledge) in order to build up an alternative framework for greater equity, justice and peace in the **post-globalisation** world order.*

The basic issue at stake in the old debate must be now becoming evident.

### **Identifying the Post-Jomtien Trends**

The Jomtien Conference was followed by the Education For All Conference in New Delhi (1993) of nine high-population countries of the world under the sponsorship of the World Bank. The nine countries included Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan. This conference set the framework for designing the internationally funded programmes in developing countries. Soon afterwards, the World Bank-sponsored District Primary Education Programme or DPEP (1995) was institutionalised in India, which spread to most of the states in phases within the next five years. For each new phase, the Union Government readily signed fresh MOUs, while the State Governments, irrespective of the ideology of the ruling party, jostled with each other to have their share in the cake of additional foreign loans or grants. No effort was made to subject DPEP to any public scrutiny, whether within

or outside the Parliament and State legislatures. The MOUs have been treated as secret documents, as if they dealt with the military secrets, rather than with education of our children. Yet, it has been possible to decipher the basic trends that characterise the post-Jomtien phase of Indian education in the latter half of the previous decade. The following important trends may be listed:

- i) Dilution and trivialisation of the aims of education;
- ii) Fragmentation or compartmentalisation of education;
- iii) Alienation of knowledge from social ethos;
- iv) Restriction of access through commercialisation, privatisation and competitive screening;
- v) Parallelisation or heirarchical layering of school systems; and
- vi) Homogenisation of socio-cultural diversities through increasing centralisation.

The most evident indicator of increasing dilution and/or trivialisation in the post-Jomtien phase is the almost complete absence of any reference to aims in the educational discourse today. Major changes in programme designs or curriculum are introduced without as much as even a reference to how these would affect our pursuit of basic aims of education. For instance, inspite of the unambiguous commitment implied in Article 45 of the Constitution to at least *eight years of elementary education*, it took no time for the DPEP to shift the focus to

merely *five years of primary education*. In the process, the significance of an integrated view of the eight-year curriculum carefully built up since the Wardha Conference (1937) was also lost, without even a single eye brow raised in the entire Ministry. Similarly, *literacy* has become synonymous with *education* during the past decade in public as well as the academic mind, though it is but merely one of the several indicators of the level or quality of educational achievement in a particular community or a population sub-set. It was this misleading perception that may have persuaded the Union Government in 1993 to declare that children in the *9-14 age group* were permitted to enrol themselves in the adult literacy classes of the National Literacy Mission. Likewise, the World Bank trivialised the aim of educating the girl child by attempting to make it synonymous with fertility control, transaction of the population message and increase in women's productive efficiency. Even this trivialisation was accepted by the Indian policy makers without murmur.

One may recall how the National Policy on Education-1986 made a commitment to provide at least *two* teachers per Primary School in its much-hyped Operation Blackboard scheme. This commitment was raised to *three* teachers per Primary School in the revised National Policy on Education-1992. However, the DPEP could dare to ignore all such commitments made on the floor of the Parliament within the next 2-3 years by making *Multi-grade Teaching* one of its central themes. This meant that, contrary to the commitment made by the Parliament under the Operation Blackboard scheme, the DPEP would get away with by training only *one* teacher to handle five classes simultaneously. The DPEP strategy also managed to provide a

justification for the unwillingness of the State to shift adequate resources to education of the poor children. The serious negative implications of all such diluting and inequitable measures in terms of the quality of education of the poor children seemed to bother no one at the helms of policy making. An adult literacy class, a non-formal centre, the so-called 'alternative' school, a multi-grade class and now the Education Guarantee Scheme centre, all have been accepted as adequate substitutes for school education, as long as it concerns the education of the poor. Needless to say, no policy maker will ever be prepared to send her or his child to any of these *parallel and heirarchical* so-called educational facilities!

The process of trivialisation in the post-Jomtien phase did not end with the measures which amounted to merely dilution of educational aims. The trivialisation agenda went much further. Let us consider the nation-wide centralised programme of introducing pre-determined competency-based Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) framework in the schools'. This is aimed at equipping the primary school children with the so-called 'mastery level' achievements which will presumably enable them to functions as 'socially useful and contributing adults.' This restricted (i.e. less than holistic) and compartmentalised view of education has been perceived by the policy makers and international funding agencies in the nineties as being critical for the well-oiled operation of the globalised economy. The MLL framework is also suggestive of an 'orwellian' basis for dividing the adolescent and youth, i.e. the 'product' of the educational system, in terms of their specific competencies, so that the emerging workforce can be 'rationally utilised' by the market-oriented economy. It is in

this context that each child will be assessed as a resource and be assigned a price tag accordingly !

The second half of the previous decade has been witness to a rising tide in trivialisation of education, both at the level of school education and higher education. To be sure, this must be seen as a worldwide phenomenon but, in a developing country like India, it has the added dimension of being remotely shaped by alien powerful forces that regulate global economy. The World Bank and other international funding agencies are already well-entrenched here with increasing emphasis on programmes such as Education For All (EFA) and DPEP which are pushing the trivialisation process, structurally as well as pedagogically. The globalisation agenda of trivialising education may be seen as re-shaping of the colonial agenda. Such an inference is justified since the current focus is on extending the *utilitarian* framework of colonial education into a dominant trend of the future.

In this scenario, as was stated by the Lokshala document<sup>8</sup> in 1995, one can envisage **'a girl child engaged in child labour as having been *Constitutionally educated* if she can be enrolled in a non-formal stream for three years and then in National Literacy Mission's adult literacy programme for the next two years, without even having stepped into the village school!'** The policy of promoting the non-formal stream as an equivalent stream to school education for almost half of India's children is part of the globalisation agenda of gradual withdrawal of the State from its Constitutional obligation of providing education of equitable quality to all children. It is also an evidence of State's willingness to co-exist with child labour (read *destruction of childhood*) in the twenty first century

while, at the same time, boasting of nuclear-cum-rocket capability and presumed global leadership in information technology !

There is yet another aspect of dilution of education which almost brutalises childhood. Of the three recognised domains of education - *cognitive* (concerned with knowing or perceiving), *affective* (concerned with emotions and values) and *conative* (concerned with psycho-motor skills) - the school's concern is restricted almost entirely to the cognitive domain. While, in the cognitive domain, the mind is engaged with processing of knowledge, the affective domain is concerned with sensitisation of children and inculcation of values and the conative domain focusses on development of various psycho-motor skills. Education is holistic only when the three domains act in unison and in appropriate combination, in accordance with the characteristics of each child's personality and inherent potential in the context of her socio-cultural milieu. The school curriculum, however, has essentially no space for affective and conative domains which are marginalised into co-curricular or extra curricular activities. What is worse is that, of the entire cognitive domain, only a narrow slice viz. memorised information, dominates the curricular objectives. Other cognitive attributes such as comprehension, thinking, logic, analysis, concept formation, creativity or intuition are essentially ignored. Thus knowledge has become synonymous with mere bits of information, often unrelated with each other. It hardly matters whether the bits of information heaped on the school child can be put together to make some sense or not or whether these lead to any meaningful concept formation. No school can really dare to opt out of this fragmented and

restrictive conception of education because its curriculum is pre-determined by the evaluation criteria characterising the Board examinations. This tragic state applies equally to government, private or the so-called 'public' schools since the examination system pre-determines essentially everything which happens inside the classroom, even at the pre-school stage.

The tendency to compartmentalise education into water-tight compartments, instead of perceiving it holistically, is part of the colonial legacy. One begins by fragmenting knowledge into natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities and then each of these into a range of disciplines and sub-disciplines. You continue this process until you are left with only micro-specialities that lose all meaning. The Gandhian philosophy of integrating the 'world of knowledge' with the 'world of work' may be envisaged as a challenge to the prevailing trend of dividing education into academic and vocational streams and alienating knowledge from the social ethos. The resistance to a holistic view of education was so strong at the time of independence that the new Indian Government rejected the Gandhian notion of wholesome education for all children. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) also failed to recommend the holistic view as the basis for curriculum re-construction at all levels. The compartmentalisation of knowledge remained essentially unchallenged. The attempt to bring the 'world of work' and social experience into the school curriculum was resisted even within the Kothari Commission. Out of this reluctance emerged the proposal to add 'work experience' as a separate subject in the schools as an embarrassing sop to the Gandhian idea. The proposal of 'work experience' effectively delinked knowledge and learning from productive work and

social experience at the pedagogic level. There could have been probably no better way of destroying the Gandhian concept. In 1978, the Ishwarbhai Patel Committee Report put the final nail in the coffin of the Gandhian concept by proposing the mouthful of 'Socially Useful and Productive Work' (SUPW). To be sure, the students' assessment in SUPW would be entered in the last column of the marks sheet and not be considered when assessing the students for entry into higher education courses!

The afore-mentioned colonial agenda of fragmentation of knowledge in the education system provided a fertile ground to the similar agenda of globalisation which views education essentially from the utilitarian standpoint for promoting the global economic order. As was the case with the Macauleyan approach to education, globalisation also aims at using education as a tool for building up various skills and capacities that are useful to the global economy (recall competency-based approach of MLL). This implies an unambiguous denial of the holistic approach to building up an enlightened and humane society. In this paradigm, knowledge in science, social science and humanities would need to be divested of its philosophical, historical, ethical, socio-cultural and aesthetic roots. Given the pre-dominance of market forces in the globalised world, it can be predicted that only those courses, research programmes or training activities would receive financial support which have a saleable value in the global market. Any discipline, sub-discipline or even a set of ideas which are not saleable, will gradually die, unless supported pro-actively by public funds as part of a conscious social policy. Inter-linkage between *knowledge* (which is viewed as being synonymous with *information* in the globalised world) and its roots may not carry

any price tag in the market economy. It has, however, critical significance for social re-construction and transformation.

**In this sense, there is a fundamental conflict of epistemological nature between globalisation and social development.**

Alienation of knowledge from social ethos is a logical outcome of globalisation. The increasing preference for internet as source of 'knowledge' (read *information*) and its screening or filtration by corporate forces on the basis of marketability will lead to de-linking of a large proportion of knowledge from its social ethos. The geo-cultural diversity will come to be largely ignored and have little role to play in defining or qualifying knowledge. This trend will over a period of time establish the hegemony of only globally acceptable (i.e. marketable) parameters of what is worth knowing in the age of globalisation. Strangely enough, this hegemony provides a meeting ground between the 'free' market agenda of globalisation and the well-established centralising tendency of NCERT, at least in the short-term. This understanding must be at the basis of the declaration by NCERT in its National Curriculum Framework for School Education<sup>9</sup> released in January 2000 to the effect that,

- a) detailed curricular guidelines and model syllabi for all stages of education would be developed by NCERT;
- b) exemplar instructional packages on several new and relatively unknown areas of knowledge should also be developed as a part of the front-line curricular materials; and

- c) a **National Testing Service** will be established by NCERT with the twin objectives of conducting surveys of educational attainment and assisting professional institutions in conducting entrance examinations and also assisting employing agencies in recruiting their employees (the Acharya Ramamurti Committee had earlier rejected the proposal to set up a National Testing Service on the ground that *it will discriminate against the people living in the backward regions and hinder their social development*).

In making these declarations, the NCERT has publicly admitted that the hegemony of the forces of globalisation is such that all other considerations will have to be set aside. For instance, NCERT had earlier stated in the same document that 'the plural nature of Indian society needs to be reflected in the pedagogical approaches' and 'there is a strong need for looking into the cultural context in which the child is placed.' The ultimate impact of globalisation on NCERT's decisions has turned NCERT's apparent appreciation of Indian plurality into a mere rhetoric!

As already emphasised in the earlier paragraphs, the increasing tendency of the State to abdicate its Constitutional obligation towards education of the poor, constitutes an important feature of globalisation. The rapid pace of privatisation in the school education sector, particularly during the nineties, is a direct consequence of the collapse of the official policy in the past five decades to maintain the quality of education

in Government schools. This collapse is reflected in the following policy dimensions:

- i) Highly bureaucratic and centralised management of the Government schools continued as part of the colonial legacy despite policy statements in favour of decentralisation; the post-Jomtien intervention by World Bank's DPEP, has led to a quiet but unmistakable strengthening of the colonial legacy by gradual shift of control over decision-making from State capitals to Delhi and from Delhi to Washington DC !
- ii) Lack of community participation or control in school management; the rhetoric of community participation in DPEP is more in form (Village Education Committees and Block Resource Centres) than in content since the directives continue to pour in plenty from higher echelons as before; in any case, even on paper, what is proposed to be devolved is not any power with regard to curriculum or pedagogy, but mere *participation* (in contrast to *control* or *accountability*) with regard to only management and, that too, in a superficial sense (it does not include any policy matters or financial decision-making).
- iii) Unwillingness to shift the necessary financial resources from other sectors to education by either re-prioritising the national economy,

changing the direction of development or even modifying education policy; the post-Jomtien phenomena of Structural Adjustment and Social Safety Net have in fact implied that *there need be no change in national priorities, direction or policy measures* since additional funds will flow *comfortably* (i.e. comforting to the ruling elite) into school sector from external sources !

- iv) Irrelevant curriculum and unattractive teaching-learning process; this crucial aspect of education, inherited from the colonial past and continued faithfully since independence, is likely to become worse since the curriculum and pedagogy are going to be moulded by the needs of the global market, rather than the social priorities of the people.
- v) Discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, language, culture and gender as part of school's hidden but operative curriculum; the interaction between discrimination in education and market forces is a complex issue and requires a detailed treatment separately; to be sure, the present situation will change in a significant manner with predictable changes in the character of hegemonic forces (e.g. market-led homogenisation of cultural diversities, increasing hegemony of English as source of knowledge legitimised through Information Technology and the woman being turned into a marketable commodity, thereby further strengthening the

patriarchal stranglehold).

- vi) Lack of political commitment to establishing Common School System and Neighbourhood Schools in order to move towards equitable quality of education for all children; with rising market pressure for privatisation and commercialisation, the social objectives of the Common School System and Neighbourhood Schools will be further marginalised and are likely to become politically even more irrelevant than during the decades following its recommendation by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) or its resolution by the Parliament thrice in the National Policy on Education (1968, 1986 and 1992).

The last issue regarding the lack of Common School System can be identified as the single most critical factor responsible for the deteriorating quality of Government schools and the consequent rapid pace of privatisation in the school sector. The problem has been made worse by the official policy of establishing parallel educational networks. For the better-off sections of society, this policy has led to the establishment of the Central and Navodaya School systems as well as several types of Model Schools within the Government school network (e.g. Sarvodaya and Pratibha Vidyalayas of Delhi Administration). For the very poor, especially child workers, the parallellism is reflected in the form of Non-formal centres, Alternative Schools, inclusion of 9-14 age group in NLM's adult literacy classes and Education Guarantee Scheme centres. Either way, this policy diverts attention from the central political task of

improving the quality of Government schools in general on a priority basis<sup>10</sup>. It is this failure that not only encouraged privatisation but also provided the necessary rationale for intervention by the World Bank and other international funding agencies.

Commercialisation of higher and technical education has been promoted in the post-Jomtien phase under the false argument that resources need to be shifted from this sector to the school sector. It needs to be emphasised that *knowledge is produced and communicated in institutions of higher learning*. This holds true even for knowledge that is essential for improving the curriculum, pedagogy and the quality of teacher education programmes for the school sector. If public expenditure in higher education will be reduced, it will lead to the following anomalies:

- a) only those disciplines or sub-disciplines will be allowed to survive that have a marketable value; the rest of the disciplines, irrespective of their socio-cultural or epistemological significance, will gradually wither away;
- b) the lower middle class and the weaker sections of society are likely to be deprived of this knowledge as well as participation in generating and re-constructing it; this will lead to further strengthening of elitist control over knowledge and its social application;
- c) the entire higher education system will become oriented to only utilitarian goals, while any

knowledge that might lead towards social development or transformation will be marginalised.

The following futuristic description of higher education, cited from a recent book<sup>10</sup> (May 2000), is apt:

Year 2010. The ultramodern campus of the newly established 'Bill Clinton International University' near Delhi. Two women students meet. One calls out to the other, 'Come, let us go somewhere and relax' The other student says, 'I have a packed day today. In the first period, there is Unilever practical in the Coca-Cola Physics Lab; in the second period, there is the Proctor & Gambles session on Western Dance Appreciation in the Pepsi Theatre; this will be followed by the Suzuki Lecture on Information Technology in the Microsoft Auditorium. And then the recess. Come, let us meet in the Kentucky Chicken Canteen in the Union Carbide Square.'

The above scenario may not be so remote as it might appear to some of you. The newly opened G.G.S. Indraprastha University in Delhi started five B.Ed. colleges in one lot last year. A seat in these colleges will cost Rs. 45,000/- each. To counter any allegation of elitist orientation, half of the seats are termed 'Free Seats', costing 'merely' Rs. 12,000/- each ! Compare this with the fee of Rs. 2,500/- per seat in the UGC-subsidised Central Institute of Education (CIE) of the University of Delhi, where a lower middle class or even a poor student can hope to obtain a B.Ed. degree with dignity and as a matter of right. But

pressure is on for institutions such as CIE as well to change or else just be wiped out, as the UGC support to higher education is threatened to be drastically reduced, if not withdrawn all together. Such measures will clearly be in violation of the spirit of the Indian Constitution which emphasised equity and social justice. This violation is only indicative of the greater dangers ahead. For instance, the Constitutional Review, already underway, can hardly be expected to resist the pressure of global market forces when the entire Indian polity has already begun to make major adjustments and even to succumb to these forces.

Contrary to the imperatives of the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992), Government schools in crowded urban areas are being closed down on one pretext or another. The official strategy (or, *is it policy?*) is to let the quality of these Government schools deteriorate over a period of a few years. The parents, including the poor parents, get the message and start shifting their children to nearby private schools or school-shops. When a majority of the children have 'dis-enrolled' and the school may have reached an unbelievable situation of having, may be, five children and three teachers, the Government uses this as a rationale for closing down the schools. The official rationale prefers not to take into account the fact that half of the children in the city might be out-of-school and the private school shops (the so-called 'convent-style' schools) have mushroomed all around the Government school wherefrom the children were forced to shift due to Government's refusal to checkmate the decline in the quality of education. At this stage, a Government report would point out that the situation needs to be rectified by *rationalisation* which invariably meant closure of schools. No policy maker would find that *rationalisation* might

also imply reversal of the official strategy of letting the quality of education deteriorate in Government schools. The prime urban property of these erstwhile Government schools is then handed over to private Trusts or unashamedly even to commercial complexes. This phenomenon was first reported from Ahmedabad in 1998, followed by the closure of thirty schools in Indore in 1999 and transfer of several of these to commercial interests. Such reports are fast becoming a common feature from different parts of the country. This phenomenon underlines the rapidly developing alliance between the State and the forces of globalisation.

### De-constructing Policy Statements

We have already referred to the phenomenon of ignoring geo-cultural diversities while maintaining the rhetoric of commitment to Indian plurality. The market economy demands that that multi-cultural, multi-linguistic or multi-ethnic societies like India are homogenised so that the marketing of a product is facilitated. The greater the homogenisation (also read, standardisation), the greater will be the size of the market for a specific product. Although this immediate economic motivation is an adequate ground for pushing homogenisation, the long-term political gains in terms of hegemony of corporate powers over global natural and human resources also need to be kept in mind. Indeed, globalisation has the **hidden agenda** of minimising cultural diversity even across national boundaries. A document released by the International Bureau of Education this year<sup>11</sup> declares that globalisation will lead to '*erosion of the power of nation-states*', concomitant with the '*transfer of sovereignty*' from governments to larger geo-political regional

entities (e.g. ASEAN, CIS and European Union). The same document further recognises that the development of multinational corporations has contributed to '*dramatic increase in trans-border exchanges*'. With the increasing dominance of Information and Communication Technology in the promotion of 'knowledge industry', one can easily see how the process of globalisation is leading towards irreversible homogenisation of plural cultures, ethnicities and languages with the objective of increasing the size of market and political hegemony of corporate powers. The inclusion of these concepts in an educational document<sup>11</sup> shows that the international educational bureaucracy has readily accepted the ideological hegemony of globalisation and, that too, with an undercurrent of admiration!

Let us see how the Indian State is preparing itself to support the impetus given by globalisation to homogenisation of plurality. A reference was made in the previous Section to the strong centralising tendencies and the new proposals to this effect, as declared in the latest policy statement of the new Government in NCERT's National Curriculum Framework for School Education<sup>9</sup> (January 2000). These tendencies are reflected in concrete measures relating to curriculum formation, textbook writing, preparation of learning packages, organisation of teacher education programmes and standardisation of evaluative criteria and testing services. Ironically, these tendencies contradict the rhetoric in the same document regarding the need for plural pedagogies. It is for precisely for this reason that we have to learn to deconstruct the policy statements and not be carried away by the rising decibel of rhetoric. Apart from centralisation of educational processes, the NCERT document cited above proposes to build up a value education framework

with a clear *Hindutva* orientation for the entire country. The NCERT document is unambiguous in its preference for *Hindutva* orientation, patriarchal control and Bramhanical hegemony over Indian plurality with respect to value framework, cultural history and sources of knowledge. It ignores the historical contributions made by the *dalits*, tribals, cultural minorities and a variety of other sub-altern groups in building up the sub-continental freedom struggle against British imperialism and the consequent composite culture of contemporary India. All of the frequent references in the document to cohesive society, national identity, national consciousness, Indian cultural heritage, India's contribution to world culture or indigenous knowledge have failed to hide the *Hindutva*, patriarchal and Bramhanical bias of the document.

While the NCERT document is replete with references to the educational philosophy and writings of Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, it finds nothing contradictory in regarding the human being as a 'positive asset and a precious resource'. This view echoes the conversion of the name of the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1985 by the Rajiv Gandhi Government in resonance with then emerging global economic order. Nor does the NCERT document hesitate to make the society dominated by Information and Communication Technology as being synonymous with 'learning society' or 'knowledge society'.

At this juncture, it may not be out of place to raise the question: What

is the linkage between globalisation and fundamentalism ? Fundamentalism would appear in different forms in different religious or cultural contexts, but the common thread in all kinds of fundamentalist ideologies has been an uncompromising and blind revivalist tendency. This tendency is then used to underline and strengthen a false consciousness of a narrow and exclusivist communal identity. In complex and plural societies like ours, Hindu fundamentalism (read, *Hindutva* of the present Indian polity) can co-exist and flourish alongside with fundamentalist tendencies of other religions. In contrast, some of our neighbouring countries would exhibit monolithic fundamentalism. Irrespective of the specific religious or cultural context, fundamentalism and globalisation seem to form an undeclared alliance inspite of their contradictory frameworks and roots. While fundamentalism emerges out of an archaic, feudal and anti-scientific ideology, globalisation apparently represents the liberal and scientific framework which underlines the latter's ideology of 'modernity'. Yet the two ideologies support each other insofar fundamentalism can be used for stabilising and enlarging the market. This is reminder of the support extended by the British Raj to fundamentalist forces (Islamic as well as Hindu) in order to strengthen its colonial stranglehold. The alliance between the colonial and fundamentalist forces eventually led to fragmentation of the sub-continent into three nation-states. Similarly, while fundamentalism raises its ugly face in the present times, the forces of globalisation would prefer to look the other way, as long as the former is kept within bounds to politically stabilise the market in the long run. This should explain how the NCERT document manages to use education to promote both the globalisation and fundamentalism simultaneously.

The Brettonwood institutions and the other international forces promoting globalisation have burnt their mid-night oil before proposing that the phenomenon of '*erosion of the power of the nation-states*' and '*transfer of sovereignty*' from countries to multi-national corporations will form the cutting edge of globalisation. However, the phenomenon has to be couched in a language that would be politically acceptable. The policy makers, have, therefore, discovered that '*interdependence and interrelationships between peoples and cultures*' is the major consequence of globalisation<sup>11</sup>. The International Commission on Education's Report (i.e. Delors Commission's Report) to UNESCO states that '*learning to live together*' must be one of the pillars of globalised education. We must ask as to what is the real reason behind this sudden respect for 'learning to live together', while the same forces also recognise that globalisation is widening the gap between '*those who globalise and those who are globalised*'<sup>11</sup>. What is so new in this concept that, all of a sudden i.e. in the late nineties, an International Commission on Education, followed by a host of international agencies, has discovered in it guidelines of critical significance for re-moulding the curriculum of all nations, especially the developing ones ? The age-old Indian concept of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbkum* never seemed to excite the imagination of either the international or the Indian educational bureaucracy.

In the paradigm of globalisation, the Universities are being perceived as 'knowledge producers' and the pupils as 'knowledge consumers'<sup>11</sup>, thereby making knowledge a mere commodity in the globalised market and, more importantly, in

globalised education. It is already envisaged that the task of producing and disseminating knowledge in the Universities through Information Technology, the so-called 'knowledge industry', will be commercialised and handed over to the trans-national corporations in the near future. In light of these known outcomes of globalisation, the '**producer-consumer**' paradigm of knowledge as referred to above will begin to define the hidden agenda of globalised education.

The Delors Commission's emphasis on 'learning to live together' and the producer-consumer paradigm of globalised education have provided the rationale to the International Bureau of Education, an UNESCO institute, to conclude that global attention must bear upon the curricular concerns of the member-states and that there is enough room for adaptation of educational content of various countries to the demands of globalisation. For this, international platforms will be justifiably built up for facilitating *intervention in national education systems by regional and global corporate forces*. And this challenge of globalisation is knocking right now at the doors of Indian education !

### **Transformative Education**

Given this market-oriented relationship between the teacher and the students, there is hardly any space left in globalised education for *liberative* (or, for that matter, even the *liberal*) pedagogy. The liberative pedagogy, critical for social transformation, would provide ample space for the students to be actively engaged in re-construction of knowledge and then,

to begin with, in questioning the world around them and eventually in attempting to transform it. The transformative paradigm would resist all attempts to fragment or restrict the holistic vision of education dedicated to the creation of an enlightened and humane society. The resistance to fragmentation of the holistic vision of education would have to be reflected in various dimensions including the education system and its structural aspects, epistemological issues and pedagogic (in its widest meaning) concerns.

The whole point is to explore how, given the constraints imposed by the market forces, education can still be transformed to resist the ill-effects of globalisation, rather than accepting it as the unchallenged destiny of crores of our children. Let us, therefore, re-formulate the central issues of the debate in the framework of a dialectical relationship between educational transformation and social change by posing the following questions:

- a) *Depending upon what is feasible in the present national as well as the global situation, what role can education play in preparing the society to deal with the social, cultural and economic impacts of globalisation ?*
- b) *What conscious steps would we have to take in transforming the quality and direction of education for this purpose ?*

c) *What implications does this view of the transformative role of education has for the following:*

- *aims of education;*
- *structure of the school (or higher education) system;*
- *community's relationship with the school/University;*
- *pedagogic relations between the teacher and the students;*
- *role of children in re-construction of knowledge; and*
- *parameters of evaluation ?*

Each one of the above issues would require a detailed scrutiny of the notion of knowledge inherent in the present curriculum and an inquiry into the transformation it would have to undergo in order to acquire the liberative character. This inquiry can not be accommodated here and would have to await an independent treatment.

### **Globalisation : An Epistemological Challenge**

These questions need to be explored in-depth in the context of globalisation. When we do this, it will become evident that basically it is the notion of knowledge itself that determines the social, structural and pedagogic character of education as well as its relationships with the society. It is this epistemological question which today's educationists

and policy makers have hesitated to seriously explore as yet. We need to recognise that the central thematic challenge of globalisation to the quality and direction of education is indeed epistemological. It is only by learning to deal with this epistemological challenge that we will also know how to transform the education system in its various critical dimensions in order to resist the powerful forces of globalisation. This will be our best bet for re-juvenating the freedom struggle to move towards an enlightened, just and humane society within India as well as globally.

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**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS MADE BY  
SRI D.C. BAROOWA, CHAIRMAN  
on the occasion of the  
FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE 2000**

Hon'ble Minister of Education, Assam, Respected Guest speaker Prof. Sadgopal, distinguished guests, my esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentleman,

Foundation Day is a day of great significance for an organisation. Sixteen years have elapsed since the establishment of this Council in 1984 and we are celebrating the 17th FOUNDATION DAY. On this auspicious day, I put on record my sincere appreciation of the dedicated services of each and every member of the Council family. I recall the valuable services rendered by my distinguished predecessors and offer my regards to them. The guidance and co-operation of all the Hon'ble members of the Council, the support and active cooperation of the State Government and above all, the elderly counsel of the Hon'ble Education Minister are all gratefully acknowledged today. I also pay my respectful homage to the departed souls who served this Council and left us untimely.

A brief outline of the activities of the Council in terms of the mandate of the Assam Higher Secondary Education Act, 1984 to "regulate, supervise and develop" the system of Higher Secondary Education in the State of Assam, has been given by the Secretary through his welcome address. I do not repeat them but I would only honestly request you to remember that a journey of thousand miles begins with a single step. Neil Armstrong, when he put his first step on the moon, had also said "A small step for man but a giant leap for mankind".

Without entering into the controversy whether we have

already stepped into 21st Century on and from 1st January, 2000 or we would be stepping into the 21st Century on and from 1st January, 2001, one statement could be safely made that the 20th Century may be considered as a Century with paragon. It has witnessed the most significant developments in Science and Technology, concern for human development and quality of life. However, this century has also witnessed the massive and inhuman brutal killings of hapless people all over the world. Alongside the unparelled growth and expansion of education, this century has also witnessed the development of meticulous strategies for economic exploitation by the rich nations. These developments are likely to manifest in greater degrees in the next century. The evil effects of these massive advancement in Science and Technology are eye-brow raising. The only defence against all these is EDUCATION. In UNESCO's view-"war is in the minds of men", hence the deterrent to war, i.e. peace, has to be instilled in the minds of men and women. Education can alone do this.

While talking of education and its tremendous power to purify the minds of men, mention must be made of the report "LEARNING : THE TREASURE WITHIN". This is a report of the International Commission on Education in the 21st Century, more popularly known as DELOR'S REPORT after the name of its President, Jacques Delor. The report has been prepared on behalf of the UNESCO and has been submitted to the UNESCO. This profoundly exciting and intensive report is a testimony to the creative abilities and genius of the 20th century. This report has rightly looked at the world as a global village without ignoring the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of the countries and their people. Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyaya of the NIEPA has said - "The report is not only of seminal importance, but con-

stitutes a robust philosophy that charts out almost a road map of what education should be -indeed, a vision that is not mangled by prescriptions”.

The Delor's Report has referred to four pillars on which the education system would mostly rest in the 21st century. They are

(i) Learning to Know

(ii) Learning to Do

(iii) Learning to Be

and (iv) Learning to Live together.

If we examine deeply we would see that these four pillars are the classical pillars of Indian way of life

(i) Gyanyoga

(ii) Karmayoga and

the concept of (iii) Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, are all embedded in these four pillars. We, as Indians, should feel proud of the fact that Indian way of life has now been accepted as the global way of life.

So, based on these four pillars, education would undergo great changes in the years to come and there should be no doubt about that. That these changes would be sweeping and all-embracing because of the great leap forward taken by Communication Technology should also not be doubted.

Now, the question arises how do we thrive in the new situation? How do we equip our students to face the challenges of the 21st Century? How do we prepare our teachers to effectively transact the curriculum in the changing scenario? How do we prepare quality text books responding to the needs of the 21st Century? These are some of the nagging questions which would have to be answered within the next year or so? We have already initiated a process of curriculum revision. In case of curriculum revision we would be guided by the principle that the curriculum must have a smell of the soil. Text Book Production will be taken up after that. I beseech help and co-operation from all concerned in fulfilling this stupendous responsibility.

The role of the teachers in the changing society is going to be very crucial. Despite breath-taking developments in technology, the teacher would continue to remain at the centre-stage of the education sector. The Delor's report has also given meaningful emphasis on the role of teachers in the changed society. **Actually nobody can replace a teacher.** But unfortunately many of our teachers are not very serious about the role which they should play not only in moulding their own lives but in giving a direction to the young generation and to the society as a whole. It is only through the teachers that a society can resolve its conflicts of being and becoming. It is through the teachers only that a society can transform itself and reach newer heights. It is through the teachers again that an urge for life-long learning can be created. So a true teacher has to be a 'thinking teacher' and not a 'working teacher'. Our future depends on 'thinking teachers'. It is only this genre of teachers who can become 'teaching teachers' as there is a close

relationship between thinking and teaching. A 'thinking teacher' is an asset and a 'working teacher' is a liability. If the latter outnumbers the former, then we are in a soup. All efforts must be made by all concerned, therefore, to transform the 'working teachers' into 'thinking teachers'.

I have already stated that a journey of thousand miles begins with a single step. This Council has already taken the first step in all the various directions indicated in the Secretary's welcome address. I once again assure you that we would not falter in our duty to "regulate, supervise and develop" the plus-two stage of education in our State. We need your guidance and co-operation.

In fine, I thank you very heartily for having kindly accepted our invitation by attending this lecture programme. I hope, in future also, the Council would not be deprived of your love, affection and guidance. I would also expect whole-hearted co-operation from the parents and the teachers and the public in general.

Thanking you all,

Guwahati  
01-06-2000

**D. C. BAROOWA**  
Chairman, A.H.S.E.C.

