

CHAPTER II

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER - HIS PLACE
IN THE PROFESSION

Modern education is paido-centric. In the paido-centric education, the educational programme is to be so planned that it will enable the child to achieve the objective of his all round development. An all round development means the harmonious growth - spiritual, mental and physical - of the child. The potentialities of the child should be explored and due opportunities should be given to him to develop himself in tune with his innate capacities. Not only that he should be given ample facilities for self-realisation but he should also be given chances to utilise his abilities in some useful creative activities whereby he can secure self-recognition and self-satisfaction. Thus, self-realisation and self-expression are the chief ingredients of all round development of the child. The type of education which helps him to achieve these is the real one.

It is not only the school where a child gets necessary education. There are mainly three agencies which have a greater impact on the child's development. These are:

- (1) the home,
- (2) the society,
- and (3) the school.

The child's development is in proportion to the favourable circumstances, these three agencies create for the child's education.

THE HOME

Thoughtful persons, everywhere, have realised that to make a country prosperous and progressive it is essential to educate the womenfolk so that they can rear up brighter and better citizens. While a child learns the language of his parents he imbibes, through imitation, from them a number of things which influence his future development in life. Other members of the family also have a great impact on the child's behaviour - present and remote. The foundations of character and morality of a child are laid in his early years at home. It can be said that the important and basic education of a child starts at home. His future development depends largely on the quality of education that he receives at home.

Heredity and environment both play a major part in the child's development. A favourable home, apart from the environment outside, helps the child's development through suitable family environment and thereby facilitating useful education at home.

THE SOCIETY

Education at any given time or place is in a large measure the product of the civilisation from which it springs.

The structure of a society has a greater influence on the nature and magnitude of the development of a child.

In a highly developed and progressive country the span of development of a child is much greater. We can compare a boy living in the U.K., the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. or Canada with a boy living in any country in Asia or Africa. A boy living in the former countries knows what a television set is. He can operate it. While a boy living in Asia or Africa very often does not know how to switch on even a radio; what, then, to talk of the television set! The development of a child in highly civilised and scientifically advanced countries is more rapid than that of a child in underdeveloped countries. The scope and facilities as well as environmental conditions are highly favourable to education in the former countries than those in the latter ones.

The nature of education depends also upon the philosophy of life of the community. In the democratic countries like the U.K., the U.S.A., Canada or India, the growth of an individual according to his potentialities is aimed at. The child's needs and interests are kept in mind while educational programmes are planned. While in the totalitarian countries like the U.S.S.R. or China, the child is to be "socialised". The child is to be developed only in the way he will fit up best in the social pattern. Thus, the philosophy of life of the community influences the pattern of education to the greatest possible extent. The education of the child, -

naturally, is affected accordingly.

THE SCHOOL

The usefulness of the school depends, to a large extent, upon the closeness of its contact and cooperation with the home and the society.

It is a school, an institution created by the society, which puts into action the philosophy of the community and thus gives it a concrete shape. Transmission of community culture takes place only through the agency of a school. Not only that but the school helps also in giving new shape to its culture in accordance with the development and the consequent increased requirements of the community. A school is, therefore, a unique agency which does the work of transmitting and also of transmuted the community culture from generation to generation. The school is a society in miniature. It has perhaps the greatest impact on the child's education and ultimately on his growth and development.

But what do we mean by the school? Is it the four walls of a classroom in a school that would transmit and transmute the community culture? No; it is the spirit of the teacher in a school that is expected to do this more essential but the most difficult job.

Teaching is essentially a spiritual process involving the contact of mind with mind. A good teacher is a powerful and abiding influence in the formation of character.

The influence of a teacher indirectly extends over many generations; it transcends national and geographical boundaries; and it advances the cause of civilisation and world order.

The world to-day is rapidly changing and so is India. New goals are being set up and new techniques are being devised in order to achieve readjustment of society to new situations. Teachers are expected not only to keep up with the changes initiated by and in society but to keep up also with the changes that are being made continuously in the techniques of education. Hence there is a great need for teachers to possess a broad, deep and thorough understanding of life. In short as is the teacher, so is the school; the school is, what the teacher makes it.

The teacher has, thus, a unique position in the educational system of any country. He has certain obligations to the school, the community and the home. All the three agencies are apparently separate, but their ultimate goal is to give proper education to the children. Though the teacher is directly employed by the community, he has to establish and maintain certain types of relations with the home and the community. It is through the teacher that the proper coordination of all these agencies is achieved. The better the relations a teacher can maintain with all the agencies, the better coordination among them will take place. The effect of any educational programme on the child will naturally be in proportion to the magnitude of unison among these agencies.

The teacher's position is, thus, a pivotal one in any educational system.

Before we proceed to discuss the qualities of a good teacher, it is necessary to describe in brief the structure of secondary education as also to describe the secondary school teacher's job in this country.

STRUCTURE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The scheme of school classes at the Primary and Secondary stages constitutes the basic framework for a sound system of education in any country.

Dr. S. N. Mukerji¹ describing the structure of secondary education in India writes,

The secondary stage of education generally covers seven years in all, including (a) the middle or the senior basic or the junior secondary stage of three years for children in the age-group 11-13, and (b) the high stage of three years for children in the age-group 13-16.

Again according to the same author²,

The duration of these stages varies from State to State. It may be noted that the high school generally contains middle classes and in some cases primary departments are attached to them.

1 Mukerji, S. N., "Education In India - To-day And To-morrow", Acharya Book Depot, Baroda (India), 1960, p. 127.

2 Ibid., p. 127.

HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Mainly after independence, the question of reconstruction of secondary education in India has drawn the attention of the educational planners in the country. According to the Report of The Secondary Education Commission¹,

The Higher Secondary School is the latest type of institution where the education imparted is in some cases of 3 years, and in some cases 4 years, depending upon the period of study required for the High Schools in the State. The High Secondary schools have been formed by the addition of one year which is taken from the Intermediate stage of the University.

The biggest problem in the reconstruction of secondary education is the upgrading of high schools into higher secondary schools which offer a fuller course in education.

Mr. Prem Kirpal², Secretary to the Union Education Ministry reports,

We have already experienced the embarrassment and difficulty of having a dual system of secondary education and it is the responsibility of everyone concerned to see that the change-over is effected as rapidly as possible.

According to him at the end of the Third Plan 7,000 out of the estimated total of 19,000 secondary schools in the country would have been upgraded, and the Fourth Plan would start with a backlog of 12,000 old type schools to be upgraded.

1 Government of India - Ministry of Education. "Report of The Secondary Education Commission" (Oct. 52-June 53), p.18.
 2 "The Times of India", dated 11th January, 1961.

It should be noted here that at present most of the secondary schools in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat are of the old type.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SECONDARY TEACHER'S JOB

One of the most important functions of the teacher is to develop a thorough understanding of the subject-matter which the pupils may profitably use in any life situation. Teaching of school subjects, thus, forms an important part of the teacher's job. But the real picture of the teacher's job can only be obtained through the study of the objectives that a school is expected to achieve through the secondary education. Such objectives implicitly describe the teacher's job as it is imperative upon the teacher to try to achieve them.

We, therefore, enlist below some of the chief aims of secondary education as demanded by the radically changing social, political and economic pattern in the country especially after independence.

According to the Report¹ of the Secondary Education Commission,

As political, social and economic conditions change and new problems arise, it becomes necessary to re-examine carefully and re-state clearly the objectives which education at each definite stage, should keep in view. Moreover, this statement must take into account not only the facts of the

1 "Report of the Secondary Education Commission", Op.Cit., p. 22.

existing situation but also the direction of its development and the nature and type of the social order that we envisage for the future to which education has to be geared.

Some of the chief aims are:

- (1)-the training of character to fit the students to participate creatively as citizens in the emerging democratic social order;
- (2) - the improvement of the students' vocational efficiency;
- (3) - the development of the students' literary, artistic and cultural interests;
- (4) - training of the students in discipline as well as leadership.

Thus the chief aim of secondary education is to train the youth of the country to be good citizens, who will be competent to play their part effectively in the social reconstruction and economic development of their country.

In addition the secondary education should prepare young men for the various vocations that are open to them.

The main functions of the teacher's job, then, are as follows:

- (1) A good performance in actual teaching; The

teacher should possess up-to-date knowledge of the subject(s) he has to teach. For this he has to develop his reading interest. He is expected to remain familiar with the latest developments and additions in the field of knowledge in the subject(s). He should be able to impart his knowledge most effectively and adequately to his pupils.

(2) He should possess a good deal of general knowledge. He should be in touch with all the recent developments in the world. He should keep the children informed of all such developments.

(3) He should be able to perform faithfully all duties assigned to him regarding school administration over and above classroom teaching.

(4) He should be ever willing and enthusiastic to add to his academic and professional qualifications.

(5) Teachers are expected to do a great deal of work other than merely imparting knowledge in the subjects of the curriculum. Equal stress is laid upon the cocurricular activities. Games and athletics, scouting, dramatics, debates, excursions and such other activities figure very prominently in school programmes. These activities are now-a-days co-ordinated with academic work in the school. The teacher, therefore, should be prepared to take active part in them.

(6) The most important work of a secondary school

teacher is to explore the potential abilities of the student and to help him develop accordingly. He can create favourable environment for the student's educational growth by studying his interests, likes and dislikes and also his economic, social and family circumstances.

(7) A very great percentage of secondary school children will leave the schools after their S.S.C. examination and start their career as citizens. Only a small percentage of them will go for University education. It is, therefore, the stage of secondary education wherein the students should be trained for citizenship. As the citizens of a country are, so is the country. Therefore, the greatest responsibility of a teacher is to see that the students turn out to be deserving citizens.

(8) Parochialism in the country, to-day, is rampant; communalism is again gaining ground gradually; linguistic feelings are at their highest; and other fissiparous tendencies are becoming stronger day by day. It is the paramount duty of the teacher to see that he is above all such tendencies and also is a guard against the prevalence of such tendencies among his students. He has to instil in them the virtue of being tolerant of persons of different faiths, castes, creed or linguistic groups. The student should learn to respect other persons' feelings.

(9) The teacher has to fulfil certain other obligations to the community. The school is the centre of varied

activities in a community - especially a village community. The teacher is to organise all such activities. He has to see that people take part in such activities. For this he has to maintain cordial relations with the members of the community by cultivating ⁱⁿ him the spirit of social service. The present need of the country is to see that nation's 'Five Year Plans' are implemented successfully. The teacher can play a greater role to achieve this by canvassing support for such plans and by enthusing them to work hard for the implementation of the plans.

(10) The teacher is expected to do the work of a liaison officer between the school and the community. He should see that all the agencies influencing the all round development of a child work in complete unison.

It can, thus, be seen that the horizon of the duties and responsibilities of a secondary school teacher is ever widening with the revolutionary changes in the structure of society day by day in such times of marvellous and amazing scientific advancement.

Henry Adams as quoted by Lawrence¹, has said:

A parent gives life, but as
parent he gives no more. A murderer
takes life, but his deed stops there.
A teacher affects eternity; he can
never tell where his influence stops.

What qualities then, should a teacher, who influenc-

1 Ministry of Education - Government of India: "Secondary Education", October-December, 1960, p.11.

the pupil interminably, possess so that he will be able to discharge all these duties and responsibilities honestly and successfully?

"An ideal teacher", according to Professor Palmer¹, "is imaginative, intellectually wealthy, stimulating, and disinterested".

The "Future Teachers of America"² has set forth some characteristics of good teachers. They are:

- (i) Physical vitality
- (ii) Mental vigour
- (iii) Moral discrimination
- (iv) Wholesome personality
- (v) Helpfulness
- (vi) Knowledge
- (vii) Leadership.

If desired this list can be lengthened to a great extent. But it is of no use. The crux of the problem is: whether the persons possessing such qualities are available as teachers; or whether the persons joining the teaching profession possess the necessary aptitude for teaching.

If one can confidently say that the persons joining the profession do possess necessary qualifications and aptitude

1 Palmer, G. H., "The Teacher", Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908, pp. 3-30.

2 "Future Teachers of America", "Future Teachers of America" Handbook for Chapters and State Associations, 1954, rev., inside back cover.

for teaching, the future outcome of the teaching profession is very bright. But unfortunately the situation is not so encouraging. Persons joining the profession, treat it as a jumping board for a more advantageous profession. They do not have liking for this profession. It can be said that the persons employed as teachers are not always the right type of persons. This causes deterioration in the standard of secondary education.

The demand for secondary school teachers is ever growing with the ever expanding secondary education in the country. Lacs of teachers are required to be recruited for the secondary schools. The prospects and the service conditions are not so attractive. Hence even the persons with necessary aptitude for teaching are tempted to join other professions. Mostly those who cannot secure good jobs elsewhere join this profession. They are available in millions. There is no dearth of teachers; but there is a great dearth of "real" teachers. The problem of securing the services of good teachers wrecks one's head. It is a highly baffling one.

Ultimately some solution has to be found out. At present we have to rest content by selecting teachers comparatively more suitable from amongst those available to serve our immediate purpose. But this raises another problem: How to select suitable teachers?

An humble attempt is made here to answer this question through the present investigation.