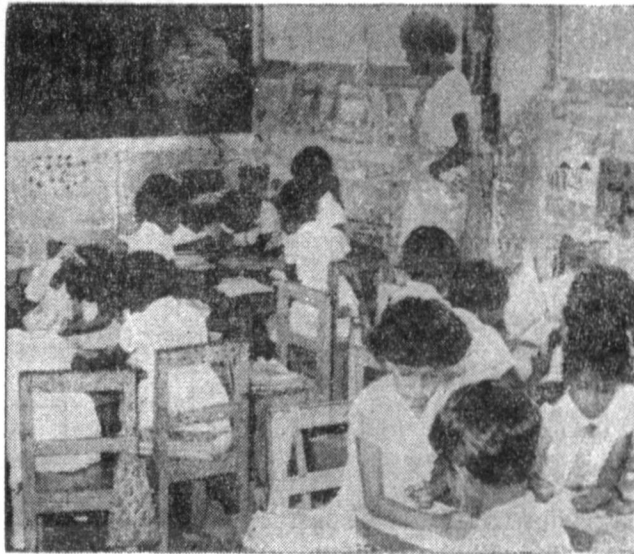




The Old Order— *Learning is mechanical—rote learning, memorising and neat writing. The curriculum revolves round the 3-Rs. Children must sit in neatly arranged rows facing the teacher's table placed upon a platform.*



The New— *The difference is clear. At first sight, it may look like chaos, as against discipline, but the actual difference is a natural atmosphere as against an artificial one of the past. The new student is active and working and learning to live.*

The New Face of EDUCATION

Education is a natural characteristic of human society. It occurs in various forms informal, formal and non-formal. Its aims and methods are varied, depending on the nature of the society in which it takes place. With every major change in society the aims and methods of education have also changed but educational change has generally lagged behind social and economic change.

Educational development in many parts of the world today is characterized by certain new features. It is being regarded as a prime factor in development. It is tending to pre-empt and accelerate economic development. It is attempting to prepare men for a society which does not yet exist, and many societies are beginning to reject the products of the existing institutionalized education. The world has realised that education can

play a more dynamic role than that of enabling men to conform to social and economic changes which have already taken place. The functional contribution which the structures and forms of education can make to historical movements is now being recognized.

A Third World Realisation

This new realisation is most evident in the countries of the Third World. In the aftermath of political independence their countries are faced with a multitude of problems inherited from the colonial past. They are faced with the tremendous task of ushering in rapid economic and social changes which would in turn lead each of their people to the "Promised Land". In achieving this task they are seeking to mobilize education as a powerful ally. They are revising educational structures and

content so that education could make a direct contribution to social and economic change. In this process education is acquiring a new face. The essential and critical interdependence between educational policy and programmes and the fundamental political, economic and social objectives of that society has become an accepted fact today.

Educational strategies in the past promoting quantitative development emphasizing the requirements of the modern sector and often neglecting the needs of the rural sector, had in many cases hampered development and created problems. It had resulted on the one hand, in an increase in the number of educated unemployed, alienation of rural youths, migration to urban centres and overseas in search of jobs, and on the other, lack of properly qualified people to fill

jobs in some critical areas of development, all of which creates a general sense of disappointment and frustration. Among the causes for the employment crisis in most parts of the Third World is the obvious mismatch between an educational strategy aiming mainly at quantitative expansion of the academic streams and an economic strategy which, until rather recently, focussed on expansion of the modern sector which could not absorb most of the academically trained people searching for jobs.

Education's Important Role

It is now recognized that education can play an important role in fighting poverty and promoting development; but the "inherited" systems of education were not suitable to perform this role. There is therefore a need to introduce profound educational reforms in order that they may respond adequately to new national development needs and objectives. It is however, for the national authorities to decide on the various educational objectives and strategies and the means to achieve these objectives. The choice of such strategies and means must be made in harmony with the overall development philosophy of each country.

What Children Say About Schools . . .

"My parents taught me to add and subtract in two days. But my teacher keeps giving me ten sums a day homework. All these are sums I know. I have no play-time at home. I hate homework. I am beginning to hate sums also. Also my teacher".

8 year old Grade II from Ratmalana

"School is a waste of time when you get to the fourth year because the teachers are fed up with us and we are fed up with them. We are treated like soldiers".

A fourteen-year-old boy

At present our entire secondary educational system is geared to the G.C.E. examinations. Indeed, our grammar schools in particular are nothing more than G.C.E. sausage machines: eleven plus mince-meat is fed in at one end and O-level and A-level sausages emerge at the other.

An English School boy 13

Prominent Third World educationists are recommending that we make productive work, within the limits of the children's physical capacity, a basic element in any school curriculum, quite apart from any considerations of specialization. This would have the three-fold advantage of giving adolescents and young people a sharper awareness of what the working world really is, involving them in the production of those social assets whose increase is the primary condition for well-being, and giving education a real basis in experience by establishing a more direct link between theory and practice. The gap, created between education and manual work by a highly academic approach of the past, has to be closed. The new curriculum is therefore rooted in our own environment in order to provide opportunities for learning about its physical and social aspects.

For education would certainly fall short of what is required if it were not rooted in the whole circumstances of the community it aspires to serve and to vitalize. The right to fundamental education for all is now universally recognized. But the elitist systems inherited from the past need to be reformed through the participation of all segments of society, with a focus on the rural community. Provision of such programmes to all segments of a population could lead to the development of new attitudes and value systems favourable to more rapid national development.

A Note of Caution

In certain cases, educational reforms have led to the creation of two parallel systems; the formal academic system for the elite and the non-formal training programmes for the underprivileged, which increased inequalities rather than reduced them. There is a need therefore, to be careful in making the fundamental choices and in translating them into integrated educational and training programmes; it calls for planning of alternative strategies based on a review of policy objectives and existing systems taking fully into account possible

And Some Famous Adults' Views...

A child born today in the U.K. stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university, and about one-fifth of mental hospital admissions are diagnosed Schizophrenic. This can be taken as an indication that we are driving our children mad more effectively than we are genuinely educating them. Perhaps it is our way of educating them that is driving them mad.

R. D. Laing

"My grandmother wanted me to have an education, so she kept me out of school".

Margaret Mead

In any field, genius is brought to mediocrity by orthodox training.

Miss Virginia Wade

The really murderous thing we do all the time with our children is to go on teaching them to be competitive and then expect them to be good citizens. How can they be!

Harry Saltzman

innovations and alternative resource possibilities in terms of both finance and trained personnel.

The survey which follows examines the changing face of education in some of the developing countries, the form it has assumed in Sri Lanka, the obstacles which lie in the path of the new educational order and what further changes seemed necessary to make education a vital instrument for fighting under-development and serve the needs of a changing society.

Educationists working on the reforms at our Curriculum Development Centre view the changes from various perspectives dealing with three country studies which focus on 'A Strategy for Development; the why and how of the changes being introduced in Sri Lanka; the possible obstacles that stand in the way of a new educational order; and finally a look into the future, the possible impact of the reforms.