

A PHILOSOPHY OF  
THE ROLE OF THE  
CONTEMPORARY  
TEACHER





KIREET JOSHI

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CONTEMPORARY  
TEACHER

The Mother's Institute of Research

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To the contemporary teacher, on whom  
the greatest demand made today is to  
revolutionise education and to aid in  
the process of the transformation of  
human nature



## Kireet Joshi

Kireet Joshi (b. 1931) studied Philosophy and Law at the Bombay University. He was selected for the I.A.S in 1955, but in 1956 he resigned in order to devote himself to the study and practice of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother at Pondicherry.

He taught Philosophy and Psychology at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry and participated in numerous educational experiments under the direct guidance of The Mother.

In 1976, the Government of India invited him to be Educational Advisor in the Ministry of Education. In 1983, he was appointed Special Secretary to the Government of India and he held the post until 1988. He was Founder Member-Secretary of Indian Council of Philosophical Research from 1981 to 1990. He was also Member-Secretary of Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan from 1987 to 1993 and the Vice-Chairman of the UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg, from 1987 to 1989.

From 1999 to 2004, he was the Chairman of Auroville Foundation. From 2000 to 2006, he was Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. From 2006 to 2008, he was Editorial Fellow of the Project on History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture.(PHISPC).

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## Growing Demands on the Contemporary Teacher

### Unprecedented explosion of information

All eyes seem to be turning towards education. Contemporary civilization is science-based, and during recent times, there has been an increasing growth of democracy. There is also today an unprecedented explosion of information and unprecedented speed of communication. As a result, an increasing mass of the human race is getting seized by the need to grow in awareness and knowledge and to determine their future by conscious and deliberate participation in the process of development.

The goal of education for all has gained universal acceptance. In every discipline, educational activities are being designed to upgrade knowledge and update skills. Early childhood education is being increasingly emphasized; programmes are being envisaged and implemented to encourage involvement of adults in helping young children overcome socio-economic or socio-cultural handicaps and prepare themselves for school life.

### Unparalleled width and depth of the contemporary quest

School education is being intensified and diversified. Higher education and research are undergoing momentous changes as a result of the unparalleled width and depth of the contemporary quest. Adult education and lifelong education are being advocated with increasing insistence; bridges between the world of education and the world of work are being built, and higher targets are being pursued to help people broaden their cultural background, enhance their potential and talents, and develop their personalities.

The ideal of a learning society is being increasingly acknowledged.

Two global problems have begun to underline the importance of education and to profoundly influence the objectives of education.

## The problem of peace

First is the problem of peace. At a time when advancing knowledge has the potential to serve the highest aims of civilization, man seems to be drifting in a direction that might bring about a fatal disaster. Every passing day shows up the dangers threatening peace.

Tensions of all kinds are becoming more marked. The arms race, which swallows up enormous sums of money which would be enough to eradicate poverty and restore human dignity to hundreds of millions of inhabitants of the developing countries, directly counters the efforts made to establish a new world of justice, equality and unity. More than ever before, there is a need to urgently and imperatively build the defenses of peace in the minds and hearts of men. It is increasingly realized that education, suitably designed, can prove to be the most effective means of building these defenses.

## The problem of development

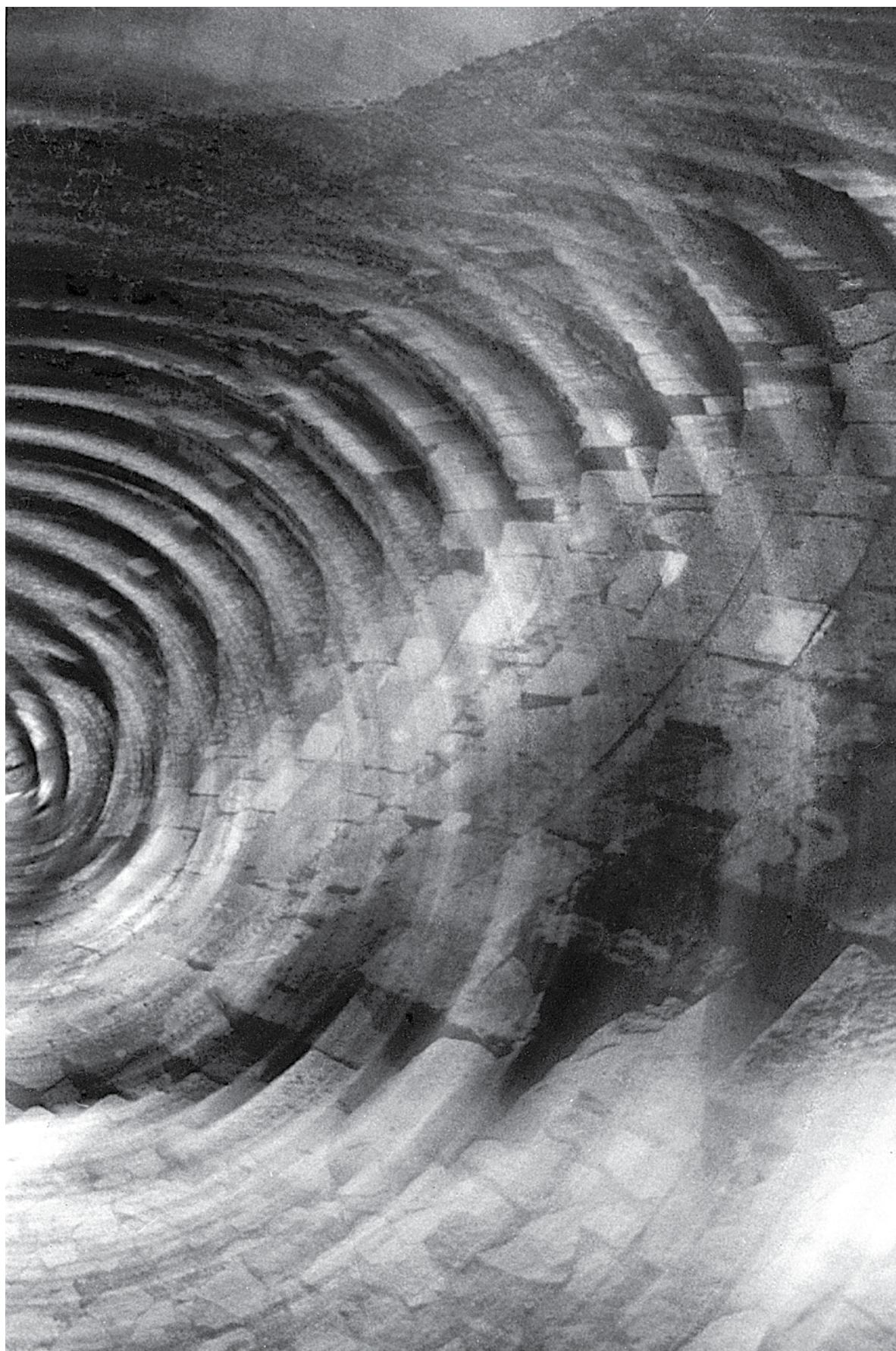
The second problem is that of development. At a time when the world is shrinking, the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening. The sharp disparities of development and asymmetrical relations among nations are impelling disadvantaged countries to seek unattainable goals.

The resulting vicious circle of dilemmas and predicaments can be broken, it seems, only if it is realized that development, like peace, is indivisible and that not by competition and exploitation, but by mutual help and cooperation can the goals of development be realized.

## Change in the very working of human consciousness

In order that this realization to be shared and practised increasingly and effectively, there must come about a change in attitudes and a change in the very working of human consciousness. It is being increasingly admitted that this task can best be accomplished by education that does not merely instruct but which also illumines and transforms the ordinary springs of thought and action.





## The synthesis of knowledge and of culture

Several other tendencies and trends are at work. Today there is a great quest all over the world towards the synthesis of knowledge and synthesis of culture. Ancient knowledge is being recovered in the context of modern knowledge. Humanities, sciences and technologies are being brought closer to each other. The need to synthesize the pursuits of ethics and aesthetics is being felt more and more imperatively. And, there is a growing aspiration to build bridges between science and spirituality.

It is being affirmed more and more insistently that what we need today is man-making education. It is pointed out that our present educational system is subject-oriented and book-oriented and that books and subjects have come to occupy in our thinking and in our educational practice, such an exclusive place, that the learner and his personality receive little attention.

## Development of integral personality

What is, therefore, proposed is the development of the powers and faculties of human personality, particularly those of concentrated thought and will. Detailed and comprehensive programmes of education are being formulated, the chief aim of which is the development of integral personality. It is in this context that a special stress is being laid on the process of self-learning, learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to become.

New methods of teaching and learning are being advocated which place the learner in the centre of the educational process. At no stage of human history was the drive towards totality and all-comprehensiveness as imperative as it is today. For, at no stage was civilization as multidimensional as it is today. The wheels of the world are spinning so fast today that we are all obliged to overpass our limitations continuously and interminably. The framework of our life is under constant pressure of change.

## The demands of ethics and aesthetics

The scientist of today runs the risk of becoming an obscurantist of tomorrow unless he accomplishes some kind of a leap in the meantime. Nor can the scientist of today ignore the demands of ethics and aesthetics, unless he prefers to become obsolete in the march of time. Some generalities or some specializations, which were valid and useful till yesterday, are increasingly losing their relevance, and we are proceeding towards the future where a peculiar combination of wide comprehensiveness and effective specialization will become imperative, and they will have to be fused together.

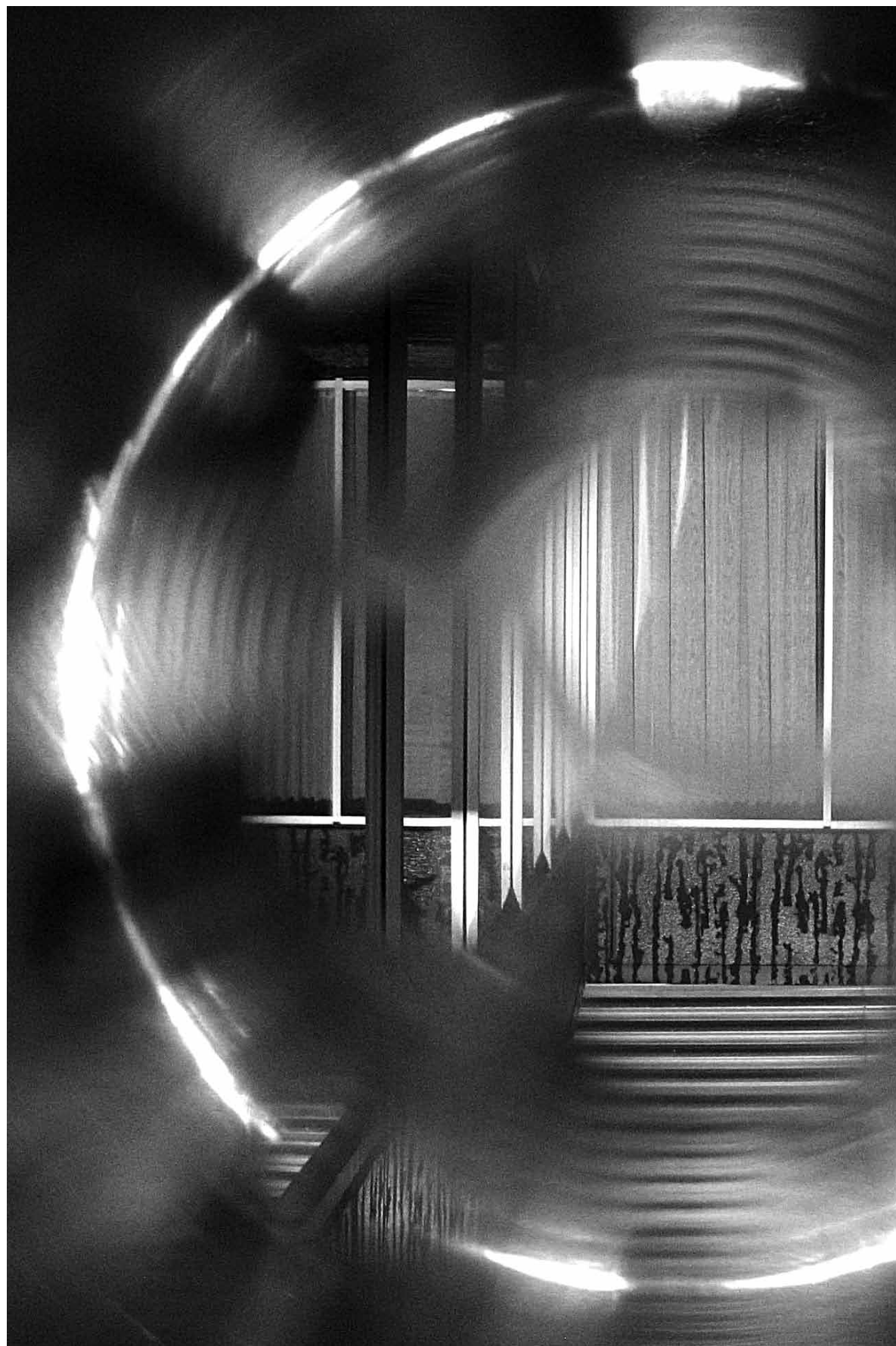
This need is further reinforced by the crisis of which we hear so insistently. This crisis seems to have arisen from the fact that while the human mind has achieved an enormous development in certain directions, in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of external life has been raised up. This structure is increasingly becoming so huge and complex that it cannot be managed by our limited capacities.

The system of civilization created by man has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilize and manage. While the external man has grown, the internal man remains neglected.

## Integration and perfection

The resulting crisis demands the development of the inner man and organized integration of the internal and external man. If education has to become an instrument of meeting this crisis, its aim should be to cultivate, sharpen and transform the faculties and powers of personality leading towards their increasing integration and perfection. It is against this background that the contemporary teacher finds himself under a growing pressure to enlarge his functions and to prepare for an increasingly difficult role.







## Educational Objectives and the Contemporary Teacher

The pursuit of man to know himself and the universe

In order to understand the meaning and significance of the role that the contemporary teacher is called upon to play, we need to clarify the fundamentals of education as well as the perennial and emerging objectives of education. There are three fundamental ideas underlying the educational process.

There is, first, the pursuit of man to know himself and the universe and to relate himself with the universe as effectively as possible. This pursuit constitutes the very theme of human culture, and education derives its fundamental thrust from the cultural setting at a given point of time. Secondly, there is a process of transmission of the accumulated results of the past to the growing generation so as to enable it to carry forward the cultural heritage and to build the gates and paths of the future. Thirdly, there is in the process of transmission a deliberate attempt to accelerate as far as possible the process of human progress.

Accelerating the process of human progress

These three premises provide us with the basic indications of what may be called the perennial objectives of education. Being at once a product and instrument of culture, education must promote the highest aims of culture, and, in particular, it must encourage and foster the quest for the knowledge of man and the universe, as well as the arts and sciences and of their inter-relationship. Secondly, education should aim at building new bridges between the past and the future. Thirdly, education should endeavour to discover and apply increasingly efficient means of the right rhythms of acceleration of human progress.

There are, in every age and every important phase of transition, certain special objectives relevant to certain special needs. There are at least three emerging objectives, namely, education for peace, education for development, and education for the integral growth of personality.

Strengthen  
the forces of  
understanding,  
harmony and  
peace

International  
dimension  
and a global  
perspective

## Education for Peace

An elementary condition in which man finds himself in his relations with fellow-beings and the world is that of a struggle for existence. This struggle is often portrayed as a battle between the creature and Nature. While we may not belittle the role played by the sense of battle and conquest that seem inherent in certain stages of human endeavour, we observe that as man becomes increasingly self-conscious, an irresistible tendency grows in him to learn the laws of harmony between himself and the universe.

In recent times, a new dimension has been added because of the increasing world tensions which have reached such a high pitch that human survival itself has become endangered. This has led to the realization of an *imperative* need of directing our efforts to generate and strengthen forces of understanding, harmony and peace.

Peace is sometimes conceived negatively to mean mere absence of war. But peace is fundamentally a positive concept, and while in the highest sense it refers to 'peace that passeth understanding', it is, in the context of dynamism, the stable foundation of all harmonious activities. Peace is a positive striving, and in the present condition of the world, this striving implies a rigorous pursuit of international understanding and cooperation. In the field of education, this implies an international dimension and a global perspective at all levels and in all its forms. It also implies understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, civilizations, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic culture and cultures of other nations. At a deeper level we should mean by international understanding not merely knowledge of other countries' cultures and peoples, but also a responsible commitment to the idea and practice of the Family of Man.



### Discovery of inner identity and universality of man

In other words, international understanding should mean a commitment to that mode of consciousness in which mutual dependence of each upon all and of all upon each is indispensable.

Indeed, international understanding does not emerge merely from exchange of ideas but it emanates fundamentally from an increasing exploration of man within himself and from a discovery of the inner identity and universality of man. A divided man is not only at war with himself but also at war with others. It is largely man's ignorance of himself and his own incapacities which condemn him to respond to outside influences which engender divisions, tensions and discords.

Finally, it is man's failure to discover any durable meaning or aim of life that reduces him to become a plaything of the forces of degeneration, decay and destruction. An integrated man, in possession of himself and set in dynamic search of knowledge and power, in service of the highest conceivable aim of life, can effortlessly become a potent instrument of harmonious relationships and of peace. It follows, therefore, that the promotion of education and training so as to multiply human beings of this kind is evidently one of the most important objectives that the contemporary teacher is called upon to promote.

### The ideal of human unity

We may go even further. Today the ideal of human unity is more or less vaguely making its way to the front of our consciousness, and the increasing advocacy of world peace is preparing a firm foundation for the realization of this ideal. The intellectual and material circumstances of the age have prepared and almost imposed this ideal, especially the scientific discoveries which have made our earth so small, that its vastest kingdoms seem now no more than the provinces of a single country.

### Search for the unification of mankind

It is necessary to remember that when material circumstances favour a great change but the heart and mind of the race are not really ready, failure may be predicted. Indeed, this failure can be prevented if men become wise in time and accept the inner change along with external readjustment. It is here that education can play a crucial role, since it is through education that the heart and mind of the race can most effectively be made ready for the needed change.

If we examine closely, we shall find that the growing search for the unification of mankind reveals one basic tension. This tension results from two opposing but equally powerful tendencies; the one towards uniformity, and the other towards unity. The two seem similar to each other and yet they engender such dissimilar consequences that it becomes necessary to recognize the dangers of the one and the difficulties of the other, and to conceive or design appropriate lines of action. In doing so, care should be taken to recognize the needs and truths of the collective life of mankind.

### Unity in diversity is preferable to uniformity

Uniformity, if led to its logical extreme, would impose not only the rule of one language, but also the overpowering dominion of one aspect of culture. Unity, on the other hand, would permit differences and differentiations which pose difficulties of separateness and psychological tensions. Yet, unity in diversity is preferable to uniformity; for while the problems arising out of uniformity seem to demand an unacceptable solution which would imprison for ever the freedom of the human spirit, the problems arising out of the drive towards unity seem capable of a solution, which requires difficult but attainable cultivation of the deeper and higher faculties of personality. The task before us is to prepare men and women in such a way that the preferred ideal of unity can be realized without the avoidable pains of conflicts and tensions.

Man's pace of progress has grown manifold

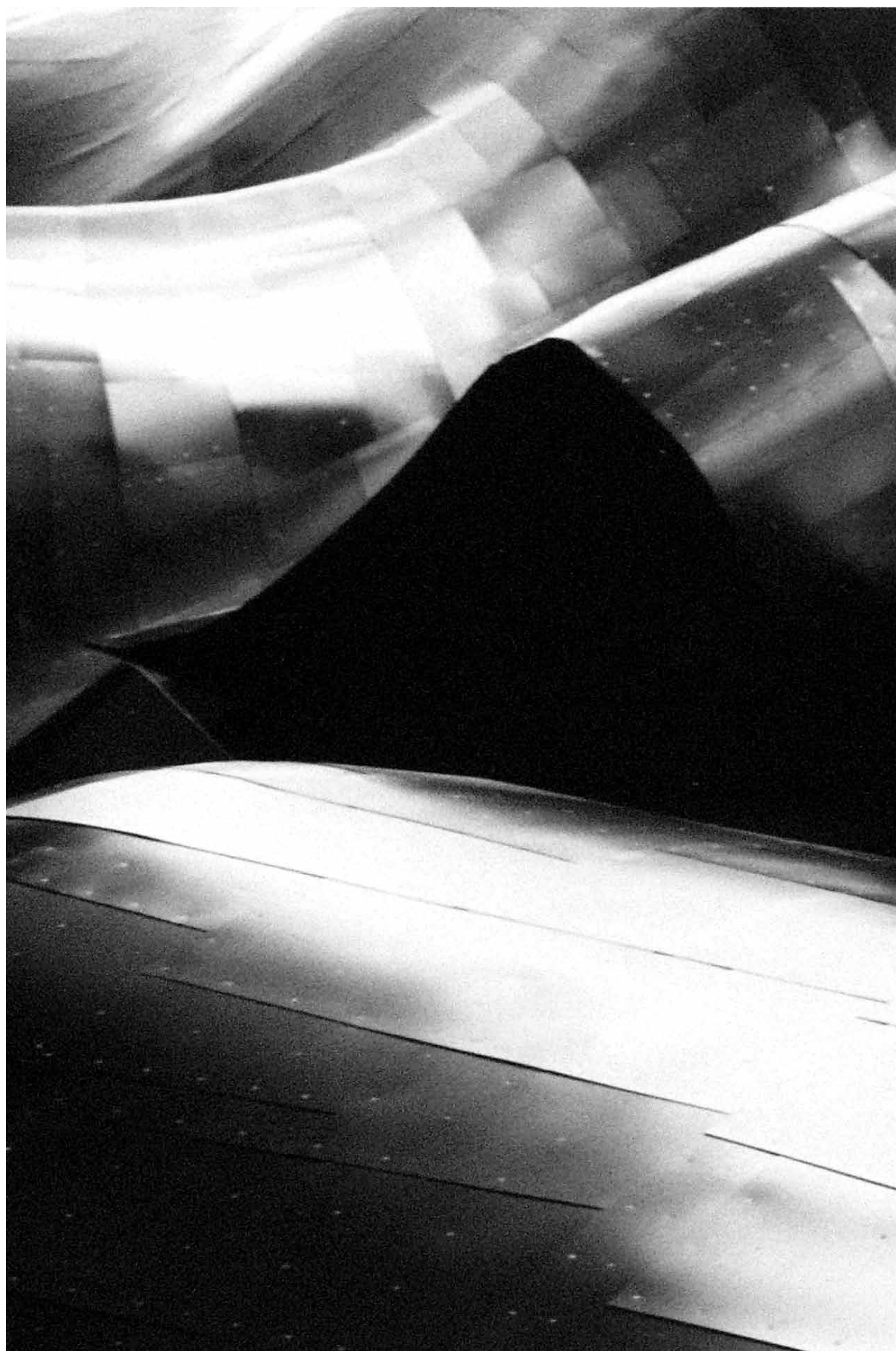
## Education for Development

Man's increasing capacity to change or determine the conditions of his life, has been responsible for his continuous progress and his thrust towards the future. To develop this capacity has been one of the perennial objectives of education. Since the industrial revolution, and increasingly since subsequent revolutions however, man's pace of progress has grown manifold, and his thrust towards the future has become more persistent and more deliberate. It is in this context that education for progress and development has emerged as one of the major objectives of education.

Productivity and social justice

Development is an ambiguous concept and needs to be clarified. Development may sometimes come to be identified with the growth of excessive consumption, competition and self-assertiveness. To the rationalistic and idealistic mind, this concept is decidedly negative. A more acceptable concept of development involves two ingredients: productivity and social justice. In recent times, the insistence on social justice has grown and it is even felt that social justice must precede economic growth. Again, social justice can be conceived in terms of several alternative frameworks of economy and polity, although the increasing tendency today is to combine democracy and socialism and to aim at the synthesis of liberty, equality and fraternity.

What exactly should combining democracy and socialism mean? Democracy should mean not any particular form of economic or political framework but the freedom of the individual to grow towards his self-perfection by means of self-determination. Similarly, socialism should mean not the deification of the state but a cultivated awareness of collectivity and a voluntary subordination of the individual to the needs and decisions of the collective as an integral part of the process of individual and collective perfection.



### Inter-relationship between individuality and collectivity

In other words, when we speak of democratic socialism, we should mean a state of existence where collectivity respects the freedom of the individual in his pursuit of perfection, and where the individual freely sacrifices his narrow interests and his egoism in the interests of the development of the collectivity.

Development ought to aim at the growth of this kind of inter-relationship between the individual and collectivity. But even this is not enough. Development needs the promotion of science and technology. Fortunately today, science and technology have reached amazing heights of achievement; but in order that the pace of progress is enhanced, there must be a positive encouragement to the development of scientific temper and to the right use of scientific and technological knowledge in solving both our economic and cultural problems. This encouragement can best be expected from the teacher, and this is what is rightly expected from the contemporary teacher.

### Development of scientific temper

The development of scientific temper often remains confined to the cultivation of a mere attitude of questioning. But there are four important ingredients of scientific temper and all of them need to be developed as adequately as possible. These are: impartial observation, untiring experimentation, unprejudiced consideration of every point of view relevant to the enquiry; and courage to go to the end of the enquiry until the ascertainable truth emerges, through a process of verification and utmost possible synthesis of arguments and counter-arguments.

The development of a robust but refined scientific brain is an undeniable necessity. By implication, it follows that the contemporary teacher is required to endeavour to embody in himself the ideal modes of scientific thinking and to practise scientific method in his quest for knowledge.



## Science is a creative activity


Sometimes a sharp contrast is drawn between creativity and scientific attitude. Often this contrast is portrayed to show a conflict between art and science; but if we look into the problem closely, we shall find that this conflict is imaginary rather than real. As a matter of fact, science itself can be conceived as a creative activity. For creativity is, in its essence, an outpouring expression of curiosity or urge that issues from an intimate experience or from some achieved fullness or irresistible need for fullness.

In this light, science, no less than art, is a creative expression, and even when the scientific method insists on an austere and colourless adherence to facts, the rigorous discipline of science can be sustained only by the creative impulse. Also, we cannot forget to note that the framing of hypothesis, which is a part of the process of scientific induction, requires a fertile but rigorous imagination on the part of the scientist. We may also note that adherence to facts is itself an act of disciplined creativity, since, in order to arrive at facts, the scientist needs to pierce through the veil of appearances.

## Transforming education into a creative experience

It must be admitted that artistic creativity is a neglected area and a great effort is needed to promote, in particular, the value of art. It is also time that teachers are asked to evolve ways and means by which the educational process is transformed into creative experience. This is particularly necessary when we speak of weaving culture into education. It is necessary for our educational system to provide opportunities and conditions under which the faculties of imagination, adventure, profound sensitivity, colourful and rhythmic expression can grow and blossom. We have been neglecting literature and poetry, painting and music, dance and drama. The minimum that is necessary, and which should find a legitimate place in any scheme of education is the *appreciation of art*.





### The romance of learning and joy of creativity

### The highest conceivable principles and values

It needs to be underlined that one cannot appreciate art unless one has practised one's own discipline as a creative activity or practised some art, at least, as an amateur.

Mere information on creativity is not enough. What is basically required is some *direct experience* of painting or music or dance or drama or architecture or poetry. It has been said, and quite rightly, that cultural experience grows and develops under the sense of leisure. But our educational programmes are not designed with a view to permit the required interweaving of leisure with activities of rigorous and disciplined studies.

It is for this reason that it has been contended that our educational system has succeeded in exiling the romance of learning and the joy of creativity from the portals of learning.


It is high time that this situation is reversed, and once again the major responsibility for this comes to be fixed on the contemporary teacher.

Development also needs to be related to the highest conceivable principles and values. These belong to realms which are not necessarily visible physically but are approachable more easily through the mind and spirit. If we examine this domain closely, it becomes clear that we need a new programme of research.

If this research is encouraged, we might not only discover new and rich contents of the ethical and spiritual domains but we might also open up a new domain where the modern trends of science can meet and converge on the ancient and nascent knowledge of the secrets of spiritual perfection.

Here, again, we make a very heavy demand on the contemporary teacher.





Personality  
and character

There is a  
double element  
in everyone

## Education for Integral Personality

There are various notions of what constitutes personality. Sometimes a distinction is made between personality and character. In one view personality is regarded as a fixed structure of recognizable qualities expressing a power of being and individuality. According to another idea, while personality is a flux of self-expressive or sensitive and responsive being, character is the formed fixity of a pattern or structure of qualities.

If we examine the matter closely, we find that there is in every one a double element—the unformed though limited flux of being, out of which personality is fashioned and the personal formation out of that flux. The formation may become rigid and ossify or it may remain sufficiently plastic and change constantly and develop.

For a proper definition of personality, we should take into account not only this flux and fixity but also a third element—the individual or person of whom the personality is a self-expression. This individual is sometimes conceived as the ego; but ego, when examined critically, reveals itself as a finite looking at itself as self-existent and yet unstable in its status and its movement—a self-contradiction.

According to certain dominant trends of Indian thought, there is a distinction between the ego and the individual. The egoistic personality is, according to this thought, a personality that is at war with itself. The true individual is harmonious, admits his dependence upon the whole and lives in and through relations of mutuality and harmony. It is the discovery and development of this individual that is relevant to the integration of personality.

### Three major aims of life

It has been suggested quite rightly that the most important exercise that is directly relevant to the growth of integral personality is to examine life and to discover the highest possible aim of life.

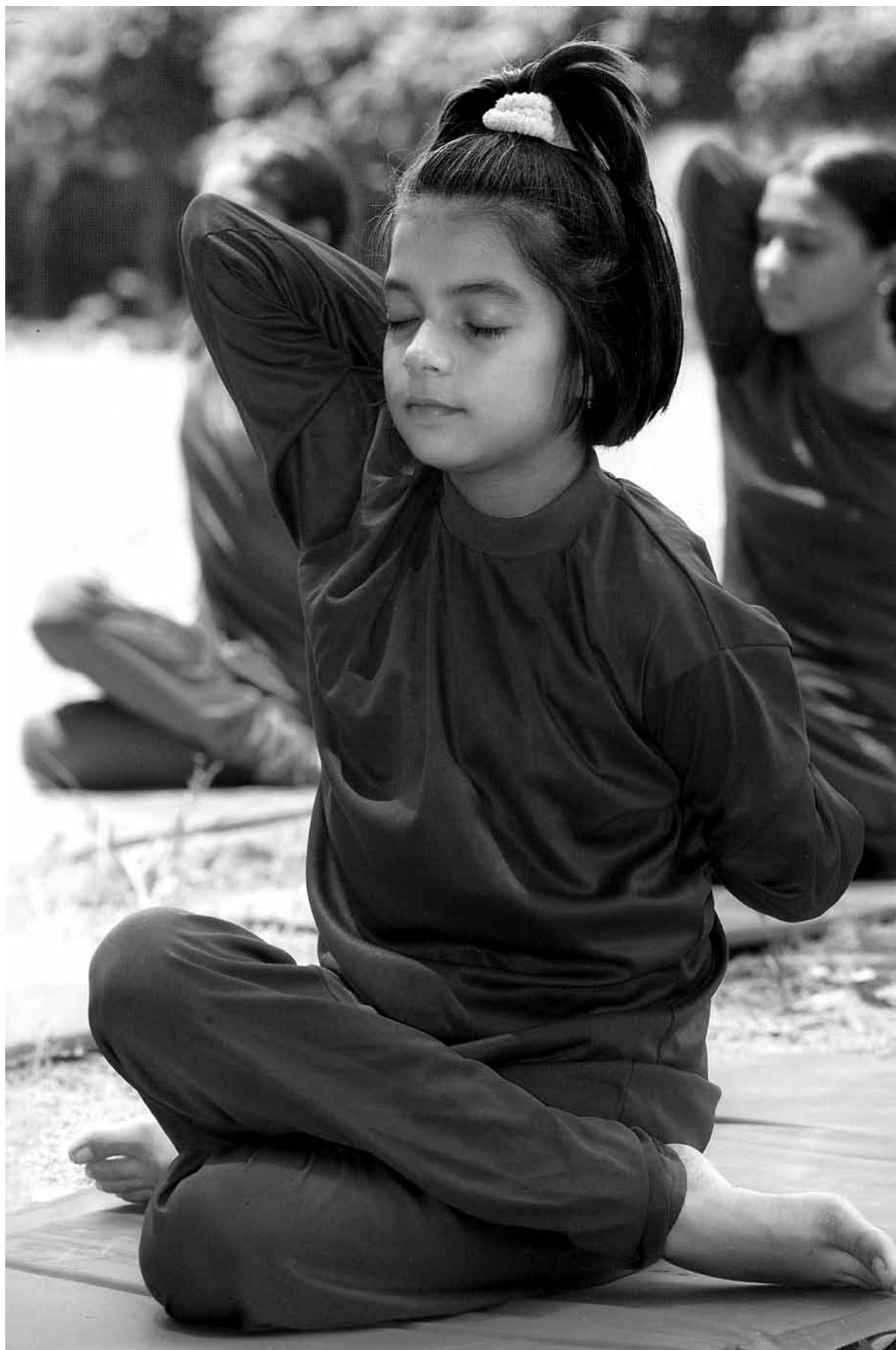
Historically, there have been three major aims of life. There is a view, first, that the aim of life is to prepare oneself for a life in another world, which is sometimes conceived as heaven or paradise.

According to the second view, the aim of life is to seek liberation not only from the physical world but also from any possible worldly existence—physical or supra-physical.

According to the third view, the cosmos or physical universe is the only reality or is the only reality that we can know, and therefore to do the utmost that one can in the physical world, to improve its condition and to improve man's happiness or well-being or perfection in the physical world, is the highest conceivable aim of life. This view has, again, several varieties such as materialistic, vitalistic, pragmatic and idealistic.

It is easy to refrain from entering into the domain of discussion as to which of these aims of life is valid or invalid. It is also easy to affirm one view or the other with some kind of exclusiveness; but confronted with various alternatives, the human mind cannot remain satisfied unless it investigates the conflicting views and arrives at a conclusion or at some kind of synthesis.

This investigation, if encouraged and promoted rightly and imaginatively throughout the educational process, would go a long way in helping students to develop their personality and to progressively achieve inner and outer harmony and integration.



Promote  
knowledge,  
power,  
harmony  
and skill

It has been suggested, again, quite rightly, that the development of the integral personality will depend upon a simultaneous development of as many powers and faculties of human personality as can possibly be rightly balanced in each individual. A right balance of the development of body, heart and mind by means of the cultivation of faculties that promote knowledge, power, harmony and skill is the right condition of the integral development of personality. It has been pointed out that if the basic powers of personality are rightly balanced throughout the process of development, and if a healthy equilibrium of these powers is upheld progressively, then we can ensure a healthy development of an integral personality. There is here a clear recognition that this implies a life-long process of development, but it is underlined that it must begin right from the beginning, and that life-long education is a natural corollary of the idea of the development of integral personality.

Value-oriented  
education is  
necessary for  
integral growth

A progressive development of various parts of the being, physical, vital, rational, aesthetic, moral and spiritual, is a necessary condition of integral growth. And the development of faculties and capacities of these various parts of the being is closely connected with the question of value-oriented education, for values are the ultimate ends that personality seeks to embody, express and fulfill.

Corresponding to each capacity there are specific values. For instance, corresponding to our physical capacities, there are values of health, strength, plasticity, grace and beauty. Corresponding to our rational capacities, there are values of truth, clarity, subtlety, complexity, impartiality and globality. Corresponding to the capacities of moral will, there are over-arching values of the good and the right. Corresponding to our aesthetic capacities, there are values of beauty and joy. And corresponding to our spiritual capacities, there are values of absoluteness and perfection.



### Involvement of the total being of the teacher and the learner

The psychological co-relation between the capacities of personality and their corresponding values is often obscured by attempts that confine values exclusively to the domain of morality or by attempts to derive values and morality from a particular religion. It is true that religions prescribe values and very often they have well-knit codes of moral conduct. However, values are at the same time, so to say, autonomous and are found to be the highest expressions of our psychological fulfillment. They can and do stand apart and are independent of any *particular* code of conduct or any *particular* system. In education, we should promote values in their psychological aspect as a part of the development of personality.

The role that emerges for the teacher in relation to this objective of the integral development of personality is perhaps most exacting. This role demands from the teacher subtler dimensions. What is needed here is the *involvement of the total being of the teacher and the learner in the learning process*. The question here is not merely to deal with subjects and books but also with faculties and capacities, with their growth and their harmony, and with the combined power of concentration and will that need to be developed in various parts and aspects of the growing being.

The teacher will need to have not only a high degree of proficiency in his own subject or discipline, but he will also need to arrive, as rapidly as possible, at a considerable maturity of the growth of his own personality, and *he will need to look upon his work of teaching as a part of the discipline required for the development of his own personality*. It is only when the teacher grows in his own personality that he can contribute to fashioning of the personality of learners.





## The Role of the Contemporary Teacher

Harmonious  
blending of  
knowledge  
skills, power,  
and love

It will now be clear that the role of the contemporary teacher has essentially to do with something which is exceptionally subtle and complex. The role of the teacher has always been basically psychological in character, but the dimensions that come to the view of the contemporary teacher are much more difficult to deal with. It may be said that the role of the teacher is not merely to promote the quest of the knowledge of man and the universe, and the sciences and arts and their inter-relationships. It is not also merely to build bridges between the past and the future. These tasks are indeed important and they are entailed by the perennial objectives of education. But what is so new and so imperatively pressing is that the role of the contemporary teacher is getting increasingly focused on the theme of changing human nature and that too on an integral scale. In brief, what we are demanding from the contemporary teacher is to inspire a change in the impulses of the pupil's growing personality so as to foster harmonious blending of knowledge, power, love and skills that are relevant to the promotion of peace, co-operation and integrality.

In order to bring out the implications of this role, we need to analyse those assumptions of the teaching-learning process which are directly related to deeper psychological dimensions and operations.

We shall refer to three most important assumptions. The first assumption is that the teaching must be relevant to the needs of the learner. The needs of the learner are varied and complex. There are needs that are felt and real needs which are not yet felt. There are needs of individual growth, and needs resulting from the social reality of which the learner is a part and in the context of which the learner will be called upon to work and produce results, so that the wheels of social progress are kept in motion.



There is also a process of the growth of needs, some of which develop spontaneously and harmoniously, while some others are induced, not infrequently, by artificial means resulting in temporary or permanent injury to both the learner and society.

How to deal with this complex domain of the learner's needs is one of the first tasks of the teacher. No rules can be laid down or prescribed, for this domain demands of the teacher a good deal of observation of the learners, a sound and sympathetic knowledge of psychology, and practical insight and tact. The task is at once easy and difficult depending upon the natural or acquired capacity of the teacher to relate contents and methods of learning to the felt needs of the learner. Much will also depend upon the facility with which the teacher is able to consult learner in his growth, and to enthuse him to make the necessary effort to bridge the gulf between what is *desired* and what is *desirable*.

The second assumption is that teaching should provide learning experience to the learner. Sometimes, the stress laid on learning experience is so exclusive that the role of teaching is reduced almost to a vanishing point. At the other extreme, the learning experience is conceived to be so overwhelmingly dependent upon teaching that the teaching-learning process is reduced to a process of spoon-feeding. These extreme positions, however, bring out the complexity and subtlety involved in the interaction between the teacher and the learner.

### Developing in the learner a sense of wonder

There is no doubt that the greater the preparedness and motivation of the learner, the greater will be the intensity of the learning experience. The minimum that is required of the learner is *curiosity*. But the teacher can play a major role in intensifying the initial curiosity and in developing in the learner a *sense of wonder* which is not only a great propeller of learning but also a constant flower and glow of learning.





### The art of learning to learn and learning to be

It is true that sincere dedication on the part of the learner is the golden key to learning, but here, again, the teacher can play a major role in kindling the innermost spirit of the learner which is the unfailing source of sincere dedication.

It is also necessary to note that every learner has certain innate reflexes, impulses, drives and tendencies, and the teacher can uplift them and help the learner in transmuting reflexes into organized perceptions and acts of behaviour, innate impulses and drives into wise and skilful pursuits of ends and means, and innate tendencies into a harmonious and integrated personality. In fact, it is this process of transmutation that is the heart of the learning experience, and it is this experience that gives to the learner, the art of learning to learn and learning to be.

### The teacher is an accelerator of human progress

The third assumption of teaching is that it accelerates the learning process. Here, again, the role of the teacher is complex and difficult. In general terms, it can be said that the teacher is an accelerator of human progress. But in his day-to-day work, the teacher realizes that different students or different categories of students have different rates of progress and that it would be unwise to impose the same degree of acceleration on all the students uniformly. To vary the rhythm of progress in accordance with the requirements of the learner is one of the most delicate tasks of the teacher.

More than ever, the role of the contemporary teacher will be *to uplift the knowledge and effort of the learner by suggestion, example and influence*. His task will be not to impose but to suggest and inspire. He will respect the psychological combination of the tendencies of the learners, and he will endeavour to improve them not by hurting or crushing the force of these tendencies but by refining them, by recombining them and by training them to achieve their maximum possible excellence.

### The ideal of sportsmanship

At the heart of his dealing with learners, the teacher will aim at leading them from near to far and from the known to the unknown, by providing them the required exercise of thought, imagination and experience. In so doing, the teacher will *share* his experiences with learners, and interweave his own development with their development.

The teacher will not underrate the importance of the development of any particular aspect of personality, for all aspects are important, and even when one is not competent in regard to any particular aspect of the totality of personality, there should not be an attitude of negligence or derogation towards that domain. There is, for instance, a tendency among many to look down upon physical education and to advocate the training of the mind in preference to the training of the body. In a balanced view, however, the training of both the mind and the body is necessary. A healthy mind in a healthy body is the ancient advice of the wise. A good teacher will always encourage learners to participate in a methodical and well-designed programme of physical education. It is true that sometimes, physical education is looked upon as a mere pastime and a matter of recreation rather than as a discipline closely related to the perfection of human personality. A good teacher will therefore promote the right concept of physical education and will lay a special emphasis on it so that learners are encouraged to develop health, strength, agility, grace and beauty by means of disciplined practice of any preferred system of physical education. A good teacher respects the ideal of sportsmanship and encourages the qualities that are associated with sportsmanship, such as courage, hardihood, initiative, steadiness of will, quick decision and action, good humour, self-control, fair play, equal acceptance of victory or defeat, loyal acceptance of the decisions of the referee, and habit of team work.





Honesty

Cleanliness

Creativity

Forgiveness



### Vibrate with children's aspirations

Development of personality and, particularly, the process of change and integration of personality, cannot truly or adequately be effected without the pursuit of values. For as we have noted earlier, corresponding to each faculty or capacity of personality there are values, and children, right from early stages, manifest their urge towards values through admiration and aspiration.

Very often educators do not recognize these manifestations, and, in due course, for want of encouragement and recognition, they become diminished and even begin to be wiped out. It is therefore very important that educators observe children deeply and sympathetically, feel themselves vibrate with children's aspirations and encourage them.

The most important quality that should be focused upon is *sincerity*; it is the one quality which, if rightly cultivated, will necessarily enable the child to realize whatever aim he comes to conceive and pursue in his life.

Around this central quality, we may conceive of certain groups of qualities that come into play at various stages of the psychological development of the child.

There is, for instance, the trinity of qualities of heroism, endurance and sacrifice, which are essential for the lasting victory of the good and the right.

There is also the trinity of cheerfulness, cooperation and gratitude, which are, we might say, the secret of all right relationships.

Another trinity of qualities is that of purity, patience and perseverance, which is indispensable in surmounting any weakness or limitation of our nature.

Finally, we may note the trinity of calm, profundity and intensity, which open the doors to an ever-progressive search for perfection.

## Development of the learner's free will

It is sometimes suggested that value-oriented education is relevant only to the primary and secondary stages, but not beyond. For, it is argued, that by the time children complete secondary education, they would have already formed their basic attitudes and traits of personality, and nothing more needs to be done specially in that direction at the higher levels of education. However, this argument misses the point that the important element in value-oriented development of personality is the development of the learner's free will and of his free and rational acceptance of the value-system and directions of the growth of personality. This development can rightly be done only at the higher level of education, when the learner has developed a will of his own to some extent and when he has basic intellectual, moral and aesthetic sensibilities enabling him to examine the basic values and aims of life.

## Intellectual, aesthetic and moral sensibilities

It is often asked if the role of the teacher includes anything more than teaching. At higher levels of education, it is universally recognized that the tasks of research and extension should also be included in the role of the teacher. At the school level, the task of extension is being gradually recognized, particularly with the realization of the close connection between education and development. In this context, the role of the teacher as community teacher must also be recognized. We might suggest that, while research as understood in the technical sense of the term, may not be included in the role of the school teacher, progressive updating of his knowledge and skill must be included.

The role of the teacher in the context of the goal of education for all, of life-long education and of the learning society needs to be emphasized. The teacher will reject the view that only a few should climb to the heights of knowledge, culture and development while the rest should remain forever on lower rungs of development.

## The learning society

Following the cry of the greatest leaders of mankind who have striven to regenerate the life of the earth, the teacher will help spread knowledge not merely for a *few* but for *all*, and he will emphasize the programmes of universalization of elementary education, of adult and continuing education, and indeed of the learning society.

Corresponding to the needs of multi-faceted development, the teacher will promote education in every sphere of developmental activity. He will also help in forging links between formal and non-formal education, and assist in a wide variety of educational programmes which can be made available to a growing number of students of all ages.

## Sovereignty of the child

The most significant symbol of learning is the child; and the learning society will acknowledge the sovereignty of the child.

It will hold the child in the centre of its attention, and will bestow upon it the supreme care that it needs. It will organize all activities in such a way that they become vehicles of the education of the child.

Just as the child always looks to the future, even so the learning society will constantly strive to build the paths of the future. Just as the child will grow increasingly into vigorous and dynamic youth, even so the learning society will continue to mature into unfading youth.

To actualize such a learning society is the responsibility of all thinking members of the society, but increasingly and progressively it may come to be regarded as the over-arching responsibility of the contemporary teacher.



## The Contemporary Teacher and Dynamic Methods of Teaching-Learning

The contemporary teacher will not be in a position to fulfill his role adequately unless educational methodology and contents of education begin to improve. The more these improve, the subtler will become our demands on the teacher.

The use of technologies might in due course reduce some burden of routine instructional work; but it will open up the possibilities of individualized learning-teaching processes.

The teacher will begin to be judged not only by the substance of what he will communicate and his power of stimulation, but also by what he is in his inner self, particularly whether he is capable of higher levels of reflection, whether he is impartial in his judgments, and whether he knows his subject from the standpoint of a wider spectrum of knowledge.

A stagnant system of education cannot tolerate a dynamic teacher; an irrelevant system of education cannot permit a teacher to make his teaching relevant to the needs of the learner or society; and a book-oriented, subject-oriented and examination-oriented system of education cannot provide the requisite opportunities to the teacher who wants to promote the objectives of peace, cooperation and integral personality.

Sooner, rather than later, the intricate problems of the teaching-learning process must receive central attention, and we shall then see that an important role of the teacher at the present juncture will be that of an innovator or inventor of dynamic methods.

Innovator  
or inventor  
of dynamic  
methods.



Students must  
be allowed free  
initiative

A principal method of teaching today is lecturing. There are merits and demerits of teaching by lecturing. Basically, the lecture system induces passivity among students. It is group-oriented and it does not easily yield to the needs of individual-oriented dynamic learning process. Moreover, the lecture system imposes a certain pattern of time-tables, which reduces the possibilities for teachers and students for individual-oriented learning. Also, the lecture system is suited only to one or two varieties of the group-oriented learning process. For instance, it is not very relevant when a group is engaged in a joint enterprise or a result-oriented activity; here, the project system is more relevant.

In the new design of education, the lecture system is not likely to play a pivotal role. It is now being increasingly realized that the student is best helped when he is allowed free initiative not only in regard to the choice of subjects or topics but also the pace of his progress. This is why self-learning is being advocated more and more insistently.

There are a number of problems connected with self-learning. First, self-learning needs to be supplemented by frequent or occasional help from teachers. It also needs to be supplemented by various kinds of group-activities. While the process of self-learning does not yield easily to prefixed time-tables, the need of help from teachers and the need of group-activities are more easily fulfilled by resorting to prefixed time-tables. Our perplexities are further accentuated when we consider the question of syllabus and its relationship with examinations.

A possible solution that has been suggested by some educationists is to emphasize a consultation system. In this system, lectures would play a subordinate role, and students would be expected to learn by themselves to the maximum degree possible. However, they would be allowed to *consult* teachers as and when needed, partly by prior engagement and partly by ready access.

## Learning is a multi-dimensional process

In this system, students would come to their classes not to listen to lectures but to do their own work. It is not difficult to arrange the facility of consultation with teachers in a dynamic situation where the classroom itself is organized not as a lecture room but as a workshop, where learning is conceived as a multi-dimensional process designed to promote concentrated study, skill-oriented activity, and creative imagination and expression.

The present system of education utilizes tests as a means of motivating students to learn. Tests are also often used as a threat or punishment. The fact that even a dull, mechanical mind can pass tests, and that too, with honours, is sufficient to pass a verdict against the present system of tests. Again, the fact that the most important aspects of culture lie beyond the scope of the present system of tests is sufficient to show that tests should occupy only a marginal place in the total scheme of education.

There are what may be called 'romantic' periods of study, and they occur to different students at different stages of development. These are periods of general expansion, of a passion for a given pre-occupation, of falling in love with education. These periods are unsuitable for tests.

On the other hand, there are periods when students need to clarify their vague ideas and systematize their thoughts, when oral or written tests can be very useful. There are also periods when there is dullness, indifference and inertia. Here tests for stimulation can be quite relevant. There are also periods of assimilation at the end of which there is a need to review in a coordinated manner different elements of study or work. Here tests for an extensive exposition would be quite relevant. There are also periods when the student is willing to undergo a rigorous programme of training, when even a series of difficult and strenuous tests would be perfectly justified.

### Tests can be inter-woven with dynamic learning

It is clear that tests have to be varied, and if the education system is suitably redesigned, it would be possible for teachers to give tests to students as and when necessary. Tests can be inter-woven with a dynamic process of learning, with such flexibility, that each individual would be free to take a test according to his progress.

All these tests can be classified under tests that are a part of the process of the formation of personality, distinct from those meant for certification. The latter should be public in character and should be designed to enable the examiner to assess as objectively and comprehensively as possible the comparative attainments of individuals, to determine their suitability for work and responsibility. These reflections show that the contemporary teacher is called upon to demand a radical change in the system of teaching-learning so he can employ dynamic methods.

### Self-regulated practical action

It is being increasingly recognized that one of the best methods of teaching is not to instruct the learner, but to present him with materials and an environment in which he can be stimulated to discover for himself what is intended to be learnt. In a model of the exploration project, teachers stimulate learners to make direct contact with the environment after defining the objectives of intended exploration. Learners determine the procedure, and the execution of the exploration is followed by an appraisal with reference to the objectives and personal processes of learning. A number of action projects which have been attempted include learning situations that are closely coupled with self-regulated practical action which demands competency of knowledge and skill. Special emphasis is laid on the achievement of a certain result that practical action is intended to entail. The learning experience is closely connected with the creation of learning situations and result-oriented practical action.

### Precisely defined goals of learning

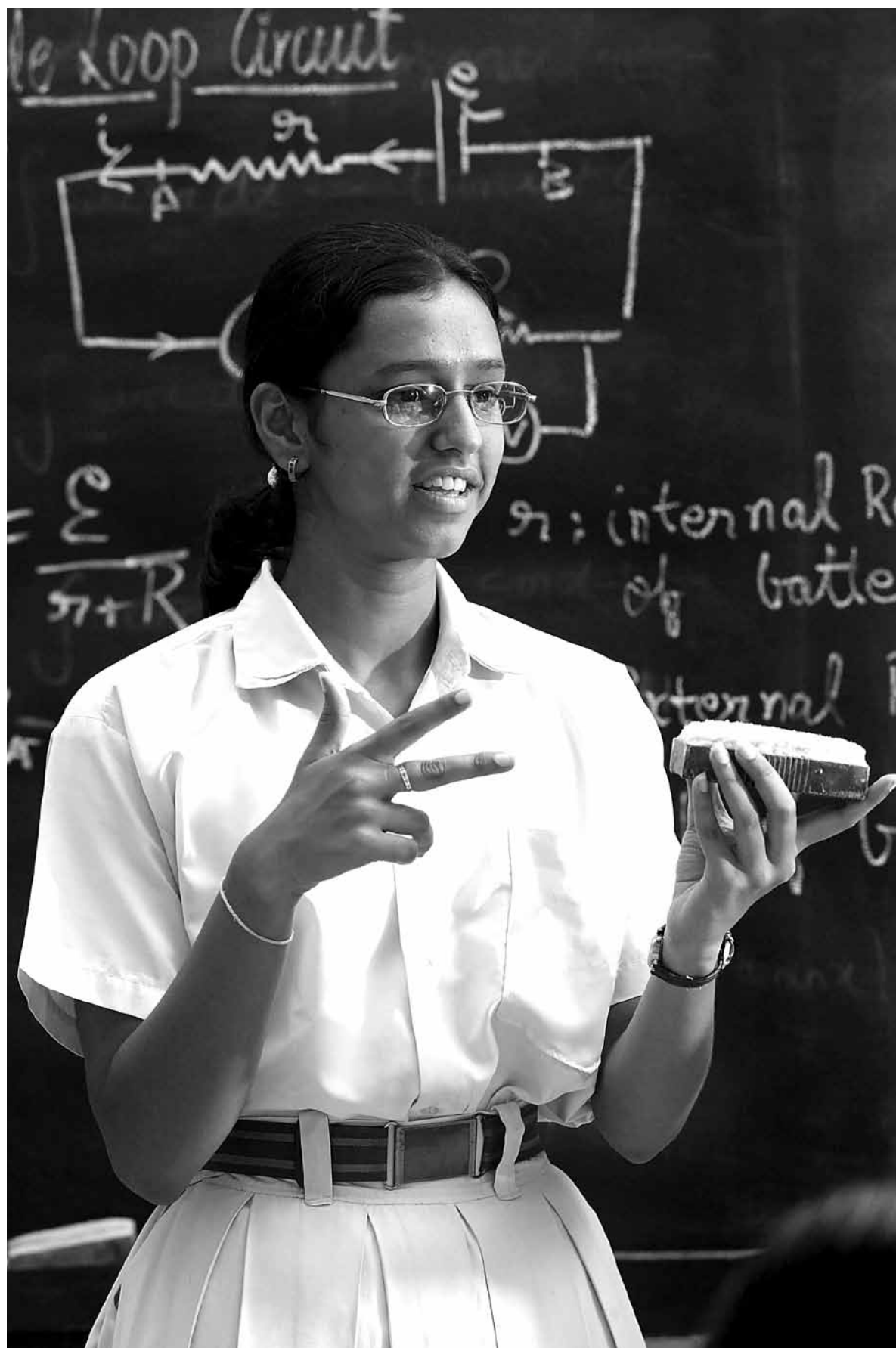
The individualized programmed instruction follows an instructional model which is designed to bring about effective communication on precisely defined goals of learning. This model makes extensive use of programmed teaching and learning materials, which are used for communicating cognitive stores of knowledge, particularly in spheres of learning in which linear sequences of steps of learning appear meaningful. At one stage it was felt that this model of instruction is relevant only to a certain section of students, but experiments have shown its direct relevance to multi-level single teacher institutions.

Although this model has its limitations, it can be used in many situations, particularly where the pace of progress requires to be varied according to the needs of different categories of students and where the active participation of the individual in the learning process needs to be emphasized.

In a slightly modified form of programmed learning, great use is made of work-sheets. A work-sheet is part of a learning module in which the contents of learning are presented in such a way that the learner is required to interact by way of filling in the blanks or correlating certain presented data or replying to some questions. Answers are often concealed in the data or in the questions themselves. Work-sheets can be of various types, depending upon the kind of learning experience that is intended to be evoked or gained.

### Stimulate learning by discovering

The most important among them are what are called 'heuristic work-sheets'. These work-sheets are intended to stimulate learning by discovering. The work-sheet system facilitates, to a great extent, multi-level teaching by a single teacher. It also facilitates 'unit' studies and unit testing. The learner is also helped in pursuing his studies at his own pace and to vary the syllabus to suit his own special interests.



### 'Info-bank' approach

In a more sophisticated approach, learners are enabled to make an adjustment between their interests in learning and their style of learning. They are also enabled to relate these to the learning environment. In the first phase, the learner has to decide on what he is interested in learning within a given framework and on the kind of cognitive approach to it. The second phase is governed principally by reading activities. In the third phase, the central feature is the appraisal of the knowledge acquired and, above all, the judgment of its significance. The area of applicability of this approach, which is sometimes called 'info-bank' approach, is defined by the necessary abilities of the learner to work on his own, and by the possibility of separating the categories of knowledge and processing them more intensively.

There are still several other trends of innovation in the teaching-learning process which the contemporary teacher can adopt. In a significant experimental model, the teacher constructs an educative environment, and learners receive an orientation over the possibilities of action and learning, following which they enter into mutual relations with the environment for a fairly long period. In the final phase, they actualize the possibilities of further development and moulding of this environment. This model has been employed in the fields of both elementary and higher education.

### Learning by teaching

Learning by teaching is another model, which is based on the principle of transferring to the learner all or some of the functions of a teacher, whereby to a certain extent, he acquires qualifications auto-instructionally. This model of 'pupils learning from pupils' is often found in operation in elementary and secondary schools, and good teachers everywhere have employed this model in varied contexts.

'Serious game'  
and 'simulation  
game'

In yet another instructional model, a number of locally dispersed learners learn from one another because they inform and consult one another mutually and unselfishly from time to time about individual problems relating to an area in which they have an interest. In this model, which is often known as the '*network*', every learner who joins this learning experience voluntarily, is under an obligation to operate the network through consultation, experimental testing and reporting back. This model is particularly relevant to the needs of non-formal learning.

In models called 'serious game' and 'simulation game', the learner takes over the roles of those responsible for the action and decision in simulated environments. Whilst in the serious game, the problems to be solved are frequently more complex and make the acquisition of external information necessary, the simulation game is largely restricted to information supplied in advance. These models are particularly suitable to those branches of learning in which the ability to act and to decide is to be taught.

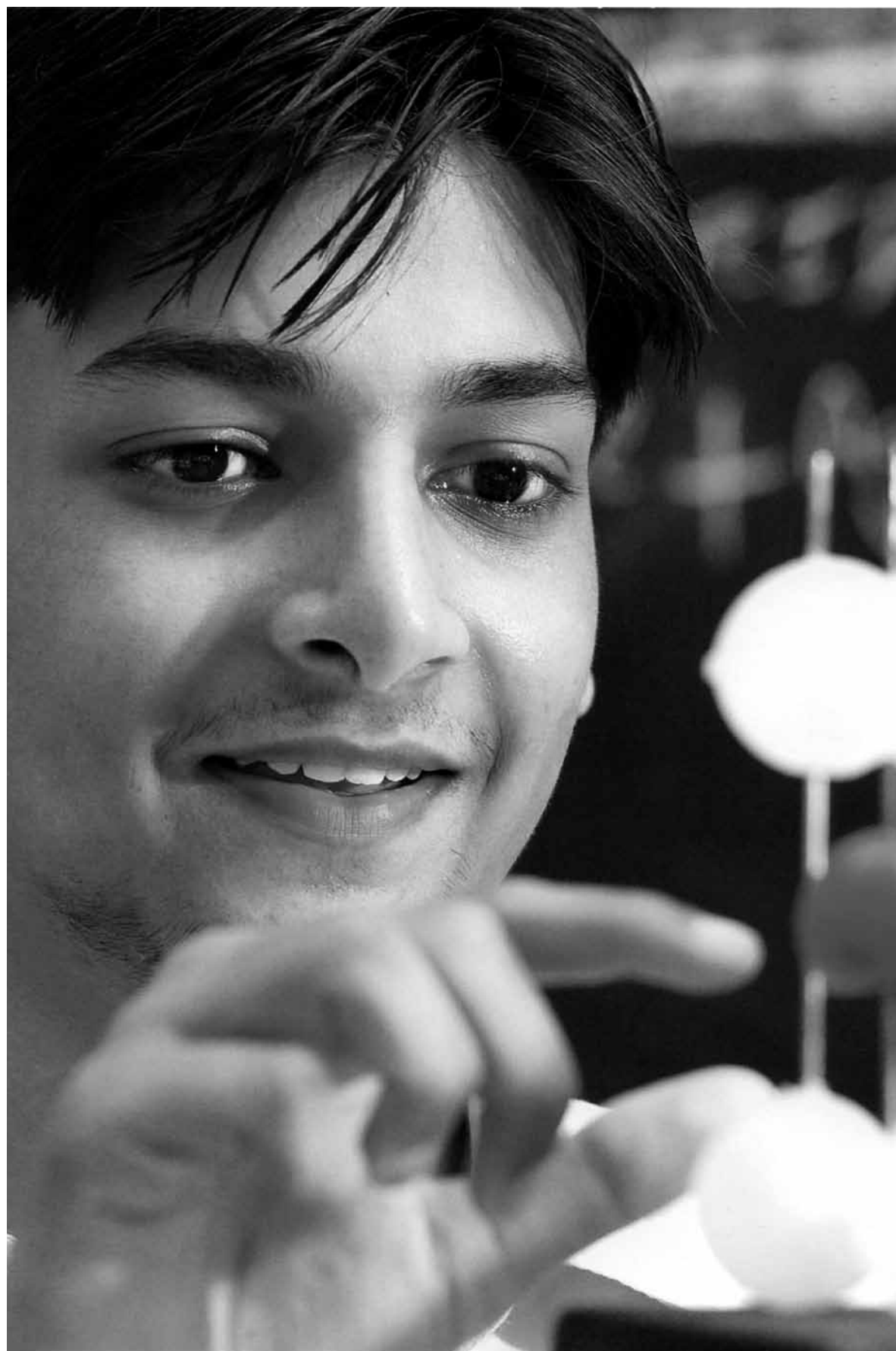
The dynamic methods of teaching are learner-oriented, and special emphasis is laid on the learner's needs and pace of progress. The old ideas where the learner was regarded as a plastic material to be moulded according to the teacher's or parent's design are fast disappearing, and we are moving into a new age of education where students and teachers will increasingly share their roles.

Discard the  
obsolete and  
invent the new

The present is a difficult moment of transition, where the teacher is called upon to discard the obsolete and invent the new. He needs a framework in which he can experiment with dynamic methods and evolve a progressive system of teaching-learning.







## A Model Framework of Teaching-Learning for the Contemporary Teacher

### Experimental model for innovation

There is a conceivable and realizable model framework of education, which is both flexible and stable, and which would meet the varied contemporary needs that are imperatively demanded.

If we want education for peace and education for development; if we want our students to have not only intellectual development but an integral development of personality; if we want to underline the value of physical education and manual labour as also that of the moral and spiritual austerity and discipline; and if we want each student to discover his own inner law of development and real vocation of life; if we want these things, then we need to have a framework of education that is quite different from the one that we have at present.

It is not intended to present here a model of the required framework as the model, but as a tentative and experimental model that could be utilized, with necessary modifications, for innovative experiments.

### The art of self-learning

The new model will be so flexible that it can accommodate or adjust itself with the various programmes of education of varying durations. In particular, this model will aim at providing the necessary structure and organization so as to permit the art of self-learning and integral development of personality as well as various combinations of programmes of agricultural, technical, vocational, artistic and academic education.

It will also facilitate the creation of the atmosphere and stimulation needed for dynamic methods. Besides, it will also meet the needs of multipoint entry system, non-formal education, part-time education, and of weaving the examination system into the learning process itself.

## **I. Grouping of Students**

For each major stage of studies (lower primary, higher primary, etc.) there could normally be sections or groups of about 100 students. The differences of levels of capacities should not count very much in the formation of these large groupings, which would be valid and useful for those areas of studies which yield easily to cooperative work, mass media or to the means of environmental influence.

These would include works of productive labour, large portions of language-learning, as well as introductory or panoramic portions of a number of subjects where demonstrations, exhibitions or stimulating and interesting lectures are suitable means of communication. These would also be relevant to what may be regarded as peripheral areas of studies, where the imparting of general information is intended. Areas of general explanations, general knowledge and general instructions are also appropriate to these large groupings.

In the general working of the organization, it is better not to have any fixed time-table for the work of these large groupings; or if it is found necessary for some reason to have a regular fixed timing, it is better not to have it for the main work but confine it to what may be termed 'time for supplementary work.'

In any case, the fixed timings of various programmes of education should be so arranged that the hours of fresh study and labour which can be done by individual self-learning are not affected in any way. (The major portion of the daily work should be available to the students for their individual self-learning.)

For purposes of individual self-learning, there will be no groupings since each individual will be free to choose his own area of work and pursue it at his own pace.

(A) Each teacher will have a number of students who will come to him more or less regularly for consultation on the subject of his competence. These students would, in a sense, constitute a kind of a natural group for the teacher. For, although these students will mostly come individually for consultations, they might also come in the form of a group from time to time.

(B) There will be, however, another kind of grouping or break-up of the large group, depending upon the mode of learning that a given topic imposes or upon the mode of learning chosen by the student. There are topics or areas which need to be pursued regularly, systematically, step by step, with rigour, measure and regulated or accelerated speed. Those who choose such topics or such a mode of learning will form a kind of group, even though each student may do his work mostly by himself. There are other areas or topics, which may permit a leisurely and free pursuit. Those who choose such topics or such a mode of learning will form another group. These groupings will, however, not be tight and inflexible. The same student may belong to one group for a few topics and to another group for other topics; or, with regard to the same topic, he may offer to do both these kinds of work appropriate to both these groups. Thus, he will belong to both the groups.

It may be noted that the groupings mentioned above under (A) and (B) will be, more or less, temporary, meant for some specific purpose or project and therefore dissoluble with the purpose in view. These groups will normally tend to be homogeneous from the point of view of capacities, or interests, but there will be no rigidity in this respect. They will often need to have group classes, and sometimes, even a fixed time-table for short or long periods. Normally, time-tables should be fixed for a month or two, renewable for a longer period, if necessary.

### Transmitters of enthusiasm, dedication and devotion

Individual consultations with teachers will also tend towards prior fixation of timings for each student. There are obvious advantages in this, but care should be taken that teachers always keep one or two hours unfixed daily, so that students have the opportunity to come to them without any prior engagement.


From time to time, there emerge spontaneously, extremely small groups of students who have common feelings and high aspirations, some common character or trait of personality, even though they may differ in capacities. Their homogeneity is by virtue of character or personality rather than capacities. Such groups are very valuable. They should be recognized, and given all the help needed, individually or collectively. Such groups become, if properly encouraged, transmitters of enthusiasm, dedication and devotion to studies, work and ideals. In regard to this system of grouping, there are three obvious advantages:

- There has recently been a strong plea for multi-point entry system, particularly in relation the solution suggested for implementation of the programme for the universalization of elementary education. This idea is extremely valuable as it will provide a favourable setting for 'unit' studies and a new system of tests can easily operate in the proposed structure and become a part of the natural rhythm of the process of learning.
- It would be possible in this flexible organization to ensure facilities for individual attention which is indispensable, particularly in the field of moral and spiritual education.
- Works of productive labour can flourish in this setting with a naturalness that is so essential to the joy of work. These works need not be given as tasks. Students can be encouraged by means of nourishment of interests, environmental needs and influences, and through hobbies. Even specialization of vocational training can be initiated at early stages. General education, diversification of courses and vocationalization—all can blend harmoniously.









Inspire more  
than instruct

Awakening  
inner will  
to progress

## II. Teachers

The role of teachers in this new organization is crucial.

1. The teachers should not only have competence with regard to their subjects but also the necessary spirit and zeal. The teacher's main occupation will be to observe his students, their inclinations and capacities, so as to be able to help them with deep sympathy and understanding. The teacher will not be a mere lecturer—rather he will be an animator. He will inspire much more than instruct; he will guide by example and influence.

To aid students in awakening inner will to grow and progress—this will be the constant endeavour of teachers.

To evolve a programme of education for each student in accordance with the needs of his growth; to watch the students with deep sympathy, understanding and patience, ready to intervene and guide when necessary; to stimulate the students with interesting projects and programmes, striking words, ideas, questions and stories—this will be the main work of teachers.

To radiate an inner calm and a cheerful dynamism so as to create an atmosphere conducive to the development of the higher faculties of inner knowledge and intuition—that will be regarded as the very heart of the work of teachers.

2. In the initial stages, students will need to learn how to organize their freedom; teachers should, therefore, help students in this regard.
3. For every unit of 100 students, there should be a coordinator or a 'First Teacher' whose functions will be as follows:
  - He will be available to students for guidance in organizing their work and in learning the art of self-learning as well as other ways of learning.

### Work as a brother among brothers

- He may, by personal contact, provide motivation to the students for various works, topics or subjects, according to the needs and circumstances.
  - He will ensure that all the material needs of studies and work are provided for.
  - He will keep an overall record of the work of every student in the unit, and he will see that the students get the necessary guidance from him or from the other teachers, or else from the environment.
  - He will also ensure that the entire organization runs smoothly and harmoniously.
  - He will work as a brother among brothers and will consult all concerned before arriving at decisions; and
  - He will also give the necessary help in framing time-tables, particularly, in view of the fact that, since there will be no time-tables fixed in advance for the whole year, there will be need to frame *ad hoc* time-tables for short or long durations in consultation with students and teachers for various subjects and for various purposes.
4. In addition to the First Teachers, it seems practicable that, for each major subject, a full-time competent teacher could take charge of about 30-40 students. (This number may vary according to the special needs of a given subject and also the age and capacity of the students).
- These teachers may form themselves into a small committee to help the Coordinator, and maintain a personal contact with the students in the Unit.
5. Problems of irregularity, indiscipline and misuse of facilities will primarily be dealt with by the Coordinator and his Committee. Some of the best students of the Unit may be nominated to this Committee.
6. All administrative problems should be handled carefully so that all points of view are given their due weight, and decisions emerge out of consultations.

Self-control  
and utmost  
inner discipline.

7. All work should be carried out by utmost goodwill and cooperative action, rather than by any arbitrary authority.
8. There should be no place for gossip, politics, canvassing, maneuvering, ugliness and untidiness. There should be an atmosphere of self-control and utmost inner discipline.
9. A full-fledged working of this model will pre-suppose new educational material in the form of booklets, work-sheets, charts, maps, pictures, albums, tapes, slides, film-strips, magazines, journals, exhibits, tools, equipment and apparatus. New curricula and syllabi will have to be worked out, particularly in regard to interdisciplinary studies and interweaving of work and knowledge. Teachers will have to make their own contribution in these tasks.
10. The very disposition and arrangement of the classes would be such that the students will have facilities to work on their own and to consult the teachers according to the needs of their progress.

Teachers, instead of being at the head of the class, will be found at convenient places so that they are readily available to those who need help, guidance and consultation.

Emphasis on  
'individual work'

### III. Organization of the Work

In the proposed organization, a special emphasis will fall upon 'individual work'. 'Individual work' may be pursued in several different ways:

- By individual consultation or interviews with teachers
- By doing works such as carpentry, knitting, embroidery, decoration, etc
- By working on work-sheets
- By studying books or relevant portions of books
- By quiet reflection or meditation
- By carrying out experiments
- By writing compositions; or
- By drawing, designing, painting, etc

There can be several situations in which group work is desirable or necessary. There are a number of projects in which there can be a division of labour; there can be educational games of team work; and there can be joint experimentation, joint pursuit of the subject or collective discussion. It may, however, be noted that collective work often tends to become mechanical and this tendency should be discouraged.

Freedom to  
choose a work  
or subject

Freedom to choose a work or a subject is a necessary element of training in the art of self-learning. It is, therefore, necessary that this free choice should be given to the students, but it should be aided by proper guidance of the teacher so that freedom is not misused. The aim should be that the student's choice should reflect his real and serious quest.

To facilitate the freedom of choice, students may be invited to indicate what lines of work or study they would like to undertake. Teachers may present students with a suggestive but detailed

list of suitable works and topics. They may also give a few talks to students to explain the main outline of the subject in order to stimulate their interest. Each work or topic selected by the student will constitute a short or a long project, depending upon its nature. In exploring each project, students will take the help of the teacher, as and when needed.

#### The inner needs of students

Teachers, on their part, will endeavour to relate the explanation of the project to the inner needs of the students. They will be expected to help students widen and intensify the areas of exploration so as to avoid narrow specialization or a mere idle superficiality.

#### Flexible, supple and evolutionary

Each student's programme of studies will be flexible, supple and evolutionary. The student will be encouraged to progress at his own pace; and will also be encouraged to correlate various topics of study around a given area of productive labour, as well as to synthesize, more and more progressively, science, fine arts, humanities and technology. Tests will be given to the students where necessary, to provide them occasions for exercise, revision, comprehension, encouragement and self-evaluation.

At the end of every two or three months each student will submit a report on his work in regard to each topic, subject or work under study to the Coordinator. This report will give details of the progress he has made in regard to what he has read or written or the reflections and conclusions he has arrived at. (Younger students will not be capable of giving this kind of report, and in their case teachers themselves will prepare reports for them.) The quality of work will be considered more important than the quantity of work, although the latter should not be meager, but commensurate with high standards.

#### IV. The Lecture, Syllabus and the Examination Systems

In this organisation, the lecture system will no longer be given the central place. Lectures will be used mainly for

- Introducing a subject
- Stimulating interest in a subject
- Presenting a panoramic view of the subject
- Explaining general difficulties or hurdles which are commonly met by a large number of students in their work or studies
- Creating a collective atmosphere with regard to certain pervasive ideas; and
- Initiating rapid and massive programmes of 'training'

#### 'Evolutionary syllabi'

Similarly, the syllabus system will also undergo a radical change. A syllabus as a general panoramic view in the vision of the teacher and as a guideline for the student has a legitimate function, and this has to be preserved. But in the actual operation of the educational processes, there have to be 'evolutionary syllabi' which grow according to the needs of the inner growth of the student; the student should be free to develop and weave the various elements of his work and studies into a complex harmonious whole. In this setting of 'evolutionary syllabi' we can truly fulfill the needs of a multi-point entry system. Also, we could have flexible programmes of work and studies suitable to different categories of students, and thus we can have a flexible pattern of education in a general framework, which can cater to the needs not merely of a small percentage of students who may be ready and fit to reach the higher levels of academic education, but also of a large number of students who may remain in the educational system only for 4 years, 7 years or a little more.





The central point is that the educational programme, whatever its duration, should aim at providing students a real base for three things:

- The art of self-learning and continuing education,
- The art of noble life, and
- The art of work

Finally, in the proposed organization, the examination system will also undergo a radical change. Tests will be used mainly for:

- Stimulation,
- Providing opportunities to students to think clearly and formulate ideas adequately,
- Achieving precision, exactness and mastery of details,
- Arriving at a global view of the subjects or works in question,
- Self-evaluation, and
- Gaining self-confidence

Tests will be woven into the learning process, the central thrust of which will be to develop noble qualities among the students, such as truthfulness, sincerity, cheerfulness, benevolence, right judgment, sacrifice, cooperation and friendship.

Tests for placement in the employment market should be conducted by a National Testing Service, and they should be open to anyone. These tests should be related to specific jobs or employment opportunities or certain specific pursuits of study and disciplines of knowledge and skill.

## **V. What Should we Expect of Students?**

- To learn the secret of self-education and to work hard so as to remain steadily on the road to self-perfection—this will be the student's constant endeavour.
- To study and work widely and intensely, to study and work with joy and application, to study and work to grow and remain perpetually youthful—this will be the content of the student's main work.
- To become a fearless hero-warrior in the quest of Truth, Harmony and Liberty, and also to surpass the limitations of his nature by an inner change and transformation—this will be regarded as the very heart of a student's work.



The child and  
his soul are to  
be subserved

## Let us not Forget the Essentials

There are four essentials that we must not forget while restructuring or reforming the educational system. Firstly, we must recognise that the child and his latent potential and his quiet yet persevering soul are to be subserved; we must not build a system that would suffocate or smother that little child.

This essential point is brought out forcefully by Rabindra Nath Tagore in his short story "The Parrot's Training". It is so instructive that we may recount it in full.

*"Once upon a time there was a bird. It was ignorant. It sang all right, but never recited scriptures. It hopped pretty frequently, but lacked manners.*

*Said the Raja to himself, "Ignorance is costly in the long run. For fools consume as much food as their betters, and yet give nothing in return."*

*He called his nephews to his presence and told them that the bird must have a sound schooling. The pundits were summoned, and at once went to the root of the matter. They decided that the ignorance of birds was due to their natural habit of living in poor nests. Therefore, according to the pundits, the first thing necessary for this bird's education was a suitable cage. The pundits had their rewards and went home happy.*

*A golden cage was built with gorgeous decorations. Crowds came to see it from all parts of the world. "Culture, captured and caged!" exclaimed some, in a rapture of ecstasy, and burst into tears. Others remarked, "Even if culture be missed, the cage will remain, to the end, a substantial fact. How fortunate for the bird!"*

*The goldsmith filled his bag with money and lost no time in sailing homewards.*

*The pundit sat down to educate the bird. With proper deliberation he took his pinch of snuff, as he said, "Textbooks can never be too many for our purpose!"*

*The nephews brought together an enormous crowd of scribes. They copied from books, and copied from copies, till the manuscripts were piled up to an unreachable height. Men murmured in amazement, "Oh, the tower of culture, egregiously high! The end of it lost in the clouds!"*

*The scribes, with light hearts, hurried home, their pockets heavily laden. The nephews were furiously busy keeping the cage in proper trim. As their constant scrubbing and polishing went on, the people said with satisfaction, "This is progress indeed!"*

*Men were employed in large numbers, and supervisors were still more numerous. These, with their cousins of all different degrees of distance, built a palace for themselves and lived there happily ever after. Whatever may be its other deficiencies, the world is never in want of fault-finders; and they went about saying that every creature remotely connected with the cage flourished beyond words, excepting the bird. When this remark reached the Raja's ears, he summoned his nephews before him and said, "My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?"*

*The nephews said in answer, "Sire, let the testimony of the goldsmiths and the pundits, the scribes and the supervisors, be taken, if the truth is to be known. Food is scarce with the fault-finders, and that is why their tongues have gained in sharpness."*

*The explanation was so luminously satisfactory that the Raja decorated each one of his nephews with his own rare jewels.*

*The Raja at length, being desirous of seeing with his own eyes how his Education Department busied itself with the little bird,*

*made his appearance one day at the great Hall of Learning. From the gate rose the sounds of conch-shells and gongs, horns, bugles and trumpets, cymbals, drums and kettle-drums, tom-toms, tambourines, flutes, fifes, barrel-organs and bagpipes. The pundits began chanting mantras with their topmost voices, while the goldsmiths, scribes, supervisors, and their numberless cousins of all different degrees of distance, loudly raised a round of cheers.*

*The nephews smiled and said, "Sire, what do you think of it all?"*

*The Raja said, "It does seem so fearfully like a sound principle of Education!"*

*Mightily pleased, the Raja was about to remount his elephant, when the fault-finder, from behind some bush, cried out, "Maharaja, have you seen the bird?"*

*"Indeed, I have not!" exclaimed the Raja, "I completely forgot about the bird."*

*Turning back, he asked the pundits about the method they had followed in instructing the bird. It was shown to him. He was immensely impressed. The method was so stupendous that the bird looked ridiculously unimportant in comparison. The Raja was satisfied that there was no flaw in the arrangements. As for any complaint from the bird itself, that simply could not be expected. Its throat was so completely choked with the leaves from the books that it could neither whistle nor whisper. It sent a thrill through one's body to watch the process. This time, while remounting his elephant, the Raja ordered his State Ear puller to give a thorough good pull at both the ears of the fault-finder.*

*The bird thus crawled on, duly and properly, to the safest verge of insanity. In fact, its progress was satisfactory in the extreme.*



Nevertheless, nature occasionally triumphed over training, and when the morning light peeped into the bird's cage it sometimes fluttered its wings in a reprehensible manner. And, though it is hard to believe, it pitifully pecked at its bars with its feeble beak. "What impertinence!" growled the kotwal. The blacksmith, with his forge and hammer, took his place in the Raja's Department of Education. Oh, what resounding blows! The iron chain was soon completed, and the bird's wings were clipped. The Raja's brothers-in-law looked black, and shook their heads, saying, "These birds not only lack good sense, but also gratitude!"

With textbook in one hand and the baton in the other, the pundits gave the poor bird what may fitly be called lessons! The kotwal was honoured with a title for his watchfulness and the blacksmith for his skill in forging chains.

The bird died.

Nobody had the least notion how long ago this had happened. The fault-finder was the first man to spread the rumour. The Raja called his nephews and asked them, "My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?"

The nephews said, "Sire, the bird's education has been completed."


"Does it hop?" the Raja enquired. "Never!" said the nephews.

"Does it fly?" "No."

"Bring me the bird," said the Raja. The bird was brought to him, guarded by the kotwal and the sepoy and the sowars. The Raja poked its body with his finger. Only its inner stuffing of book-leaves rustled. Outside the window, the murmur of the spring breeze amongst the newly budded Asoka leaves made the April morning wistful."







### Natural and spontaneous growth

The second essential point to be noted is that the child is like a closed bud that grows slowly or swiftly and opens up its petals and blossoms into its fullness by an innate pressure, aided by sunny atmosphere and environment watched and recreated by the uplifting hand of the teacher.

Even though teaching is a deliberate process, it is essentially a creative activity. Teaching is a conscious art that aims at natural and spontaneous growth of the faculties and capacities of the pupil. Natural growth does not mean wild growth; the teacher is like a gardener who needs to spend all his increasing knowledge and skill endlessly to combine all the helpful factors (external environment and internal resources of the pupil's actual and potential tendencies and powers) in such a way that there is the resultant experience of spontaneous growth marked by right rhythm and acceleration.

### The fundamental needs of today and tomorrow

The third essential point to remember is that the contemporary teacher has increasing possibilities of utilising dynamic methods of teaching-learning, and he can thus create or invent a new system of education that is directly relevant to the fundamental needs of today and tomorrow.

We may summarise here some of the models of dynamic methods that have been experimented upon during the last few decades:

In an EXPLORATION PROJECT (EP) the learners try to orientate themselves, individually or in groups, in real environments and, in doing so, make direct contact with the environment and reflect their learning process in addition.

ACTION PROJECTS (AP) include learning situations which are closely coupled with self-regulated practical action in actual situations by using professionally-overlapping reserves of competency and of knowledge.

INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION (IPI) follows instructional model in a manner timed to meet the needs of the individual, mostly with the help of programmed teaching and learning materials.

The INFO BANK (IB) enables learners to make an adjustment between their interest in learning and their style of learning on the one hand and the learning environment on the other.

In the KELLER PLAN (KP), so-called after its author, written texts are divided up into small passages for learning that the learner has to work on in succession. This instructional model is mainly used in various branches of learning in the sphere of the university, particularly when the acquisition of facts and knowledge of concepts is the chief objective.

In the CLARIFYING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT (CEA) the learner interacts with a didactically prepared and naturally stimulating environment in which he learns so that he takes over in turn the roles of the agent, the patient, the significant other and the generalized other.

The didactic model LEARNING BY TEACHING (LBT) is based on the principle of transferring to the learner all or some of the functions of the teacher, whereby to a certain extent, he acquires qualifications auto-instructionally.

The MULTIMEDIA STUDY CENTRE (MMSC) is an instructional model in so far as it not only contains a combination of different information materials at one place but at the same time it also makes available instruments with the help of which the learner can construct and control his own learning process.

The NETWORK is an instructional model in which a number of locally dispersed learners learn from one another because they inform and consult one another mutually and unselfishly from time to time, about their individual problems relating to an area of operation in which they have an interest.

Participate in a  
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In the SERIOUS GAME (SG), as well as in the SIMULATION GAME (SIMG), the learner takes over the roles of those responsible for the action and decision in simulated environments. The didactic models of the SG and the SIMG are particularly suitable for those branches of learning in which the ability to act and to decide without running risks (to the learner and to others) is to be taught.

In the WORKSHOP (WS), the learners work like colleagues supported, if necessary, by organizers and advisors, on the solution of real problems with which they are confronted in (professional) practice.

We must, however, not make a fetish of any particular method, but create and recreate methods and means by which the needed help, guidance and learning experience are provided to the pupil.

The fourth essential point that we should underline is that we are living through unusual times and that the contemporary teacher is required to make unusual effort in various directions in order to meet growing demands on him. In particular, he is called upon to widen his horizons and participate in a global endeavour that aims at human survival, which, in turn, demands radical change in the ordinary springs of thought and action.

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