

ON EDUCATION

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Ever since independence, strenuous efforts have been made to improve our system of education and build up citizens worthy of the future India of our dreams. New schools, colleges and Universities have sprung up all over the place. Educated unemployment has increased. And yet, the defence services are finding it difficult to recruit an adequate number of well qualified persons for the defence of the country. Public Service Commissions all over India speak of the poor quality of our students, their lack of general knowledge and so on. And, in the field of sport, we have the mortification of witnessing India taking second place to some of the smaller and poorer countries of South East Asia.

2. The subject of education affects all citizens. It should not be left for consideration only by the experts i. e. by the educationists. It is solely from this point of view that I venture to note below a few thoughts which I hope will receive consideration.

3. In my opinion, the Secondary School Certificate examination suffers from three major defects. Firstly, it ignores the body which is the very foundation of living. Secondly, it ignores the emotions which control basic virtues like leadership, team spirit, discipline consideration for others and so on. Thirdly, even as regards the mind, it gives undue importance to memory training, relegating intelligence, initiative and other aspects into the background. The system of education in schools is naturally influenced by these defects in the system of examination.

4. The present system was evolved by our late rulers, as generally alleged, with a view to producing clerks to help to run the administration. The business of a clerk

was to collect previous papers and put up the case for orders. Any person with good memory made an excellent subordinate. Independent thinking was deprecated, if not actively discouraged in as much as it almost invariably created dissatisfaction with foreign rule.

5. The strictest possible discipline was enforced by fear. Any breach of discipline, loose talk and disrespectful behaviour resulted in quick and severe punishment.

6. Institutions like Talims and Akharas for physical culture were treated with suspicion as potential breeding grounds of sedition and revolt.

7. Thirteen years have now elapsed since independence. And, yet, we are substantially carrying on with the same old system which puts a premium on memory training, discourages initiative and intelligence and completely ignores the body and the emotions. Indeed, in some respects, we have possibly made matters worse by overloading the curriculum, by adding more subjects for examination, multiplying text books and so on. What with home work, private tuition and private classes, we have, in fact, increased the pressure on immature brains at a time when our children should be mainly concerned with building up their own physique. It is a common sight to see little boys and girls going to school in the morning with a heavy load of books which they can hardly carry on their shoulders. It is even more pathetic to see the return procession of boys and girls late in the evening, tired and dispirited, with little time or energy to take part in healthy outdoor games and sports.

8. The standard of teaching in schools has deteriorated to such an extent that, after school hours, many of the boys

and girls have to undergo private tuition or join private classes which have sprung all over the country. Guides and notes are getting preference over text books. Indeed, I doubt whether we are now building up even clerks and subordinates as efficiently as before.

9. With the removal of the fear complex and the prestige of the foreign rulers, student indiscipline has increased. No effective method has yet been found to replace discipline based on fear by discipline based on love, self-respect, patriotism and a civic sense which is so very essential to make democracy a success.

10. The problems of education are vast and complicated. They are not capable of any simple solution and have to be tackled in a number of ways from different angles. We have to transform our students into first class citizens capable of dealing successfully with the new age of Sputniks and space travel. The success or otherwise of any solution will depend primarily on how far it will evoke the voluntary co-operation of students to improve their own bodies, emotions and minds. It is obvious that the fear complex should have no place in future India. Not only we cannot but we should not attempt to replace the fear of the rulers by fear of the teachers, parents and so on. We have got to remember that the future of the country lies with our children. That future is safe only if our children become fearless, strong, healthy, disciplined and capable of independent and purposeful thinking.

11. The physical body is mainly built up during the first 20 or 25 years of life. The emotional nature is properly developed only after a person gets married and has children of his own. The mind goes on getting developed until a very advanced age and a man keeps on learning even when he is old. In the circumstances, it would seem to be a mistake to

concentrate too much on studies in the early years of life, when the body has to be built up to its utmost capacity.

12. The crucial period comes at the S. S. C. or the Matriculation examination stage when students leave school with all its discipline and go on to the free atmosphere of college and University education. At this stage, the students are just beginning to understand their own responsibilities and have still got a few years ahead of them in which they can build up their physique, if they really wish to do so. Thereafter it is too late to do anything when they step into the turmoil of life and face difficulties and hardships inherent in earning one's own livelihood.

13. The S. S. C. or Matriculation examination generally carries about 800 marks for written papers in different subjects. Unfortunately, as stated before, the written papers are more a test of memory than intelligence, which accounts for guides and notes getting preference over text books. I do hope that our educationists will seriously consider how the written examinations could be oriented so as to make them more a test of intelligence, general knowledge and knowledge of current affairs than at present. It was all very well cultivating memory when the scriptures had to be handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, and every word and its correct pronunciation had to be memorised without the slightest variation. But now when books are available in plenty, there is no reason to put a premium on such training. I would also suggest some easing of the curriculum to avoid too much pressure on immature brains at a time when children should be mainly busy with physical growth. I feel that this will reduce the proportion of students who do very well at the S. S. C. E. stage but fade out in after life.

14. I am, however, chiefly interested in this note with the physical health of students; their capacity for leadership and team work; their aptitude for games; and what is most important, true discipline which is essential for the proper growth of democracy in India. I appreciate all the efforts being made to improve the health of students; to provide them with better food and better facilities for games and sports, and to inculcate discipline amongst them in various ways. All the same, I would like to suggest one more incentive, which, I hope, will capitalise the psychological factor and enlist the voluntary co-operation of students to improve their own health, morale and discipline to some extent.

15. Examinations play a prominent part in our system of education. Attention is mainly concentrated on subjects for examination. Other subjects are treated as secondary and given little attention. It is universally agreed that the object of education should be to produce a healthy mind in a healthy body. But for various reasons the health of the body has never been included as a subject for examination. I therefore suggest that to the marks for the written papers at the S. S. C. Examination, we should add another 200 marks for physical health, recreation, discipline and good conduct as compulsory subjects of examination. This total of 200 Marks may be sub-divided as follows:

- (i) 75 marks for physical health;
- (ii) 50 marks for recreation including proficiency in games and sports and
- (iii) 75 marks for good conduct and discipline.

16. I do not advocate any addition to existing school hours or teaching; nor any new text books or theory; nor even compulsory physical exercise of any kind. Compulsory physical training and objective tests are already prescribed in all schools upto and including Class X. Compulsory

P. T. has also now been introduced in Colleges. Finally, when a student completes his education and applies for a job, the employer invariably demands a certificate of physical fitness as well as two certificates of good character. I would now advocate the maintenance of Progress Books for all students from the age of 10 to the age of 21, which should record their annual progress in physique, sports and discipline in addition to progress in studies and extra-curricular activities. Progress Books giving a connected account of the entire period from age 10 to 21 should act as incentives to progress for all concerned. These books may themselves well serve as School and College leaving certificates.

17. Headmasters of schools are eminently in a position to judge the merits of candidates, particularly with reference to their Progress Books. They should allot marks to their own students on a consideration of the candidate's record, without any further objective tests. Detailed instructions could be easily drawn up for their guidance, in allotting marks, once the principle is accepted. Boys and girls will require separate criteria and treatment. Headmasters should of course associate with themselves the school medical officer, physical instructor, games teacher and so on. A percentage check of the marks should be undertaken by a small committee appointed by the S. S. C. E. Board or by the Headmasters of one or two neighbouring high schools, to ensure uniformity of marking and obviate favouritism. These marks should be finally reported by Headmasters to the S. S. C. E. Board on the respective applications for appearance at the S. S. C. Examination. Incidentally this will help to raise the influence and prestige of Headmasters, with benefit to all concerned.

18. The S. S. C. E. Board should add these marks, with such further moderation

as may be necessary, to the marks obtained by candidates in the written papers. The resulting total should count for all purposes for which totals count at present. It is obviously right that amongst students who get equal number of marks in the written papers, those with better physique and discipline should get a higher place in the final examination result. Once this is assured, the psychological factor will begin to operate. Consciously or unconsciously, students will begin to take more interest in their own health and discipline. This will be particularly so in the case of students who hope to appear amongst the first 30 students at the top of the final examination result as also in the case of others who are on the border line between Grade I and II, between Grade II and III and so on. What is of course more important, the inclusion of physical health, games and discipline as compulsory subjects of examination will influence the entire system of education and make students and their teachers and guardians take greater interest in these subjects.

19. To begin with, at any rate, I suggest that the pass marks for physical health, discipline etc should be zero percent. There should be no question of any candidate who is handicapped or crippled in any way failing to pass the S. S. C. Examination, if he gets pass marks in the written papers. It would be unwise to shut out from the portals of the University a budding genius who is crippled or otherwise abnormal in some respects.

20. Incidentally, this proposal will furnish valuable data to judge the progressive improvement in health of our students as a result of successive Five Year Plans. It is essential to collect such data for future reference, more particularly for the 16 to 18 year age group. Unfortunately, it appears from a report recently published by the Health Association of the Calcutta University that there has been some deterioration in the

health of students between the years 1953 to 1959. Obviously the matter requires urgent consideration on an All India basis.

21. Certain proposals are separately under consideration to limit admissions to Universities. It may be pointed out that admissions to Medical and Engineering Colleges and the higher technological institutes are even now controlled to a large extent by the number of marks obtained at various examinations. I do not see why the same principle should not be extended to control admissions to the Universities and affiliated colleges. The main thing, of course, would be to insist on all Universities refusing recognition to colleges unless they are adequately staffed and equipped upto the proper standards. The number of admissions to each college should be limited according to the capacity of the buildings, the strength of the staff and so on. Once this is done, admissions to the colleges should be strictly according to the ranking obtained by the students at the S. S. C. Examination. It should indeed be possible in this way to ensure that no student who gets less than 40% marks at the S. S. C. Examination will get admission to any college. Some concessions will, of course, have to be made in favour of students from the backward classes, scheduled tribes and so on.

22. Success in life depends on a proper co-ordination of body, mind and emotions. Without such co-ordination, it is impossible for anybody to reach international standards in any field of activity. Our continued failure at the Olympic games and other international sports and competitions is eloquent testimony to the poor physique of our students. Our few Olympic stars are mostly from the Defence Services and from regions where people have not so far allowed their bodies to be cramped by over exercise of the brain at an early age. I feel that it is high time that we change our system of education and evolve a new system which will help

to develop the entire personality including the body, mind and emotions to the fullest extent.

ANNEXURE I

My suggestions for allotting marks for physical health, games and discipline are noted below (vide para 17 of my note on Education):

I. Physical Health - 75 Marks

(i) Candidates should be divided into 3 age-groups, whose age next birthday will be:

- (a) 16 years or below;
- (b) 17 years, and
- (c) 18 years or above.

(ii) For each age-group, we should have prescribed standards of average height, weight, chest measurement etc. separately for boy and girl students.

(iii) Students with average height, weight and chest measurement should be credited with 30 marks out of the total of 75 marks for this subject.

(iv) Headmasters should add marks upto say 15 marks for boys and upto 25 marks for girls for increased height or chest measurement and other outstanding points including beauty for girl students.

(v) Headmasters should make specific deductions upto 25 marks for less height or chest measurement or for any disease, deformity, over-weight, bad eyesight and so on.

(vi) Finally, Headmasters should give special credit upto 30 marks for boys and 20 marks for girls for special achievements in body building, whether by gymnastics or sports, yogic exercises and so on. (Strength - endurance - agility - stamina - smartness and personality).

(vii) No student should be given more than 50 marks in this subject unless his body is really outstanding. Students who continue on the rolls after they are 18 should in no case be allowed more than 50 marks.

II. Proficiency in Games and Sports-50 marks.

Headmasters should give marks at their discretion as follows:

(i) For regular participation in any game or sport. upto 15 marks.

(ii) For special proficiency in any game or sport e. g. for membership of School Team upto 10 marks.

(iii) For leadership e. g. for captaining the School Team. upto 10 marks.

(iv) For any other outstanding achievement (which must be specifically noted) e. g. for prizes and cups won in tournaments. upto 10 marks.

(v) For selected members of School Team which may have done particularly well in Inter-School Sports. upto 5 marks.

(vi) Headmasters should make suitable deductions for breach of discipline or unsportsmanlike behaviour.

(vii) No student should be allowed over 35 marks in this subject unless he is really outstanding. Students over 18 should in no case be allowed over 35 marks.

III. Good Conduct and Discipline-75 marks.

(i) For Punctuality in attendance at School. upto 15 marks.

(ii) For Discipline. upto 15 marks.

(iii) For Good Conduct. upto 15 marks.

(iv) For Team Spirit and Co-operation. upto 15 marks.

(v) For Leadership, smartness and personality. upto 15 marks.

(vi) Headmasters should make suitable deductions for breach of Discipline or bad conduct.

(vii) No student should be given aggregate marks over 50 in this subject unless he is really outstanding. Students over 18 should in no case be given over 50 marks.

2. It would be a good idea if this method of allotting marks for physical health, games and discipline is adopted in all schools at all examinations from Class V to Class XI. The same principle may well be extended upwards to other examinations, except those of a highly specialised nature. Students will then become familiar with this method and consciously or unconsciously they will make an effort to gain more marks. We would thus be helping to build up the student's entire personality as far as possible instead of only a fraction of it as at present.

There is nothing to worry about students who are already taking part in healthy games and sports. But we must try to do something for others who are not utilising even the existing facilities for games and sports, nor making any conscious effort to improve their own health.

3. Even the most defective system of marking will produce positive results because of the psychological factor involved. I am, therefore, against making the system so complicated and expensive that the entire proposal falls through on the ground of expense. In course of time,

however, the system could be further improved in the light of actual experience of working for the first few years.

4. Even if a student gets less marks than what he really deserves, he will not really lose much, because, the improvement in health and discipline which he has achieved in the process, will stand him in good stead throughout his life.

5. These proposals will supplement and not come into conflict with any other proposals for improving the health and discipline of our students.

6. The expenditure involved in my proposals is insignificant. It will be amply repaid, if, in consequence, even 20% of our students improve their health and discipline to some extent. I would therefore earnestly request that the implementation of the scheme should not be delayed or postponed whether on the score of expense or with a view to improving the system of giving marks. As already stated above, I feel that even the most defective system of allotting marks will necessarily produce positive results merely because of the psychological factor involved.

B. K. GOKHALE.

ANNEXURE II

PROGRESS BOOKS FOR PUPILS FROM AGE 10 TO AGE 21

B. K. GOKHALE, I. C. S. (Retd.)

Cumulative Record Cards have been prescribed for Pupils in Secondary Schools with a view to giving a connected account of progress from year to year. Some schools have themselves introduced Annual Calendars to record progress. While admirable in themselves, these involve an amount of care and attention which it is hardly possible to expect from average school teachers all over the country.

I am advocating the inclusion of physical health, recreation, discipline and good conduct as compulsory subjects of examination. Unless these subjects are placed on a par with academic subjects, I doubt if they will ever receive adequate attention. It is necessary to examine the student's entire personality in the formative years of his life instead of his mind, and more particularly his memory, as at present.

I attach herewith a form of progress book which will give a connected account

of each pupil for the entire period from age 10 onwards. In my opinion, progress books on the lines suggested will be easy to maintain and will also act as incentives to pupils as well as help parents to encourage all round development of their wards before it is too late to do so.

Progress Books in the form suggested could be maintained by class teachers from original notes recorded in the school registers. These Progress Books may well be continued in colleges upto the degree standard. They will serve as School and College leaving certificates and be of assistance to students when they ultimately seek jobs after completing their education.

The cost of each Progress Book including printing and stiff water proof cover should not exceed Re. 1/- per pupil. A new Progress Book could be opened at any stage if the original is lost or damaged. The reasons for the loss or damage should be noted at page 79 of the new book.

Page 1: **Progress Book**

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No.	Subject	Pages
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	Repeat pages 7 to 10 from year to year for 12 years i. e. upto age 22.	11-54
4.	Grand Total of marks in all subjects from year to year for 12 years.	55-66
5.	Remarks by Heads of Institutions.	67-78
6.	Special notes etc. if any.	79-80

I. Academic achievements.

Academic Year : (e. g. 1960-61) Standard : (e. g. V)			Age next birthday (e. g. 11) years
Subject	Marks obtained	Out of total Marks	Remarks by Class Teacher
Mother tongue. Hindi. Mathematics. Science. Music. & so on.			Rank in Class..... out of pupils.
Total for all Subjects.			

General Remarks :

Signature of parent
with date.Signature of Class
Teacher with date.**II. Conduct and Discipline**

Academic Year : Standard :			Age next birthday Years.
Subject	Marks obtained	Out of total marks	Remarks by Class Teacher
Punctuality. Good Conduct. Discipline. Personality			Rank in Class..... out of pupils.
Deduct for breach of discipline or bad conduct.			
Total			

General Remarks :

Signature of parent
with date.Signature of Class
Teacher with date.

III. Physical Health

Academic Year : Standard :			Age next birthdayyears
Subject	Marks obtained	Out of total marks	Remarks giving details of height, weight etc.
Height. Weight. Chest measurement. Expansion of Do Do. Specific additions for achieve- ments in body building			 inches. pounds. inches. inches. (Here give details of special achievements, diseases and handicaps)
Deductions for disease and handicaps.			Rank in Class out of pupils.
Total			

General Remarks :

Signature of parent
with date.Signature of Medical Officer or
Physical Instructor with date.

IV. Games, Sports and Extra Curricular activities

Academic Year : Standard :			Age next birthdayyears
Subject	Marks obtained	Out of total Marks	Remarks mentioning games played and other details includ- ing extra curricular activities.
Regular participation. Special proficiency. Outstanding achievements. Team Spirit. Leadership.			
Deductions for breach of discipline or unsportsmanlike behaviour.			Rank in Class out of pupils.
Total			

Signature of parent
with date.Signature of Games Teacher or
Physical Instructor with date.

Pages 11 to 54

Repeat as at pages 7 to 10 from year to year upto age 22.

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V. Grand Total of marks from year to year

Academic Year : Standard :			Age next birthday years.
Subject	Marks obtained	Total marks	Remarks and suggestions for improvement.
Academic achievements. Conduct and discipline. Physical Health. Games, Sports and extra curricular activities.			Rank in Class..... out of pupils.
Grand Total			

Signature of parent
with date.Signature of Class
Teacher with date.

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Repeat as at page 55 from year to year upto age 22.

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(Special notes and remarks by the Heads of Institution to be recorded, from time to time, as may be necessary e. g. when a pupil migrates from one institution to another or when he has any special or extraordinary achievement to his credit or discredit. Heads of Institution should mention the names of the

Institutions below their signatures and enter the dates on which the remarks are recorded.

The term " Heads of Institutions " also includes Heads of N. C. C., A. C. C. Boy Scouts; National Discipline Scheme and so on.)

Page 79-80

Here record any special notes or points not covered on previous pages e. g.

loss of original progress books and reasons for opening new ones etc.