CHAPTER A

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS MOVEMENT

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was, indeed, a great event in the annals of Indian history, for it opened a new chapter in the history of the nationalist movement in the country. Prior to that, the Indian national movement had only a socio-cultural complexion; it was in the nature of a revolt against the cultural domination of the West. All those indigenous movements which had emerged as the expression of the nationalist sentiment till 1885 - the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Ram Krishna Mission Movement - drew their inspiration from the ancient religion and culture of the land, and their chief aim - social reform apart - was to check the flood of Western culture which threatened to engulf the country. To achieve this aim, they tried to rehabilitate the traditional culture and religion of India in the light of the new thought and conditions of the modern age.

With the advent of the Congress, however, both the complexion and the tempo of the nationalist movement underwent a radical change. Politics, not religion, now became the sheet-anchor of nationalism. The Congress was founded with explicit political motives - its object in the beginning was to organise and express public opinion on certain administrative issues and to agitate for reform in the administration of the British bureaucracy, from the Indian viewpoint, on constitutional lines. But within a decade, the movement assumed a militant tone,
and later started aspiring and working for the political emancipation of the country. And this remained its chief object until Independence was achieved in 1947. Thus, with the advent of the Congress, the Indian nationalism entered its political phase, a new current of nationalism was unleashed and the old cultural current got submerged into it.

BACKGROUND

The Indian National Congress movement was not born overnight. It was, on the other hand, the culminating point of certain factors and forces that had created a stir in the Indian mind for some decades in the past. Of these factors and forces, the following were the most important ones:

1. The Reactionary Nature of the British Rule:— The administrative policy followed by the British in this country had certain reactionary features which caused wide-spread discontent among the Indian people and ultimately led them to form an organisation, namely, the Indian National Congress, with a view to agitating against them. Firstly, in the sphere of trade and industry, the British followed a policy which ran counter to the Indian interests. "The classic type of modern colonial economy was built up; India becoming an agricultural colony of industrial England, supplying raw-materials and providing market for England's industrial goods." This disintegrated the entire economic pattern of the Indian society - the artisan class evaporated on a prodigious scale, the pressure on land increased enormously and the standard of living began to fall rapidly. This policy of ruthless economic exploitation, followed by the British, resulted in the impoverishment of the masses and brought the country to the brink of economic

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1 - Nehru, J.L. - Discovery of India; p.256.
disaster. "It was pure loot. The 'Pagoda tree' was shaken again and again till the most terrible famines ravaged Bengal. .... There are a few instances in the history of any nation like it. And it must be remembered that this lasted under various names and under different forms, not for a few years but for generations. .... The corruption, vanity, nepotism, violence and greed of money of these early generations of British rule in India is something which passes comprehension."

Secondly, the British rule in India was characterised by distrust, suspicion and hatred for the natives of the land. A sense of racial superiority haunted the mind of the British bureaucracy. The Revolt of 1857 had made the matters worse - it had changed their feeling of contempt for the Indians into one of 'active hatred. They now looked down upon Indians as "a parcel of black-heathen bodies and natives ....... worshipping stocks and stones, and swinging themselves upon bamboos like beasts." Such a racial humiliation was too much for the Indian people to put up with, and, as such, a wide racial gulf was created between the rulers and the ruled.

Thirdly, the British rule in India, after it was taken over by the Crown, continued to suffer from the same ills as it had done before. The rigid revenue system, costly litigation, corrupt and oppressive police, harsh and repressive administrative measures like the Arms Act and the Forest Act, the British monopoly of all posts carrying trust and responsibility, discrimination in the administration of justice - these and others were the long-standing grievances of the Indian people against the British rule.

Such a reactionary and self-styled rule of the British bureau-
cracy, running counter to the interests of the Indian people in so

1 - Ibid; pp.254-255.
2 - Cotton,H.- New India; pp.46-47,
many respects and subjecting them to so much racial humiliation and administrative injustice, was bound to stir up that psychological discontent among them, especially among the upper classes, which later gave rise to political agitation, resulting in the foundation of an all-India organisation, namely, the Indian National Congress.

2. The impact of the Western Culture:— Contact with the Western culture, which came through the British, was a great blessing in disguise for India. "The impact of the Western culture on India was the impact of a dynamic society, of a "modern" consciousness on a static society wedded to medieval habits of thought, which, however, sophisticated and advanced in its own way, could not progress because of its inherent limitations."¹ The steam engine, the railway, the printing press, the highly centralised form of government and the uniform pattern of trade, exchange, banking and industry, introduced by the British, created in the Indian people that feeling of oneness which they had never known before.

The English system of education was by far the most important factor in the emergence of Indian nationalism. English language, the common vehicle of thought, proved a great unifying force. The study of English literature and history, so rich in the traditions of national independence, aroused in the educated Indian people a new feeling of national consciousness. The modern political philosophy, characterised by the progressive cults of Spencer's Individualism and Morley's Liberalism, had a tremendous influence on their mind. Ramsay Macdonald rightly said, "Mr. Herbert Spencer's individualism and Lord Morley's liberalism are, as it were, the only battery of guns which India captured from us, and condescends to use against us."²

¹ - Nehru, J.L., opcit; p.249
² - Awakening in India; pp.124-125.
3. Influence of the 19th Century Reform-Movements: Most of the reform movements which emerged in India during the 19th century were revivalist in nature; their chief aim was to revive the ancient culture of the country and, at the same time, to reform Indian religion and society in such a way as to free them from medieval dogmas and orthodoxy. The leaders of the movements—Swami Dayananda, Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mrs. Annie Besant—to name the most outstanding amongst them—sang the swan-songs of India’s ancient glory and tried their level best to rehabilitate her ancient religion and culture. Their efforts brought about a cultural renaissance which proved a strong barrage against the current of Western culture which threatened to engulf the land. Their message set the people of the country—especially the youth—thinking and helped them to cast aside the sense of cultural inferiority which they seemed to have developed under the first impact of an alien culture. This faith and confidence in the traditional culture of the country instilled a sense of national pride into their hearts and thus paved the way for the advent of a new phase of Indian nationalism, represented by the Indian National Congress.

THE GENESIS AND FOUNDATION OF THE MOVEMENT

The genesis of the Indian National Congress can be traced back to March 1, 1883, when Allen Octavian Hume, a retired British official, addressed a letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University, exhorting them in a most forceful way to labour for the moral, social, intellectual and political advancement of their motherland. Pleading for the formation of an organisation for this purpose, he wrote, "If only fifty men good and true can be found to join the founders, the thing
can be established and the further development will be comparatively easy. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right, then are Lord Rippon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary, then, at present at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better Government than she enjoys."

This fervent appeal of Mr. Hume did not go in vain, for, soon afterwards, in collaboration with the eminent public leaders, he formed the "Indian National Council". To secure the support of the progressive elements of British public life, he then sailed to England, and on his return from there he gave the Union its new name, "Indian National Congress", the first session of which was held at Bombay in December, 1885.

The foundation of the Indian National Congress was undoubtedly a great event in the history of Indian nationalism. There were some who viewed its future with despair, for they suspected that behind it was the high-handed game of British diplomacy, associated as it was with the name of a retired British official; they believed that it was merely a 'safety-valve' designed by the imperialistic genius of the British, to provide an out-let to the excessive patriotic fervour of their Indian subjects. The events of the subsequent years, however, gave a lie to their fears. What might have then seemed to be a tiny sapling was destined to grow into that gigantic tree which, protected and nurtured by the sacrifices of the Indian people and their leaders
in all types of rough weather, ultimately bore the fruit of political freedom, and thus opened a new chapter in the history of the country.

TH E NATURE, AIMS AND IDEALS OF THE CONGRESS

The nature of the Indian National Congress was revealed by its following distinguishing features:

Firstly, it was a truly national organisation in as much as it made "no difference between British India and Indian India, between one province and another, between the classes and the masses, between towns and villages, between the rich and the poor, between agricultural and industrial interests, between castes and communities or religions." In other words, it sought to express the grievances, demands, and aspirations of the teeming millions of India, without any distinction or discrimination whatsoever, and this gave it a truly national colour.

Secondly, it was predominantly a political organisation. It represented the political aspirations of the people and championed their cause in the sphere of Indian politics and administration. Starting with the modest programme of agitating for certain administrative reforms, it gradually set before it the ideal of achieving complete political independence for the country. Though, in due course of time, it also took upon itself the task of national reconstruction in various fields, the fact, however, remains that its political aspect, as represented by its continuous struggle against the imperialistic policy of the British Government, dominated the whole sphere of its activity all through.

Thirdly, it was purely a non-violent organisation. For Mahatma Gandhi, who became the most outstanding leader of the Congress after the I World War, violence was a taboo. Means, he believed,
should be as good and chaste as the end. Hence, terrorist approach, based on violence, was condemned by him root and branch. Despite his insistence on non-violence, there were sometimes outbursts of violence here and there, no doubt; but this was not consistent with the general tone of the Congress. True to its avowed policy of non-violence, it counted more upon its moral strength, emanating from the propriety of its stand, rather than upon brute force based on physical strength.

So far as the aims of the Indian National Congress are concerned, it was inspired by two fundamental principles, namely, (i) the unity of India as a whole and (ii) the right of the people to rule over themselves. Guided by these two national ideals, the Congress, from its very inception, had set before it the aim of securing a just and responsible form of Government for the people of the country. In the beginning, its aim was to organise public-opinion against the unjust and harsh administrative measures of the British bureaucracy, but as time passed, the scope of its aim widened in a dynamic way. This happened in two ways. Firstly, its political aim widened from a mere demand for administrative reforms to a demand for complete independence; and secondly, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, its aim transcended the limits of politics and hence it became a potent tool of national regeneration. Under his guidance and leadership, the movement entered such constructive fields as village-uplift, removal of untouchability, promotion of cottage-industries and spread of education. This shows that the aims of the Congress have neither been rigid nor static; like a dynamic force, it has, on the contrary, so changed and widened its scope of work as to keep itself abreast of the new situations and demands of the times.
ITS INTEREST IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

The Indian National Congress, as has already been pointed out, started its career as a political movement but, ere long, it became a very comprehensive movement of national reconstruction. In its attempt to bring about a national reconstruction, the movement had to grapple with many problems which had become the chronic maladies of Indian society, sappling all its inherent strength and vitality. The leaders of the movement soon realised that, of all these problems, the problem of educating the people through a system of education, suited to the needs of the country, was by far the most important one. They felt that the then-prevailing system of education was one of those sinister legacies of the British rule which had disintegrated the entire fabric of Indian society, and believed that unless it was replaced by a new system, the work of national reconstruction could not be carried on effectively. To bring about a silent social revolution, the minds of men are to be moulded; and to mould the minds of men, an appropriate system of education is indispensible. This belief led the leaders of the movement to concentrate a good deal of their energy on the problem of educational reconstruction.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SCENE

The educational policy of the Government had crystallised much earlier than the birth of the Congress. The Wood's Despatch of 1854 had set all the educational controversies at rest, by laying down quite clearly the educational policy to be followed in future. What the British bureaucracy, therefore, did in the educational field in the succeeding years was to follow this policy as faithfully as they could. This adherence to the Despatch of 1854, continuously for about
three decades, produced certain educational results which were well on the surface by the time the Indian National Congress movement started. These educational results, which are fairly revealing of the contemporary educational conditions in India, may be summarised as under:

(i) Westernisation of the content of education:

The indigenous system of education suffered most as a consequence of the policy of promoting Western knowledge, laid down in the Despatch. Indians themselves showed great enthusiasm in taking to the English system of education. Hindus apart, Muslims, who had abstained from it earlier, started sending their boys to the English schools in large numbers, as a result of the new awakening that had dawned upon them through the initiative and efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The net result was that the only system of education that survived and flourished towards the end of the 19th century was the New System which sought to spread Western knowledge through the medium of English.

(ii) Indianization of the educational agency -

After the Despatch of 1854, the Government and the Missionaries decided to restrict their educational activities. The Govt. was guided by the consideration of administrative economy; and the Missionaries were in a pessimistic frame of mind as regards the success of their proselytising designs, in the light of their past experience which had not been a happy one. The result was that almost the entire educational field was left to the private Indian enterprise. Educated Indians, who were now available in good numbers, moved by patriotic motives, came forward to serve in English schools run by private Indian enterprise. When persons like R.P. Paranjpe - 'a senior wrangler of the
Cambridge University' - began to work as Principals of private colleges, the stamp of inferiority that was attached to private Indian enterprise vanished at once; the spread of education became rapid and its cost was considerably reduced. The private Indian enterprise, which thus dominated the contemporary educational field, did not only try to meet the then-existing demand of the country for more education at a low cost, but also created an educational awakening among the people which was destined to be the precursor of further advances in the domain of education.

(iii) Unprecedented educational expansion:-
The system of grant-in-aid, followed by the Government in pursuance of the Despatch of 1854, also gave great impetus to private Indian enterprise in the field of education; and this resulted in a very rapid increase in the number of educational institutions, especially those imparting collegiate and secondary education.

CONGRESS AND THE EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE

Though, in the history of Indian education, the second half of the 19th century was characterised by a great popularity and spread of the study of Western learning and English language, but this represented only the things on the surface. Under the seemingly placid waters of New Education, there flowed a current of nationalistic thought, unleashed by the various revivalist indigenous movements that had emerged under the leadership of men like Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda and Mrs. Annie Besant. This underneath current, representing the national aspirations of the Indian people in the field of education, could not remain a hidden force for long. As the first wave of Western culture, which had left the Indians spell-bound, as it were, for some time
subsided, the ideology of National education came into growing prominence. The result was that towards the end of the 19th century a fair amount of educational consciousness on national lines had developed among the Indian people, and they seemed to be inclined to take more and more interest in the educational affairs of the country. Indians appeared as witnesses before the Indian Education Commission of 1882, and gave their evidence before it from the Indian point of view. This also indicates that the Indian opinion and viewpoint had become a force to be reckoned with in the field of contemporary Indian education; and the Congress, as a national organisation, became aptly enough the greatest exponent of it within a few years of its inception. In agitating against the educational policy and measures of the British bureaucracy and also in its attempts to build up a national system of education, it represented the nationalistic aspirations of the Indian people in the field of education.

ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION IN THE EARLY YEARS

Till the end of the 19th century, the Congress remained a quiet movement agitating for certain administrative reforms on constitutional lines and organising public-opinion on them. In the field of education, hardly any constructive work was done by it during this period. It was, in fact, a period of preparation in which, instead of doing any active work, it only observed and assessed the educational policy of the Government. Perhaps, the leaders of the movement, preoccupied with administrative matters, did not think this to be time for any active work in the field of education.
EMERGENCE OF MILITANT NATIONALISM AND ITS EDUCATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

From the beginning of the 20th century, the tempo of the Congress changed; from a quiet movement it was now transformed into a militant one, challenging the British Government with a tone of strength and confidence. This ushered in the era of militant nationalism in the constitutional history of India. The immediate cause for this change in the political atmosphere of the country was the vice-royalty of Lord Curzon (1898-1905). In his enthusiasm to reform the entire Indian administrative pattern, he assumed an autocratic air and introduced such radical and sweeping measures which aroused the whole nation to a feeling of utmost bitterness and hostility. Administrative measures, like the Officials Secret Bill, the costly Durbar at Delhi (when famine was rampant in the country), officialisation of the Calcutta Corporation, and, above all, the Partition of Bengal, fired the people with indignation and rage. Wide-spread poverty, growing unemployment, famines, and epidemics also caused a ferment against the British rule.

The emergence of militant nationalism had significant educational repercussions. The Congress no longer remained a mere observer of the official educational policy; it rather took up its cudgels against it. A programme of active educational work was launched upon, and great enthusiasm was shown by the Congress workers in popularising the concept of National Education and in implementing it through their own independent efforts.

CONFLICT WITH THE CURZON'S POLICY

As in the administrative sphere, so in the sphere of education
Lord Curzon followed a policy which was not welcome to the Indian people. Showing his utmost disgust with the then-existing system of education, he explicitly said, "... there was a vagueness as to the fundamental principles, slackness had crept in, standards had depreciated and what was wanted was the impulse and movement of a new life...." He, therefore, decided to reform the educational system so as to tone up its efficiency and quality. The policy which he followed and the measures which he took for this were, however, not palatable to the Indian people, for they ran counter to their national aspirations in the educational field.

The educational differences between Lord Curzon and the Indian people were many. Of these, the major ones were as follows:—

(1) Curzon believed what Indian education needed most was not expansion but consolidation and qualitative improvement. He declared his policy in clear words, "A system, the standard of which are in danger of being degraded, is a system that must sooner or later decline. ..... It is quality, not quantity that we should have in view." Contrary to this, the Indian public opinion held that, the educational needs of the country being so vast, expansion in educational opportunities were the crying need of the day. This shot up a controversy between quality and quantity in education.

(2) Curzon advocated strict official control and supervision, for he felt that without it the efficiency of educational institutions could not be maintained. Indians viewed this with suspicion. They apprehended that it was only a device to perpetuate the intellectual and political domination of the West.

1 - Lord Curzon in India - Vol.II; p.68.
2 - Ibid, p.42.
(3) Curzon did not like the policy of encouraging private Indian enterprise in the field of education. Too much latitude in this respect, he thought, would result in mushroom growth of schools and colleges which would be poorly equipped and inadequately staffed, with the result that educational standards would deteriorate, as was already happening. Such a viewpoint was resented to by the Indian people, for it undermined and humiliated the role which Indians, imbued with the feeling of patriotism, were playing in the expansion of education to meet the educational needs of the country.

(4) Indian, Curzon believed, could never have the same efficiency as Englishmen, and hence all superior posts in the Education Department, he held, should be filled up by the latter. This the Indians considered as an insult to their racial prestige and said that the hypothesis of racial superiority, put forward by Lord Curzon, was not only a reflection of his vain and arrogant personality, but was also utterly erroneous and misleading. What was, therefore, demanded by the Indians was the complete Indianisation of the Education Department.

(5) Curzon advocated the policy of promoting the study of Western literature and sciences, along with the teaching of English language. The Indians, on the contrary, wanted that emphasis on the teaching of English should be given up, and that due place should be given to Indian languages in the curricula of schools and colleges; though, at the same time, they did not want to discard the study of Western literature and sciences or of English language. Their only contention was that Indian languages should not suffer, as a result of this policy.
(6). Lastly, Curzon expressed great dissatisfaction with the tendency that was fast growing among the students to participate in the political agitation of the day, as this, he contended, fostered indiscipline among them and led to the neglect of their studies. Indians, on the contrary, hailed this tendency of the student community as a befitting expression of their national awakening, which, they felt, instead of being curbed, should be appreciated and encouraged.

In his characteristic autocratic fashion, Curzon brushed aside the Indian viewpoint and went on with his own scheme of educational reform. In 1904, the Universities Act, based on the recommendations of the University Commission of 1902, was passed, notwithstanding the vehement opposition it received from the Indian members of the Legislature. Protests raised by such outstanding leaders of the Indian National Congress as G.K. Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerji and Phiroza-shah Mehta proved mere cries in the wilderness. The Act caused great disappointment and bitterness among the people. As Gokhale said, "It was thought that we were on the eve of a mighty reform which would change the whole face of things in regard to higher education in India. . . . . . . . It was, however, not long before the new-born hope that had thus gladdened our hearts was chilled to death and we found that, instead of the measures we were looking for, we were to have only a perpetuation of the narrow, bigoted and inexpensive rule of experts."¹

The Act was condemned by the Indians for many reasons. Firstly, it imposed restrictions on the enrolment of students by making higher education more expensive. Secondly, it laid down stricter

¹ - Gokhale's Speeches; pp. 255-36.
conditions for the affiliation of colleges which was suspected to be a subtle device for undermining Indian enterprise in the educational field. Thirdly, the senates and syndicates were designed to be so reorganised that they would become greatly Europeanised, leaving very little room for the popular Indian elements in them. Fourthly, it gave very wide powers to the Government in the administration of the Universities, making them 'the most completely dominated Universities of the world'. The net result was that there arose a great discontentment and distrust in the Indian mind as regards the educational policy of the official bureaucracy, led by Lord Curzon. Faith in the motives of the British was rudely shaken, and a movement of National Education, led by the Congress, soon started. It was a movement which, instead of looking to the alien Government for patronage or help, depended solely on popular support; self-confidence and self-reliance were its dominant notes.

THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT AND THE FIRST UPSURGE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

The Swadeshi movement of 1905, led by the Congress, was the first expression of the spirit of militant nationalism, that had arisen in the country during the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. It was in the nature of a 'Direct Action' on the part of the Congress against the British rule. The movement, though essentially economic in origin, did not remain confined only to the boycott of foreign goods and the use of Swadeshi materials. It had significant repercussions also in other spheres of Indian life. Of all the spheres to which the movement soon spread, the educational sphere came in most handy.
STUDENTS' ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT

The student community responded readily to the call of Swadeshi. They not only boycotted foreign dress and materials but also actively participated in the political meetings and demonstrations organised by the Congress to mobilize public support for the Swadeshi movement. The enthusiastic role which they played in popularising the movement was a great help to the Congress. The official bureaucracy got irritated and passed prohibitive orders against students participating in political meetings and demonstrations. Students who participated in them were expelled and rusticated from Government schools and colleges. This repressive policy of the Government, instead of checking the agitation, added fuel to the fire, and a full-blooded movement of educational boycott soon started. The driving force behind this movement was Satish Chandra Mukerjee, the founder-organiser of the 'Dawn Society', which proved to be a powerful instrument of a moral and intellectual revolution among the youth of Bengal by preparing them ultimately to achieve the freedom of the country. Students, overflowing with patriotic fervour, started boycotting schools and colleges in large numbers. It seemed they were willing to make any sacrifice to give a show-down to the repressive policy of the official bureaucracy. The cause of Swadeshi had really become so dear to their hearts.

THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON NATIONAL EDUCATION

The Congress leaders appreciated the spirit of patriotism and sacrifice shown by the student community; they strongly felt that the time had come to put before the nation the ideal of National Education. "Unless you accept this ideal of National Education", said one of the Congress leaders, and "not only accept it intellectually but also make a strong resolution, the rich to lay out their money, those
who have no money, to place their boys and their youth for tuition in these schools, and the general public to offer the best that they can towards the furtherance of the object, unless you do it, the time is come when all this new spirit will fail to attain its purpose, because of the repressive measures that are being introduced in the Education Department of India by that Government.¹ The atmosphere for devising a National system of education had already been created by working up the national sentiments of the people through the Swadeshi movement; the immediate occasion for its implementation was also found in the student-movement boycotting Government institutions.

The Congress seized the opportunity by forelock and passed the following Resolution in its 1906 session, held at Calcutta, under the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji:–

"Resolved that in the opinion of this Congress the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control."

Thus the Congress, for the first time, put before the people the concept of National Education. The concept was not an innovation, for it had been talked of by Mrs. Annie Besant earlier. The new thing about it, however, was that now it had behind it the strength of the Indian people; it had become, to put in other words, a popular concept representing the nationalistic aspirations of the people in the field of education.

¹ - Extract from the speeches of Babu Bepin Chandra Pal; The Indian National Builders; published by Ganesh and Co., Madras; p.375.
THE PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

The concept of National Education was not clear during the early years of the Swadeshi movement. But gradually the confusion subsided and some unanimity regarding the basic characteristics and ideals of National Education came to the surface. It was believed by all the national leaders that "National Education is education conducted along national lines, controlled by the representatives of the nation, and so controlled and conducted that it should have for its object the realisation of the National Destiny."\(^1\) The following were almost universally accepted as the basic principles and ideals of a National System of Education:

1. **Indian Control:** It was believed by the Congress leaders that unless education was controlled by the Indians themselves, the official system could never be so overhauled as to suit the national needs.

2. **Fostering Patriotism:** The official system was condemned by the Congress, for it sought to foster loyalty to the British. A truly national system of education was supposed to be one which could arouse patriotic sentiments among the students and thus imbue them with a sense of national service.

3. **Provision for Religious Teaching:** As religion has been the dominant note of Indian culture, religious instruction was considered to be indispensable for evolving a National System of Education.

4. **No servile imitation of the West:** National Education, it was contended by its exponents, should cater to the needs of the country; it should be based on the cultural and intellectual traditions of the land. Indiscriminate imitation of the West in devising the content and

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pattern of education was branded anti-national.

(5) Teaching through the medium of modern Indian Languages:- Emphasis on the teaching of English and its use as a medium of instruction was considered to be the greatest denationalising factor in the domain of education. In a national system of education, the use of modern Indian languages, as medium of instruction, was, therefore, advocated with great emphasis.

(6) Lower Fees:- Education, to be really national, it was contended, should not be a monopoly of the well-to-do classes; it should, on the other hand, be within the easy reach of the masses, and hence fees should be as low as possible.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION AND ITS WORK

The concept of National Education did not remain a mere pious wish for long. The Congress leaders, who were already full of rage at the Curzon’s Universities Act of 1914, soon realised that it was their national as well as moral duty to provide alternative educational institutions for those students who had left Government controlled and aided institutions and had suffered so much at the hands of the repressive bureaucracy for the sake of Swadeshi. It was, indeed, a delicate situation warranting their immediate attention. An educational conference was, therefore, held on November 16, 1905, at the Bengal Landholders Association. It was presided over by the distinguished leader and jurist, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose. It was a representative conference of national leaders, of all men of light and leading in the country, including Gooru Das Banerjee, Tarak Nath Palit, Sarada Charan Mitra, Satyendra Prasanam Sinha (later Lord Sinha), Hirendra Nath Dutta, Bepin Chandra Pal and Satish Chandra Mukerjee.
Some distinguished students of the Calcutta University were also invited. It was a unique spectacle, for never before was such a representative conference held to consider the subject of National Education.

The Conference was marked by animated and protracted discussion for hours. It continued up to mid-night and finally the following significant resolution was passed:—

"That in the opinion of this Conference, it is desirable and necessary that a National Council of Education should be at once established to organise a system of education—literary, scientific and technical—on National lines and under National control."

The Ways and Means Committee (of the Conference) report was considered at the third meeting of the Education Conference held on March 11, 1906, and two resolutions were passed—first accepted the report and the other accepted the list of some 92 select names as forming the National Council of Education. The Council was formally inaugurated on March 11, 1906.

The objects of the Council, as stated in its Memorandum of Association, were as follows:—

1) to impart education, literary and scientific, as well as technical and professional, on national lines and exclusively under national control, not in opposition to, but standing apart from the existing system of Primary, Secondary and College education, attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, history and philosophy, and designed to incorporate with
the best Oriental ideals of life and thought the
best assimilable ideals of the West;

(ii) to promote the study chiefly of such branches of the
arts and sciences as are best calculated to develop the
material resources of the country and satisfy its press-
ing wants;

(iii) to provide for denominational religious education, subject
to certain conditions;

(iv) to create and maintain a high standard of proficiency,
and to enforce strict discipline in accordance with the
best traditions of the country;

(v) to impart and facilitate the imparting of education
ordinarily through the medium of the vernaculars and, for
that purpose, to prepare and encourage the practice of
suitable text books in the vernaculars in arts and
sciences;

(vi) to create and maintain a high standard of qualification,
intellectual as well as moral, in teachers and to found
and maintain professorship and fellowships;

(vii) to provide and arrange for meetings and conferences to
promote and advance the cause of education."¹

The Council prepared an educational plan of its own, covering
all the stages of education, as given below :-

(1) The Primary Stage : 3 years' course, commencing at the
age of 6.

(2) The Secondary Stage : 7 years course, commencing at 7 and
finishing at 15.

(3) The College Stage : 4 years' course in a single subject-
literary or scientific with one allied
subsiduary subject, equivalent to the
B.A. Honours course of the University.

¹ Ganesh and Co., Madras -
The Indian Nation Builders,
Part III; pp.182-183.
Imbued with a true nationalist spirit and prompted by the motive of securing the real welfare of the country, this plan of education, prepared by the Council, had certain features of its own, which at once distinguished it from the alien system. These were as follows:

(i) It attached adequate importance to the awakening of the powers of observation and thought by means of object-lessons.

(ii) It sought to make education easy by imparting it through the medium of the learner's mother-tongue.

(iii) It sought to make education real by insisting on the learner's acquiring a knowledge of things and thoughts, and not merely of words and sentences, which are only their verbal expression.

(iv) It sought to save the learner's time by arranging the course of study so as to enable him to master in 5 years, after finishing his Primary Education, what he then took 7 years to learn, the standard for the 5th year being equal to the present Entrance Standard of the Calcutta University, while that of the 6th and 7th years was equal to the standard for its Interim Examination in Arts, attainable under the then-existing system only after 9 years' study. This saving of time was to be secured as a result of imparting knowledge through the medium of mother-tongue and of excluding from the course of study the encumbrances of unnecessary difficulties and unimportant details.

(v) It facilitated technical education by providing for its being taken up at different stages of the learner's progress, as follows:
(1) at the end of the Primary course, that is, at the age of 9;

(2) at the end of the 5th year of the Secondary course, that is, at the age of 14;

(3) at the end of the 7th year of the completion of the Secondary course, that is, at the age of 16.

(vi) It specialised the College course to a much greater extent than what was the case under the then-existing system.

(vii) It reduced within the narrow limits the number of public examinations, which were a severe strain on students and were hindrances rather than help to real study.

(viii) It provided for moral education by requiring teachers and professors to avail themselves of every opportunity afforded by the ordinary lessons, in imparting it and by requiring the enforcement of strict discipline in accordance with the best traditions of the country. It also provided for Physical education and Religious education, subject to certain conditions.

(ix) The scheme, as a whole, sought, on its liberal side, to train students intellectually and morally so as to mould their character according to the highest national ideals, and, on its technical side, to train them so as to qualify them for developing the natural resources of the country and increasing its material wealth.

These were, no doubt, significant features of the scheme, for they constituted a radical departure from the then-existing official system of education which was characteristically bookish, examination-
ridden and unbalanced. The scheme promised to open a new chapter in the history of Indian education by devising a new system of education based on the socio-cultural traditions of the country on the one hand, and calculated to cater to the real needs and interests of the people, on the other.

The work of the Council received a very good start by the munificent endowments - announced on the spot - by Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhary (Zemindar of Gouripur) and Suryakant Acharya (Maharaja of Mymensingh); the former promised a donation of Rs.5 lacs and the latter of Rs.3 lacs, while Subodh Chandra Mallick, another pioneer in the educational field, had already promised Rs.1 lac.

To implement its above scheme of National Education, the Council soon started a model college at Calcutta, named as the 'Bengal National College'. Satish Chandra Mukerjee saw in the Bengal College the fruition and fulfilment of the work he had started, by organising the Dawn Society, and it was quite meet and proper to appoint him as the Superintendent of the College; Sri Aurobindo lent the weight of his name and personality to it as its Principal.

The National Council of Education did not rest at its oars after founding the Bengal National College; it was determined to do real and solid work in the educational field. Within a few years, therefore, many institutions of National Education were founded by it. A list of some of the outstanding ones among them is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of founding</th>
<th>Name of Institution founded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Dinapur National School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Chandpur National School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(contd:)

1 - Mukerjee, H.D. and Mukerjee Uma- The Origin of the National Education Movement; pp.113-14.
1906 Mymensingh National School
1906 Comilla National School
1906 Kishoreganj National School
1906 Majura National School
1907 Majpara National School
1907 Sylhet National School
1907 Maldah National School
1907 Khulna National School
1907 Jessore National School
1907 Shantipur National School
1907 Noakhali National School
1907 Jalpaiguri National School
1907 Kamargram National School

(The National Schools at Rangpur and Dacca were the only exceptions, for they had been founded before the Council came into existence, that is, in 1905).

'In all, 11 High Schools in Bengal and 40 in East Bengal were started', by the Council.²

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT OUTSIDE BENGAL

The National Council of Education had done exemplary work in the field of National Education in Bengal. This gave inspiration to the educational workers in other provinces also, and the ideal of National Education became almost an 'all-India commodity'. The result was that, by the middle of 1909, the Bombay Presidency could boast of 2 Secondary National Schools - besides a number of Primary Schools - namely, (I) The Samartha Vidyalaya of Talegaon Dabhada in the Poona district, and (II) The Maharashtra Vidyalaya, Poona. In Berar, the Yeotmal National School, at Yeotmal - solely financed and controlled by the people of the locality - became the veritable beacon-light

² - Quinquennial Review (1907-12), para. 670.
of National Education in the province. In Andhradeesh, the Andhra Jatheeya Vidya Parishad, which was founded on the pattern of the National Council of Bengal, took up the cause of National Education with great enthusiasm. The townsmen of Masulipatam resolved, on November 17, 1907, at a public meeting, to establish a National College for imparting education - literary, scientific and technical on national lines and under national control. They also set up an executive committee of 13 members to found the Andhra National University in the Madras Presidency. In January 1908, was started the Secondary National School at Rajahmundry, and the Model National College on July 1, 1909, at Masulipatam.

Notwithstanding the foundation of the above National institutions outside Bengal, the fact remains that the movement in other provinces did not show the same flush of enthusiasm as in Bengal, with the result that the number of institutions founded in them was comparatively much smaller.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

The first tide of National Education, that came in the wake of Swadeshi movement, however, soon ebbed out. The National schools and colleges that had sprung up during this period evaporated rapidly. They could neither become a permanent feature of Indian education, nor did they leave any traces behind, to inspire the workers in the field in the succeeding years. Lala Lajpat Rai has described the last phase of the movement very vividly thus, "The National Council of Education still existed but only in name. Its condition is moribund. The leaders and officers themselves have strangulated it. Mr. T. Palit and Sir Rash Behari Gosh, two of its strongest pillars, gave it a death-blow when
they handed over their magnificent endowment to the Calcutta University, instead of to the National Council of Education, founded by them. The few scholars who, with characteristic sacrifice, gave up careers to give instruction to the students of National Colleges, are all dispersed. They are seeking appointments in Government aided institutions. The nationalist schools, started by the Council, have, most of them, been disintegrated by the force of circumstances, and at the present moment the movement is nothing but a dilapidated and discarded landmark in the educational progress of the country. ¹

As to the reason for this rapid decline of the movement, it was to be found in the changed political atmosphere of the country. The British Government was shrewd enough to change its tactics of repression, which was making the people more and more infuriated and desperate. The British foresaw the danger involved in such a policy, and soon, therefore, switched over to a policy of reconciliation. The annulment of Partition, followed by Minto-Morley Reforms (1909), took the wind out of the Swadeshi sail. Tempo of the political ferment subsided, and calm was restored. Due to this change in the political atmosphere, the movement of National Education, which was carried on the crest of the tide of political agitation, was bound to become dull. With the tide of Swadeshi had come the gem of National Education, and when the tide receded, the gem was also gone.

CONGRESS EFFORTS FOR THE SPREAD OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The next important step which the Indian National Congress took in the field of Indian education was in respect of Primary education. The 'filtration' theory, upheld by the official bureaucracy,
was not to their liking, for they knew that it was this theory which was chiefly responsible for the very low percentage of literacy existing in the country. The need for the expansion of Primary education was being felt by them right from the beginning of the 20th century. Inspiration was drawn from the advanced state of Primary education in the Western countries and a great example had already been set by the Gaikwar of Baroda who introduced Compulsory Primary education in his state in 1906. The popular demand for such a step for the rest of the British India got strength from this example. The official preference for quality did not at all appeal the people, for they wanted more and cheap education in the form of universal, free and compulsory education. The Congress, as the spokesman of the people, took up the issue of Compulsory Primary education, under the leadership of G.K. Gokhale who, besides Surendra Nath Banerji, Dadabhai Naoroji and Pheroz Shah Mehta, was an important pillar of the Congress during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Gokhale attached very great importance to compulsory Primary education, as is clear from his these remarks on the subject "Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement."

I think it is not unfair to say that one important test of the solicitude of a government for the true well-being of its people is the extent to which it seeks to discharge its duty in the matter of mass education. And judged by this test, the Government of this country must wake up to its responsibility much more than it has hitherto done,
before it can take its proper place among the civilised governments of the world."¹ As regards the official preference for quality, he clearly said, "------ the quality of education is a matter of importance that comes only after illiteracy has been banished."²

Inspired by such an ardent faith in the value and importance of literacy, Gokhale started his struggle for compulsory Primary education by moving the following resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council, on March 19, 1910:—

"That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country and that a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals."³

The resolution caused a good deal of stir amongst the official members of the Council. The Government was definitely not prepared for such a radical move; hence it abstained from committing itself on the issue. It only gave him an assurance that the matter would be considered 'most carefully'. Upon this, Gokhale withdrew his resolution with a graceful speech, trusting the bona fides of the Government in a gentlemanly fashion. The following two proposals of his resolution were, all the same, accepted by the Government :—

(i) That there should be a separate Secretary exclusively for Education. Accordingly, a Department of Education was created under the Government of India in 1910.

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¹ Gokhale's Speeches; pp.608-9.
³ Quoted by Nurullah S., and Naik, J.P.- A History of Education in India; p.534.
(ii) That a statement, describing the progress of education, should be included in the budget-statement. This promise was also fulfilled, for the Government of India began to publish yearly-reviews of educational progress in India.

Gokhale watched the developments patiently for some time. But, finding the Government lukewarm towards the promise it had made in respect of compulsory education, he resumed his fight for the same on 16th March, 1911, when he introduced for a second time his bill for Primary education on the floor of the Council. It embodied most of the proposals contained in his original resolution. The object of the Bill was stated to be, "to provide for the gradual introduction of the principle of compulsion into the elementary educational system of the country." This was considered to be the only effective way for a universal diffusion of elementary education.

The Bill had the following remarkable features:--

(1) It was permissive in nature, for it did not seek to make it obligatory for the local bodies to introduce compulsory Primary education; it, on the other hand, only permitted them to do so on the fulfilment of certain conditions.

(2) It put the initiative for introducing compulsory education on the local bodies, and not upon the Government.

(3) It did not bind the Government to pay any definite proportion of the additional expenditure to be incurred by local bodies in introducing compulsion. It, on the other hand, only expected the Government to make rules for the appropriation of the cost of compulsion between the Government and the local bodies.

These features of the Bill clearly show that the measure was
only a modest step in the desired direction.

After the Bill had been circulated for opinion, it came up for discussion before the Council on the 17th of March, 1912. The discussion was quite a prolonged one, lasting for full 2 days. It, however, soon became clear that the Bill had no chance for success. The majority-opinion was decidedly against it. Not only official members but also many non-official members spoke against it; on one ground or the other. Some of the main grounds on which the Bill was opposed were as under:

(i) Persuasion should be exhausted before resorting to compulsion.

(ii) The popular demand was for more elementary education, and not for compulsion.

(iii) Provincial Governments were not in favour of it.

(iv) Local bodies were not in a mood to impose more taxes to meet the additional expenditure to be incurred on account of compulsory education.

(v) There would be many administrative difficulties in the actual execution of the plan, especially due to want of cooperation from the masses.

Gokhale gave spirited replies to all these objections, but all in vain. The motion to refer the Bill to the Select Committee was defeated by 38 votes against 43. The defeat caused little surprise or sorrow to the sponsor of the Bill, Gokhale, for he was prepared for it. "My Lord, he said, "I know that my Bill will be thrown out before the day closes. I make no complaint. I shall not even feel depressed. .... It may be that our efforts may not conduce even indirectly to the
promotion of the great cause which we all have at heart, and that they may turn out after all to be nothing better than the mere ploughing the sands of the sea-shore. But, My Lord, whatever fate awaits our labours, one thing is clear—we shall be entitled to feel that we have done our duty, and, where the call of duty is clear, it is better even to 'labour' and fail than not to labour at all.¹

Although the legislative efforts of Gokhale could not result in the enactment of the desired law for Compulsory Primary education, yet his efforts in this direction made the following significant contributions to Indian education:

(1) A Department of Education under the Government of India was created in 1910.

(2) The Government of India began to publish yearly reviews of educational progress in India.

(3) It gave great stimulus to the Provincial Governments in the field of Primary education. The lead was given by V.J. Patel in Bombay. His Bill for the introduction of compulsory Primary education in Municipal areas was accepted by the Bombay Legislature and it became the Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act of 1918, popularly known as the Patel Act. His example was soon followed by other provincial governments as well. This will be evident from the following table² showing the Acts passed for Compulsory Primary Education before 1921:

1 - Gokhale's Speeches; p.660.

2 - Quoted by Syed, N. and Naik, J.P. - op.cit.; p.543.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Name of Act</th>
<th>Compulsion whether for boys or girls</th>
<th>Whether applicable to rural or urban areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>Primary Edu. Act</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>Primary Edu. Act</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>Primary Edu. Act</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Bihar and Orissa</td>
<td>&quot; Edm. Act</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>City of Bombay</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>City of Bombay only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>Primary Edu. Act</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>Elementary Edu. Act</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) It made the people keenly conscious of the need of spreading Primary education as extensively as possible.

THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1920) AND THE SECOND UPRARIVAL OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

Towards the end of the second decade of the 20th century Indian nationalism was again at a high pitch. The magnificent role of India in the World War I gave her a sense of self-consciousness. The Montford Reforms (1919) frustrated the people who had expected a greater return from the British Government for the help rendered by the country to the Allies in the War; the Muslims were also betrayed by the British Government, and they joined hands with the Congress in their Khilafat movement; the active interest and support of the capitalists strengthened Congress financially; and lastly, the appearance of Gandhiji on the political scene gave a new edge to the National movement by driving it home to the masses. No wonder if, under these circumstances, a new wave
of nationalism began to sweep over the country, and the political tension increased by leaps and bounds in the period following the war.

The Government realised the danger inherent in such an explosive political situation and hence resorted to Emergency Laws, known as Rowlatt Bills. Gandhi tried to get them withdrawn but in vain. He then gave the call of Satyagraha against these laws. The people responded energetically, and the Government resorted to repression again. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in Amritsar shook the conscience of the whole nation. The Hunter Commission report, which dismissed the tragedy merely as 'an error of judgement' on the part of Col. Dyer, who was responsible for the inhuman incident, outraged the people.

The situation seemed to be fast heading towards a crisis, when the Congress held its special session at Calcutta, from the 4th to the 9th of September, 1920. It was at this session that Gandhiji came out with his scheme of Non-Cooperation movement, which was accepted by the Congress, and subsequently ratified by it in its regular session at Nagpur. The Non-Cooperation movement, as envisaged by Gandhiji, was to be a very broad-based and comprehensive movement, "covering the whole field, from the renunciation of titles, at one end, to the refusal to pay taxes, at the other. It called upon the merchants gradually to boycott foreign trade relations and encourage hand-spinning and hand-weaving, exhorted the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the National Movement."

Among the four things which the people were called upon to boycott by Gandhiji to make the Non-Cooperation movement a success

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1 - Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya - op. cit., p. 207.
schools were one, the rest being foreign cloth, liquor, and the
Councils. In one of his resolutions, passed at the special Calcutta
session, he advised "the gradual withdrawal of children from schools
and colleges owned, aided, or controlled by Government, and, in place
of such schools and colleges, the establishment of National schools
and Colleges in the various provinces."\(^1\)

Thus, like the Swadeshi movement, which had brought the first
upheaval of National education, the Non-Cooperation movement of 1920
had also two aspects, as regards education, namely, (i) boycott of
Government owned, aided or aided educational institutions, and (ii)
establishment of National Schools and Colleges. Gandhiji believed it
to be a national sin to study in the institutions of a Government
which was guilty of the Punjab and Khilaphat wrongs. "It is sinful",
he declared, "to receive any education under the control of the present
Government, no matter how high its quality may be, even as it would be
to take the richest milk when it is tainted with poison."\(^2\) Besides, he
believed the students had a moral obligation to participate in the
movement, for, when the liberation war is on, they should not cut
themselves into an unrealistic isolation from it. Were not the Oxford
and Cambridge Universities, he argued, deserted during the last World
War?

Gandhiji's advocacy for the establishment of a parallel set
of national educational institutions, without any Government help, was
not pure emotionalism. It was rather based on well-calculated facts.
He supported his belief by quoting the following expenditure figures

\(^1\) Ibid, Vol.I; p.203.
\(^2\) Young India, 29th September, 1920; p.48.
for 1918-19 on Primary, Secondary and Higher education:

- Government Treasury: Rs. 392 lacs.
- Local Funds: Rs. 174 lacs.
- Municipal Funds: Rs. 49 lacs.
- Fees: Rs. 319 lacs.
- Public Funds: Rs. 195 lacs.

Total: Rs. 1,129 lacs

Gandhiji emphasised the fact that out of a total expenditure of Rs. 1,129 lacs, the Government spent only Rs. 392 lacs to show that Government's contribution in educational expenditure was negligible, and that, therefore, it was possible for the people to run these educational institutions themselves. He wrote, "Do these figures not show that practically we ourselves finance the Governmental educational system, while all along we maintain the hallucination that the Government does everything, and that we can, without Government, do nothing for ourselves. If we get rid of this hallucination and further decide upon curtailing the useless and costly paraphernalia, we can very easily make education independent of Government-control, stand on its own legs and make improvements necessary to suit it to the needs of the country."

ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE BY THE STUDENTS

The call of Gandhiji, strongly supported by other national leaders and by Ali Brothers*, in particular, evoked enthusiastic response from the students. The situation did not only arouse their patriotic sentiment but also "presented possibilities of romance and adventure that irradiated a colourless existence. Picketing and procession were

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1 - Young India - 1919-22; p.423.
2 - Ibid, p.423.
as irresistible to such minds as a bumper supper and a 'rag' to Oxford undergraduates."

The students of the Aligarh University were the first to come out when Mahatma Gandhi and Ali Brothers visited Aligarh and appealed to them for it. They immediately passed a resolution demanding nationalisation of the University with a view to severing all connections with the Government and to revise the curricula on national lines. But unity among the students could not last long. Some of them were recalled home, and some were persuaded to change their views. The few who continued to stay on in the university premises and to press for nationalisation, were turned out with the help of the Police. True to the policy of non-violence, they quietly left the premises and established a new University - the Jamia Millia Islamia, (National Muslim University)-at Aligarh, almost immediately.

The example of Aligarh was soon followed elsewhere. The student movement spread like wild-fire in the U.P., the Punjab, and the Bombay Presidency. Bengal followed suit, and "Calcutta witnessed one of those thrilling scenes which were not few or far between in the course of that memorable year and a half. About the middle of January, on an appeal by Deshbandhu C.R. Das, thousands of students left their colleges and examinations." The call of Non-Cooperation had gone home to the student-community; they boycotted schools and colleges in large numbers and made this part of the movement most successful.

The movement had a constructive side as well. National Universities (Vidyapiths), National Colleges and National Schools were

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2 - Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, op.cit., p.211.
started in different parts of the country. Gandhiji visited Calcutta and opened the National College on the 4th February, 1921. He also visited Patna for a second time and formally inaugurated the National College there. A number of Vidyapiths (National Universities) were established all over the country, namely, the Gujerat Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Bihar Vidyapith and the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith.

Besides these National Universities, a large number of National schools and colleges of all grades, with thousand of students, were started in all parts of the country, as a result of the impetus given by the Non-Cooperation movement. The following table shows the great number of National Schools and Colleges that came into existence by 1921-22:--

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>National Schools and Colleges in 1921-22.</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Scholars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>5,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>17,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>14,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>8,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>16,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar and Orissa</td>
<td></td>
<td>442</td>
<td>17,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western Frontier Province</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Administrations</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,389</strong></td>
<td><strong>96,682</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India, 1917-22.
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

What Mahatma Gandhi wrote about the Vidyapitha (National University) of Gujerat is fairly indicative of the characteristics of the National institutions, which were established in the wake of this upheaval, in general:—

(i) The National University stands to-day as a protest against the British injustice and as a vindication of national honour.
(ii) It stands for a religion with a 'Dharma' of the Hindus and Islam of the Mohammadans.
(iii) It wants to rescue the Indian vernaculars from unmerited oblivion, and to make them the fountain of national regeneration, and Indian culture.
(iv) It holds that a systematic study of Asiatic cultures is no less essential than the study of Western sciences for a complete education.
(v) It stands not for domination of one culture over the other, but harmonious blending of all. That is why the University has devised a study of all the Indian religions by its students.
(vi) The study of Hindustani, which is a national blend of Sanskrit, Hindi and Persianised Urdu, has been made compulsory.
(vii) The spirit of independence will be fostered not only through religion, politics and history, but through vocational training also, which can alone give the youth of the country economic independence and a backbone that comes out of a sense of self-respect.
(viii) The use of Gujarati as the medium of education will facilitate the process, and ere long the suicidal cleavage between the educated and the non-educated will be bridged. And, as an effect of industrial education to the 'genteel folk' and literary education to the industrial classes, the unequal distribution of wealth and the consequent social discontent will be considerably checked.

(ix) The Gujarat University will have nothing to do with the Government. *

The National Schools, Colleges and Universities could not, however, have a smooth sailing for they had to labour under many difficulties, as enumerated below:—

(i) Lack of suitable buildings and accommodation.
(ii) Inadequate finances.
(iii) Lack of trained staff.
(iv) Hostile attitude of the Government; students and teachers of the National institutions were arrested in large numbers in the name of political security.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE UPEHEVAL

The second upheaval of National Education also did not last long. The Non-Cooperation movement unfortunately took an ugly turn, as the cases of violence began to occur, e.g., the Chauri Chaura incident. Gandhiji was arrested and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment, and the movement was suspended in 1922. The people, who had been promised Swaraj within one year, felt dejected, and the political fervour subsided. The enthusiasm of the students also cooled down, and except a few top-ranking

1 - Young India - Novr. 17, 1920; p. 64.
institutions, like the National Muslim University, all other national institutions became defunct, and their students were also permitted to join Government institutions, unless they desired to devote their whole life to the national cause. On the whole, the movement of National Education again fizzled out; the real spirit behind them was gone, and they soon became national institutions in name only. It is interesting as well as revealing to read the following letter which was written to Gandhi Ji by one of the students of these National institutions, describing the general decadence that had set in them:

"You are aware that in the year 1920 many students all over India left Government-controlled institutions. Several national institutions were started. Some have already gone under. The one that I know is a poor affair. It may be called a foreign imitation under national control minus discipline. Many of our teachers do not know the distinction between khaddar or foreign or mill-made cloth. They dress like sahebs and, though themselves dressed in foreign cloth, would not mind talking to us about Swadeshi. They remind one of drunkards, advising others to give up liquor. They talk of the spirit of sacrifice and the value of joining national institutions when they send their own sons or other relatives to Government-controlled schools or colleges. In fact, there is very little love lost between them and us. Do you wonder of many students having gone back to Government institutions. A few of us still remain out. But how long can we do so. ......."¹

¹ - Quoted in Young India - 15th July, 1926; p.73.
movement, they lost public support and sympathy. Scepticism among the 
students and their guardians about their future career and prospects 
dulled their patriotic zeal; the public attitude towards the products 
of National institutions was also one of contemptuous negligence, as 
they were not considered to be truly educated.

Under the above circumstances, the second upheaval for 
National Education also came to an end. It should, however, be pointed 
out here that the second upheaval was more intensive and more wide-
spread; it brought into existence a large number and variety of insti-
tutions, and included within its fold a far bigger number of students, 
as compared to the first one. Also, it left behind some permanent 
traces, whereas the first one had done nothing of the sort. Some of 
the National institutions, that had come into existence in the wake 
of the second upheaval, managed to survive the general decadence that 
had set in them after the suspension of the Non-Cooperation movement, 
and, in due course of time, they gathered fresh momentum.

ITS EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Although the second movement of National Education, like the 
first, could not bring into existence a National System of Education 
in the country, yet it made important contributions to Indian education 
which may be summarised as under :-

(i) It indicated a wide-spread and profound dissatisfaction 
with a system which was too literary and theoretical and 
was chiefly concerned with the preparation of candidates 
for the legal and clerical professions.

(ii) It increased the demand for practical and vocational training, 
which economic conditions had made more necessary 
than ever before.
(iii) It created a fuller recognition and demand for the incorporation of Indian culture and aspirations, coupled with a desire for the more intensive study of vernacular languages and literature and a protest against the excessive use of English as the medium of instruction.

(iv) It conceived of the educational needs of the country in a national sense, for it thought of the same on an all-India basis, without any regard to provincial boundaries.

(v) It propounded the idea of running educational institutions without Government help.

INFLUENCE ON THE OFFICIAL POLICY

True, the movement of National Education, led by the Congress, could not produce immediate results, but its influence on the subsequent educational policy and programme of the Government was considerable. The official bureaucracy realised that something was surely wrong in the educational system devised by it - "... the crisis has left behind the conviction that our educational aims need restatement. If the function of education is the adaptation of the future citizen to his environment, then the content of education must change in harmony with changes in the environment. The political and economic conditions of India have been undergoing change and the National School movement can at least claim that it lent strength to the advocates of educational reform."¹

The following changes in the subsequent official educational policy bear testimony to the influence exercised by these two upheavals of National Education:

1. Introduction of modern Indian languages as media of instruction in secondary schools.

2. Attempts to evolve a National language and efforts to popularise it.

3. More attention to mass education which resulted in a great increase in the number of schools and pupils.

4. Complete Indianisation of the Educational Service, by discontinuing the I.E.S. in 1924, and organising Provincial Educational Service (Class I), instead.

5. Efforts to popularise vocational education and manual training, and to bring education generally into closer contact with the realities of life.

THE POSITION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION FROM 1922 TO 1937

After the second tide of National Education had ebbed out, a general feeling of despondency and hopelessness overtook the people about the possibility of running a net-work of national institutions, independently of Government, to cater to the needs of the country. They had now got the lesson that any large-scale endeavour to maintain a parallel set of national educational institutions without the attainment of political freedom would prove futile. This Lala Lajpat Rai had already stated in 1920, "Any attempt to provide for National Education by private agencies and private funds is futile and to attempt this is to attempt the impossible. ..... A National System of Education must be provided for, enforced, financed and controlled by the nation, and in performing that function the nation must be represented by the State."¹

This view was now accepted more and more, with the result that after 1922 the work in the sphere of National Education became almost negligible; it was, at best, confined to the organisation of

¹ The Problem of National Education in India; p.109.
a few national institutions on an experimental basis. The nationalist struggle was henceforth concentrated to the political front, for it was believed that a National Government is the first pre-requisite for national regenerations in other fields.

With the introduction of the scheme of Dyarchy (Montford Reforms) in 1921, education, as a 'transferred' subject, had passed into the hands of the Indian Ministers in the Provinces. Notwithstanding their enthusiasm for educational reform and expansion, they could hardly do anything for the implementation of the principles and ideals of National Education. This was chiefly for two reasons, namely, (i) they had very little control over the I.C.S. bureaucracy which continued to administer educational affairs according to its old policy, with minimum changes possible; (ii) they did not have the support of the people. The Congress, which was the only political party representing the national aspirations of the people, had already rejected the Montford Reforms, and hence it had boycotted the Legislative Councils. Truly Indian viewpoint, as such, remained outside the Government; the old bureaucratic viewpoint, as represented by the I.E.S. officers, dominated the whole field of education till the advent of Provincial Autonomy in 1937.

EDUCATION UNDER NATIONALIST CONTROL

The year 1937 opened a new chapter in the history of Indian education. The Government of India Act (1935) introduced Provincial Autonomy, as a result of which the entire field of Provincial administration was placed into the hands of Indian Ministers responsible to a legislature having a big majority of elected members. In pursuance of this scheme, elections were held in 1937, and, out of 11 provinces
of British India, the Congress could form its ministries in 1937. This made people optimistic about the future educational prospects. It was hoped that the achievement of political power by the Congress would now enable it to evolve a national system of education to which it was already committed.

The Congress Ministries did try to justify the hope and confidence that the people had reposed in them, by taking up the problem of education earnestly and enthusiastically. Unfortunately, however, efforts of the popular ministries were cut short by the Second World War which broke out in September, 1939, and which had serious repercussions on the political situation of India. Differences arose between the Congress and the British Government on the issue of 'War and Peace Aims' of the Allies, and this resulted in the resignation of Congress Ministries in 1940, and the establishment of Governor's Rule, in their place, under Section 93 of the Act. These 'Care-taker-Governments' functioned in the provinces upto 1945; after that the Congress again resumed power in 1946, but till the achievement of complete independence on August 15, 1947, it remained too busy with political matters to give any serious attention to education.

Keeping in mind, however, the very short span of time from 1937 to 1940 during which the Congress Ministries remained in power, the record of their educational work is by no means a petty one. Working with great zeal and energy, they did commendable work in the field of education and, by their efforts in the field, laid down the lines on which educational reconstruction was to be carried on in future.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CONGRESS MINISTRIES

I. Experiments in the Field of Primary Education:

The educational field to which the Congress Ministries paid most ready
attention was that of Primary education. The need for providing compulsory Primary education had been felt for a long time in the past and the necessary psychological background for the same had already been prepared by the legislative attempts of Gokhale in the second decade of the 20th century. It was, therefore, meet and proper for the Congress to take up this work when it came to power in 1937. Many schemes and experiments, tried by it in the field of Primary education, constitute an important contribution it made to Indian education. Of these, the three schemes, which merit special attention, were :-

1) the Scheme of Basic Education,
2) the Scheme of Vidyamandirs, and
3) the Scheme of Voluntary schools.

7. The Scheme of Basic Education:

Of all the schemes tried by the Congress Ministries, the scheme of Basic Education was undoubtedly the most revolutionary one. The scheme had originated in the mind of Mahatma Gandhi, as he thought over "the appalling illiteracy in the country, the dire need for spreading education, the utter impossibility of making it universal with the present financial resources of the Government if present methods were pursued, and the utter futility and waste of energy and time involved in the method now pursued in educating our children." ¹ In devising this scheme of education, he was actuated by 3 considerations, namely,

(i) to replace the alien system of education by a national one,
(ii) to make education self-supporting, for in a poor country like India it was not possible to make education universal at Government cost, and
(iii) to evolve a system of education which, on the one hand, would provide for the development of the total personality of the child and,

¹ - Rajendra Prasad - Two Years of Work; p.13.
on the other, it would make the educational process a child-centred one.

To give the scheme a definite shape, a conference, to which were invited the workers in the field of education from different provinces and also Education Ministers of the 7 Provinces having Congress Ministries, was held at Wardha in October, 1937. Gandhiji himself presided over it. After some discussion, the following four resolutions were passed:

1. That in the opinion of this Conference, free and compulsory education be provided for 7 years on a nation-wide scale.
2. That the medium of instruction be the mother-tongue.
3. That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre round some form of manual productive work and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft, chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.
4. That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The Conference then appointed a Committee under the presidency of Dr. Zakir Hussain to work out the details of the scheme. In February, 1938, the Committee submitted its report to Gandhiji, the Chairman of the Conference. He approved of the report and placed it before the Working Committee for consideration. The Congress accepted the scheme, as a part of its programme of National Education, in its Haripura Session of March 1938. It was also decided at this session
to establish an All-India Board of National Education to deal with this Basic part of education. The Board came into existence in April, 1938, under the name of Hindustani Talimi Sangh, with its headquarters at Sevagram.

The scheme of Basic Education has been called a revolutionary scheme in the realm of Indian education; this is because of its following novel features:

(i) It seeks to provide free and compulsory education to all boys and girls for a total period of 7 years, that is, between the ages of 7 and 14. This universal minimum education was styled as Basic National Education by Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee.

(ii) It envisages some craft as the centre of education. According to the Zakir Husain Committee Report, "Modern educational thought is practically unanimous in commending the idea of educating children through some suitable form of productive work. This method is considered to be the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education."¹

(iii) It stands for a self-supporting system of education. This was considered to be a very significant feature of the scheme by Mahatma Gandhi himself, for, as he wrote, "You have to start with the conviction that looking to the needs of the villages of India, our rural education ought to be made self-supporting, if it is to be compulsory."²

(iv) Lastly, it seeks to impart education through the medium of students' mother-tongue, as attempts to educate the child through any other medium is believed to be unnatural, involving callous waste of his time and energy.

¹ - Zakir Husain Committee Report; p.120.
² - Mahatma Gandhi - Harijan; 18-9-'37; p.27.
Through these novel features of the scheme, Gandhiji not only aspired to bring about a revolution in the field of education, but also believed that the scheme, when put into practice, would prove "the spear-head of a silent social revolution, fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the professional decay of villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom."

Immediately after the scheme of Basic National Education was accepted by the Indian National Congress, it was put into operation under official patronage in the major provinces where Congress Ministries had been formed, namely, Bihar, Bombay, C.P., Orissa and U.P. The first institute of Basic education, the Vidyamandir Training School, was opened in April, 1938, at Wardha to train teachers for the primary schools to be run on the new lines, as envisaged under the scheme. The governments of C.P., U.P., Bihar and Bombay appointed Special Officers and Boards of Basic Education. Numerous Basic schools were started; some Training centres for teachers and administrative officers were also organised. Among the native states, Kashmir took an active interest in the scheme. A few National Institutions, for example, Jamia Millia Islamia of Delhi, Andhra Jatiya Kalashala of Muslipattam, Gujarat Vidyapith, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith of Poona and similar

1 - Quoted by E.W. Aryanayakam - The Story of Twelve Years; p.21.
other bodies conducted their own Basic institutions. "By October, 1939, there were 247 Basic Schools and 14 training schools trying to work out the experiment of Basic Education in Kashmir, Delhi, U.P., Bihar, Orissa, C.P., Bombay, the Madras Presidency and the state of Mysore." \(^1\)

With the outbreak of the Second World War and consequent upon the quitting of office by the Congress Ministries in 1940, the movement of Basic education got a set-back, especially during the period 1940-41. The Madras Government closed the experiment in Basic education in 1940; the C.P. Government did not carry out its plan of converting all the Normal Schools into Basic Normal Schools; the Vidyamandir Training Institute was closed after a year of work; the Bihar Government also issued a communique in February, 1941, notifying the Government's intention to discontinue the experiment in the new scheme, and hence the Board of Basic Education was dissolved by it in March, 1941.

Notwithstanding this official indifference towards the scheme, the work of Basic education did not come to an end. "A few institutions of National education, such as the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi and the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, Poona, continued their work; 7 Basic Schools in Orissa and 1 in Sewagram were conducted directly by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.\(^2\) All this apart, the most significant development was the transformation of Basic education from a Government to a National experiment, in Orissa. The national workers of the province decided to continue the work independently of Government help or patronage, on the basis of their own strength, and a private body, called the 'Utkal Moulik Shiksha Parishad' was formed for this purpose.

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1 - Ibid - p.3.
2 - Ibid - p.3.
It was due to their efforts that 7 out of 15 Basic Schools in the province continued their work even without Government help.

The National movement of 1942 affected the work of Basic education badly. The struggle diverted the attention of the national workers from the field of Basic education to the political field; the Basic institutions were, therefore, closed; workers were pushed behind the prison-bars and it seemed, for the time being, that the new scheme of education was doomed. Nevertheless, "it is noteworthy that the fury of the storm and the thundering of the gathering clouds could not extinguish the lamp lighted by Gandhiji. Though its light was dimmed for a short while, it began to shine with greater brilliance on the release of Gandhiji from jail."¹ As soon as he came out of the jail, he said he had been thinking hard during the period of his detention over the possibilities of Nai Talim and that he had come to the conclusion that "Basic Education should literally become the education for life."²

Thus began the second chapter in the history of Nai Talim. The scope of Basic education was now very much widened; it was made 'extensive with life itself'. Simultaneously, there was a general awakening of interest in Basic education. Many of the national workers came out of jail with a clearer understanding of its true significance and its place in the programme of national reconstruction. There was a wider and more intelligent demand for Basic education from all parts of the country."³

¹ - Patel, M.S. - The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi; p.144.
² - Eighth Annual Report of Nai Talim(1938-46); pub. by Hindustani Talimi Sangh.
³ - Ibid; p.25.
The All-India National Education Conference, held at Sevagram in 1945, considered this new interpretation of Basic education by Gandhiji and, after a thorough examination of all the aspects of the subject, decided to work out the whole scheme in four parts corresponding to the four stages of life:

(i) Adult education, or education of men and women in all stages of life, including the care and education of the expectant mother, and the mother while the baby is dependent on her.

(ii) Pre-Basic education, or the education of children under 7.

(iii) Basic education, or the education of children from 7 to 14.

(iv) Post-Basic education, or the education of adolescents who have completed Basic education.

The Conference appointed 4 Committees to prepare and revise schemes of education for these four stages of life. Sevagram was chosen as the first field for work on a complete programme of Nai Talim.

In March-April, 1946, National Governments were formed in almost all the provinces. Of these 8 were Congress Governments. One of the first tasks facing the Education Ministers was the introduction of Basic education in their provinces. A Conference of Education Ministers and educational workers was, therefore, called by Sri B.G. Kher, the Chief Minister and Education Minister of the Bombay Presidency, to consider the question of Basic education in the provinces. One of the resolutions passed by the Conference was, "This Conference is of the opinion that Basic Education has passed the experimental stage and requests the various provincial Governments to take the necessary steps to introduce it on a provincial scale."
In response to this Resolution, the National Governments of various provinces started the work of implementing the Basic scheme of education in their respective provinces, both as an integral part of the programme of rural reconstruction and also as a part of their official programme of post-war reconstruction. Thus the work of Basic education had already been taken up by the Provincial Governments, under nationalist control, before the achievement of Independence in 1947.

2. The Vidyamandir Scheme in C.P. & Berar

This scheme was undertaken by the Government of the Central Provinces under the guidance of Pt. Ravi Shanker Shukla, the then Minister of Education in C.P. The aims and objectives of the scheme were:

i) to provide primary education in small villages at a nominal cost to the Government.

ii) to teach the usual primary course, and at the same time to develop a national outlook.

iii) to bring about a close coordination between the school and its rural community.

iv) to work for the welfare of the villages, as a 'radiating centre of light and learning'.

The scheme envisaged the establishment of a Vidyamandir for every village or group of villages within a radius of a mile, where no schools existed formerly, and where about 40 boys and girls of school-going age could be available. These Vidyamandirs were to be established at first on a voluntary basis, and were later on to be transferred to the local community as a salutary obligation. These were designed to be one-teacher institutions; the teacher was to be middle passed and trained, to be employed on 5 years' probation. The remuneration to be
paid to the teacher was to be not less than Rs.15/- p.m., to be met from the endowment fund of the institution. On confirmation, he was to be given the benefit of an insurance of Rs.500/-. It was incumbent upon the teacher to reside in the institution.

The usual Primary course was to constitute the curriculum of these Vidyamandirs. Care was, however, taken to relate the curriculum to the environment of the children, by giving it either agricultural or industrial bias, as the local conditions demanded.

To make the scheme a success, the Government launched upon a plan of vigorous propaganda to arouse public-enthusiasm for it. In 1938-39, 80 Vidyamandirs came into existence. But the 'Care-taker-Governments' did not take interest in them and the scheme soon faded away.

3. The Scheme of Voluntary Schools in Bombay

This scheme was adopted in the province of Bombay. The Government felt that it could not do justice to the problem of universal education at its own cost, for its financial resources were limited. Hence this scheme was formulated with a view to spreading education through private enterprise.

The object of the scheme was to provide schools in small school-less villages, where Government or local authorities could not undertake the work directly. Any person or association running a private school in a locality where there was real need for it was given a fairly liberal grant-in-aid. This aid was given at the rate of Rs.4/-per boy per year on average attendance, and Rs.6/- per head in case of all girls and students belonging to the backward communities.

The scheme was put into operation by the Government in 1938;
and it proved useful to the Government in its endeavours to provide schools in several school-less villages. "Public response to the scheme was spontaneous, and 2,400 schools were opened during the year 1938-39. Private enterprise further added 3,200 primary schools, so that within a period of less than four years there was a net-work of small village-schools all over the province."¹

One remarkable feature of the Scheme of Voluntary schools was that it was also harnessed to liquidate mass-illiteracy, which was rampant in the Indian villages. Voluntary private efforts in this field were encouraged and individuals or associations who undertook to start illiteracy schools for the masses, were given grant-in-aid by the Government. For this, the Government undertook/spend an additional sum of Rs. 4½ lakhs.

The progress of the Scheme, however, declined from 1942 to 1947. "The number of mass literacy schools had touched the peak-figure of 8,000 at the end of the year 1941-42; and thereafter there was a set-back and the number began to dwindle. As a result of the concessions and special facilities provided by Government, the number of mass literacy schools began to record a rising curve again in the year 1945-46, so that at the end of the year 1948-49, the record figure of 8,707 was reached. ....... These special measures ....... accounted for the increase in the number of aided primary schools from 6,684 in 1946-47 to 8,707 in 1948-49, and in the number of pupils in them from 3,48,770 in 1946-47 to 4,53,159 in 1948-49."²

¹ - Report of the D.P.I., Bombay (1941-42); p.25.
² - Ibid - (1947-49); pp.18-19.
II. ADOPTION OF VERNACULARS AS THE MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION

Of all the steps which the Congress Ministries took to reform the official system of education then prevalent in the country, the adoption of modern Indian languages as the media of instruction, particularly at the Secondary stage, was undoubtedly the most significant one. All through, the Congress had agitated against the use of English as the medium of instruction, for such a practice was considered to be completely out of tune with a national system of education. It made the entire educational process an artificial experience for the educand by depriving him of his natural right to receive education through the medium of his own mother-tongue. It was a linguistic tyranny - pure and simple.

With great promptness, the Congress Ministries took up this vital educational problem, when they came to power in 1937. A number of steps were taken by them to effect the desired change in the medium of instruction. Of these, the following were the most outstanding ones:

(i) Publication of good text-books in vernaculars;
(ii) Evolving of necessary terminology in vernaculars;
(iii) Training of teachers through the medium of vernaculars.

All the above steps went a long way towards increasing the popularity of vernaculars from 1937 onwards. It was, in fact, due to the sincere efforts made by the Congress Ministries in this direction that by 1947 modern Indian languages were adopted as the media of school-instruction almost everywhere. This was certainly a significant achievement of the Congress Ministries in the educational field.

III. WORK DONE IN THE FIELD OF ADULT-EDUCATION

The extensive efforts made by the Congress Ministries in the field of adult education constitutes another outstanding contribution
made by them to Indian education. It was rightly felt by the leaders of the Indian National Congress that unless appalling illiteracy, prevailing in the country, was removed, the task of national regeneration was well-nigh impossible; spread of awakening and enlightenment among the people was considered to be the first pre-requisite for bringing about the desired social reconstruction.

Thus, fully aware of the vital importance of adult education, the Congress Ministries, soon after coming into power, started their crusade against illiteracy. Adult Education Boards and Committees were appointed in the various provinces to advise the Government on the steps to be taken for the liquidation of illiteracy. Among the various measures adopted by them for this purpose, the following are note-worthy:

(i) Vigorous propaganda was launched upon with a view to preparing a favourable atmosphere for the spread of adult education. For this, Literacy Days were celebrated, lectures were organised, meetings, songs, dramas and processions were arranged; the cooperation of press was sought and voluntary workers were enlisted. All this went along way in arousing consciousness among the people regarding the need of the mass literacy-work.

(ii) Centres of adult education were established to serve as direct agencies for the opening of classes for the education of the adult populace.

(iii) Grants-in-aid were liberally advanced to private individuals or associations taking up the work.

(iv) Local bodies were exhorted to liquidate illiteracy within their respective areas.

(v) Social welfare organisations were persuaded to give their attention to the cause of adult education.
(vi) Distribution of reading materials to adults free of cost was undertaken.

(vii) Reading-rooms and libraries were opened in the rural areas to save the literate villages from relapsing into illiteracy.

(viii) Rural Development Departments were instructed to take up the literacy work as an important part of their programme.

(ix) Teachers and students were exhorted to take up the work of adult education during their vacations.

(x) Colleges and schools were made to run night classes for adults.

As a result of all these measures, the movement of adult education got a spurt. It was the first organised and enthusiastic effort in the sphere of mass literacy. No doubt, the movement neither proved adequate enough to banish adult illiteracy, nor did it go beyond the narrow limits of the three R's, the fact, however, remains that it aroused unprecedented interest in adult education and familiarised the educationists with its special problems pertaining to its methodology, curriculum, and literature. The experience thus gained proved useful in planning for the spread of education among the masses in the post-war era. The outbreak of the second World-War interrupted the work of adult education, and it was only after Independence that the work could be taken up again in right earnest.

IV. PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

An insistent demand for vocational and technical education had existed in the country right from the last decade of the 19th century. The Indian National Congress, as the spokesman of the people, had been hammering on the need of such education almost in all its annual sessions, expressing great dissatisfaction with the totally bookish and academic
system of education prevalent in the country. Efforts were also made by the Congress to do something in the field on its own initiative. In 1904, an organisation, known as the 'Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education', was established in Calcutta, which started sending abroad a number of Indian students for advanced technical studies. In Bengal, the National Council of Education founded, during the Swadeshi days, the College of Engineering and Technology at Jadavpur which imparted training in mechanical and electrical engineering, and later served as a model for similar institutions. Also, one of the distinguishing features of the National institutions, founded in the wake of the Swadeshi and Non-Cooperation movements, was their vocational and technical bias, for teaching of some craft or trade, in addition to the traditional academic subjects, constituted an integral part of their syllabus.

Introduction of Dyarchy in 1921, which placed Education into the hands of responsible Ministers in the provinces, provided the first opportunity to the Congress to do something in the field of vocational and technical education. It brought such legislative pressure on the Provincial Governments as resulted in the foundation of a number of technical institutes, for example, the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad, the Harcourt Technological Institute, Kanpur, the School of Chemical Technology, Bombay, and others, between 1921-37.

The above pioneering work in the field of vocational and technical education, though appreciable, was too inadequate to meet the total needs of the country for such education. The Congress realised this fact quite well and hence took up the problem in right earnest when it came to power on the grant of Provincial Autonomy in 1937. The Nationalist Ministries, formed by it in the provinces, paid their
immediate attention to this problem. Education at the Primary stage was made craft-centred by the introduction of the Basic Scheme and at the secondary stage, a good number of technical, commercial and agricultural High Schools were started. To provide further incentive to the growth of vocational and technical education, Provincial Governments started giving substantial grants to private schools imparting such education, and also scholarships to deserving candidates for higher technical education were liberally given.

All this gave great impetus to the development of vocational and technical education, and provided a healthy corrective to the contemporary system of education which laid its sole emphasis on the teaching of Arts and Science subjects.

V. EDUCATION AMONG THE HARIJANS

The Congress was committed, under the leadership of Gandhi, to ameliorate the lot of untouchables. The miserable plight of this section of Indian society had stirred the conscience of Gandhi deeply, and he had taken up their cause with great sympathy and feeling. As a true democrat, who believed in the organisation of society on the principle of Sarvodaya, he could not stand the social injustice and exploitation to which they were subjected. It was unbearable for him to call them as untouchables; he, therefore, preferred to call them as 'Harijans' - the creatures of God. Through his paper, 'Harijan', he championed their cause with great fervour, and it was under his influence that the Indian National Congress took upon itself the task of ameliorating their lot as an important part of its constructive programme.

The Congress Ministries, when they came into power, therefore, paid a good deal of attention to the work of Harijan welfare. Besides trying to abolish untouchability and removing their social dis-
-abilities, special efforts were made to spread education among them, so that they may become enlightened members of the society. Various measures were, therefore, taken by the Congress Ministries to implement this part of their programme meant for Harijan welfare. The most significant of these measures were as follows:—

i) Abolition of special schools for untouchables.

ii) Admission of Harijans to common schools on terms of perfect equality.

iii) Award of scholarships to them.

iv) Total or partial exemption from payment of examination fees, or grant of such subsidies for this.

v) Financial help for books and other educational requirements.

vi) Reservation of seats in educational institutions where such reservation was necessary, such as, in Medical and Engineering colleges.

vii) Running of hostels for Harijans under the control of Government, and payment of grant-in-aid to those which were privately organised.

viii) Special facilities to Harijan teachers.

ix) Conduct of special vocational courses in occupations commonly practised by Harijans, for example, tanning and leather-work.

x) Exemption from the payment of tuition fees.

It is also noteworthy in this connection that these special facilities or concessions, given to Harijans, were extended to the Aboriginals, Hill Tribes and other Backward communities, as well.

VI. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The interest of the Congress Ministries in the immediate
educational problems apart, they were also the pioneer in the field of educational planning. The Congress leaders, who were at the helm of the movement, realised pretty well that a policy of piece-meal or casual educational reforms would not do, and that what was needed to evolve a truly National System of Education was concerted action following a well-thought out plan of educational development in the years to come. As such, they undertook the task of preparing such long-range plans which would ensure the future educational development of the country on the desired lines.

While the Provincial Governments prepared their own Five Year Plans of education, the Congress leaders did laudable work in this respect at a non-official level. They prepared comprehensive plans of National Education, having an all-India basis. Of these plans, the two, which deserve special mention were: (i) the Plan of Educational Reconstruction prepared by the National Planning Committee which was constituted in 1938, under the chairmanship of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, and (ii) the Plan of National Education prepared by the All-India Educational Conference, which was held at Bombay in December, 1938. (Both these plans are appended at the end of the thesis).

These plans, which were comprehensive enough to cover all the stages of education and represented the national aspirations of the people in the domain of education, were a distinctive contribution of the Congress to education. They, with their new features—education through the medium of mother-tongue, diversified courses, technical and vocational instruction and physical education—marked a happy departure from the then-prevalent official system of education; and created quite a stir in the educational field. It was for the first
time in the history of Indian education that such comprehensive
plans of educational reconstruction, based on sound and progressive
educational ideas, were made. These pioneer efforts in the field of
educational planning, on the one hand, proved that Indians were not
incapable of sitting together, discussing and planning for the future
educational development of the country and created, on the other, hand,
a tremendous educational consciousness in the people, so far as the
problem of educational reconstruction was concerned.

A SUMMARY OF THE EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF
THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

I. The Indian National Congress, for the first time, approached
the problem of education from a truly national point of view. The
concept of National Education, as propounded by the earlier movements,
had been narrow, for it was a bye-product of the Hindu religious-cum-
cultural thought. The concept of National Education, put forward by
the Congress, was, on the contrary, based on a broad and secular con-
cept of nationalism, including within its fold all sections and commu-
nities of the Indian society.

II. The Congress not only quickened into action the movement of
National Education, but also made it a popular movement in the true
sense of the term. The movement went home to the people and became as
popular with them as the Swadeshi and the Non-Cooperation movements.
As a matter of fact, the movement of National Education started and
developed as a part of these two popular movements.

III. The National Schools and Colleges, that came into existence in
the wake of Swadeshi and Non-Cooperation movements, were valuable
experiments in the domain of National Education. For the first time,
various principles and ideals of national education were tried in them,
and the experience thus gained proved an asset to those working in the field. It was, indeed, in the laboratory of these national institutions that the fundamental principles and lines of educational reconstruction were first evolved.

IV. It was under the leadership of the Congress that the people came to realise the necessity of founding educational institutions on their own initiative, independent of Government help or control. This invariably gave great stimulus to private Indian enterprise in the field of education. Many educated Indians, imbued with patriotic sentiments, came forward to serve the new National Schools and Colleges, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, turning their backs on more lucrative careers.

V. Laudable efforts were made by the Congress for the expansion of Primary education. The legislative attempts made by Gokhale in this direction could not, of course, bear immediate fruits; but the lead that was given by him aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the people for Compulsory Education. As a result of this new educational consciousness, the various Provincial Governments launched upon the policy of introducing Compulsory Education, though in a limited way in the beginning.

VI. The scheme of Basic Education, initiated and implemented by the Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, constitutes an important contribution of the movement to Indian education. The scheme in fact, wrought a revolution in the field of Primary education, by making it truly child-centred. The idea of self-supporting education, embodied in the scheme, was a novel answer to the financial difficulties which blocked the expansion of Primary education.
VII. Adoption of modern Indian languages as media of instruction by the Congress Ministries at the Secondary stage was an important step in the development of education on National lines, for instruction through a foreign language (English) did not only entail unnecessary linguistic difficulty for the pupils, involving considerable waste of their time and energy, but was also clearly inconsistent with the National ideals of education.

VIII. To the Congress goes the credit of setting on foot the movement of Adult Education in India. The mass-literacy campaigns, organised by the Congress Ministries from 1937 onwards, represented a happy departure from the policy of 'downward filtration', followed by the British bureaucracy in the past.

IX. Following the lead of Gandhiji, the Congress contributed immensely towards the education of the Backward classes, especially of the Harijans. This was a significant step, in as much as it sought to provide a happy corrective to the social injustices from which these unfortunate sections of Indian society suffered.

X. The Congress, by laying special emphasis on vocational and technical education, tried to bring about a healthy change in the then-existing system of education which was predominantly bookish. The efforts of the Congress in this direction also provided an effective remedy against the malady of mounting unemployment in the country.

XI. Lastly, it was the Congress which gave to the country, for the first time, the idea of planning in the domain of education, by preparing such schemes and plans of educational development which would ensure the achievement of certain well laid-down educational targets, within a specified period of time. This was, undoubtedly, a significant innovation in the field of Indian education, for, as a result of it,
the educational advance no more remained just a leap in the dark; on the contrary, it now became a matter of pre-planned policy, both in respect of direction and speed.