



WARDHA EDUCATION SCHEME (FIRST COMMITTEE 'S REPORT) .

1. Genesis of the Wardha Scheme.-The present educational system of India has of recent years been condemned on the grounds that it has failed to adjust itself to changed conditions and is "uninspired by any life-giving and creative ideal". In 1937 Gandhiji initiated in the columns of the Harijan a discussion of the Indian educational problem and offered many suggestions the main principles of which were: -

- (a) The course of Primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include the general knowledge gained up to the Matriculation standard less English and plus a substantial vocation.
- (b) For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should so far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation.
- (c) This Primary education, besides training the mind, should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learnt and by buying from the schools their manufactures at prices fixed by the State.
- (d) Such education taken as a whole can and must be self- supporting.
- (e) Higher education should be left to private enterprise and the State universities should be purely examining bodies.

2. An All-India National Education Conference, which was convened at Wardha in October 1937 under the presidentship of Gandhiji to consider his proposed scheme of self-supporting education, passed, the following resolutions : -

- (a) that free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale;
- (b) that the medium of instruction be the mother-tongue;
- (c) that the Conference endorses the proposal made by Gandhiji that the process of education throughout this period should centre round some form of manual and 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;

(d) that the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The age of entry to school should be 7 years and the standard attained at the end of 7 years schooling should approximate to the Matriculation (less English).

*The report was adopted by the Board without alteration in December 1938.

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3. The All-India National Education Conference then appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Husain, Principal of the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, to formulate a scheme of Basic education on the lines suggested by its resolutions. This Committee worked but in detail the implication of those resolutions, and its report is the authoritative Wardha Scheme of Education.

4. That Report (called for purposes of reference, the Zakir Husain Report) was in the hands of each member of the Central Advisory Board of Education Sub-Committee. Before the discussion either on the principles on which the Wardha scheme is based or on its details,, Dr. Zakir Husain, whose presence at the meetings was of the utmost value, pointed out that many of the criticisms to which the Wardha Scheme had been subjected, arose from either a misconception of the fundamental ideas on which the scheme rests or from statements extracted from their context which give a false or distorted impression.

5. Dr. Zakir Husain felt that the discussion would be less discursive if he first pointed out what the Wardha Scheme was not. The removal of misunderstandings and the correction of false impressions would enable the members of the Committee to confine their remarks to the real and not to some hypothetical scheme and so avoid irrelevancy.

6. Dr. Zakir Husain mentioned that criticism was directed mainly against the idea that the scheme was conceived wholly with the set purpose of making education self-supporting by the sale of articles made by the pupils. It appeared to be a scheme of production with conscript child Labour. This impression was, entirely wrong. The scheme was one, of education, not production. The educative value of craft-work and activity was throughout emphasised and the economic question was quite subsidiary. Education in Wardha schools would be carried on through real life situations arising from the physical and social environment of the child and the craft activity. Education through activity is now considered by all teachers as " the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education".

7. The Zakir Hussain report defines the aim of the Wardha Scheme not as "the production of craftsmen able to practise some craft mechanically. but rather the exploitation for educative purposes of the resources implicit in craft work", and sounds a warning of the obvious danger of stressing the economic aspect to the sacrifice of the cultural and educational objectives. The Wardha scheme rejects any mechanical Labour in schools merely for production and states as a

necessary condition of education that "the craft or productive work chosen should be rich in educative possibilities. It should find natural points of correlation with important human activities and interests". This view is identical with that expressed in paragraphs 10-17 and 24-25 of the Wood-Abbott Report and is in complete accord with modern educational thought. The Wardha Scheme deals only with compulsory Primary education and does not imply any stoppage of grants to existing schools or colleges.

8. Hence all criticism, directly or indirectly implying that child labour is to be exploited for economic purposes, so that the schools can be wholly or even partially self-supporting is irrelevant. Critics therefore who believe

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that the schools will be industrial or vocational in the, narrow sense and that the system is intended to force young children into prescribed Vocations have not appreciated the real significance of the Wardha Scheme.

9. Dr. Zakir Husain deprecated uninformed criticism of the Scheme as a result of statements made by enthusiastic but misguided protagonists. He denied that the scheme would remove unemployment; indeed the question of unemployment was not even mentioned in his report, though he felt that the pupils of the Wardha schools would be better "employable" material than the pupils of existing schools because the scheme was designed to produce "workers who will look upon all kinds of useful work as honourable and who will be both able and willing to stand on their own feet". He also denied that the Scheme stated or even implied either that the Government would provide, employment at the end of the course or that all existing schools were to be transformed immediately into Wardha schools.

10. Dr. Zakir Husain next answered the criticism which had arisen in one form or other mainly from Muslim sources that the proposed Wardha schools neglected religious education, and were entirely secular in outlook. He admitted that the scheme prescribed no syllabus in religious education as the difficulties were obvious, but one of its foundations was a respect for all religions. The Wardha Scheme neither made nor implied any alteration in the present position by which any community at its own expense is permitted to give religious teaching in Government or Local Body schools to the pupils of that community out of school hours. Dr. Zakir Husain stated that no community need have the least apprehensions that the Wardha Scheme was intended to discourage any form of religion or religious observance.

11. Misunderstanding also existed in regard to co-education. The Wardha Scheme does not make co-education compulsory to any age, and can be adopted in either boys or girls or co-educational schools. Indeed it expresses no opinion whatever whether or not co-education is desirable. The option given to parents in the Wardha Scheme to withdraw their girls from school after the completion of the twelfth year does not imply that boys and girls should receive co-education up to that age.

12. After illuminating the educational and sociological bases on which the Wardha Scheme rests, Dr. Zakir Husain referred to the charge that under the wardha Scheme, universities were to be

merely examining bodies and as such would receive no financial aid from Government. Such a charge needs no refutation. His Report expressly excludes any discussion on Secondary education for pupils above the age of 14. If the Wardha Scheme is adopted, a system of higher education coordinated with the Wardha organisation will have to be worked out.

13. To summarize, the Wardha Scheme-

(a) emphasises education through activity and is not primarily concerned with the production of saleable material;

(b) does not make spinning and weaving the only basic craft, but admits of the inclusion of any craft of equal or higher educative possibilities;

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(c) does not imply the ruling out of facilities for religious (denominational) education, where any community desires it; and

(d) does not state or imply that the salary of the teachers must be directly met from the sale of material made in the school.

Dr. Zakir Hussain's explanation removed from the minds of some members of the Committee the apprehension aroused by the literature which preceded the formulation of the Wardha Scheme and by some of the phraseology of the Wardha Scheme Report itself and so prepared the ground for a discussion of details.

14. The framers of the Wardha scheme deliberately confined their proposals to village education as the bulk of India's population resides in villages. The scheme is therefore primarily for rural areas. The Committee therefore wish to emphasise that it should first be introduced in rural areas and should not be extended to urban areas without necessary modification though the principle of education through activity is as true for urban as for rural schools.

15. Age range for "Basic" education. The Zakir Husain Committee lays down a seven years course of education from the age of 7 to 14. They however, realise that by fixing 7 as the age for the introduction of compulsory education, they have neglected a very important period of the child's life. In view of financial and other considerations, they did not feel justified in including the education of children below the age of 7 as a part of the compulsory scheme, though they hoped that nursery and infant schools would be started and encouraged by the State.

16. The normal age for admission to school in all advanced countries is 5 or 6. Even in India under the existing system of education children are usually admitted to school about the age of 6. This period of a child's life offers such educative possibilities that the majority of members preferred that the age range for compulsory education should be six years to fourteen years, though children of 5 years of age should not be excluded from school. It was agreed that compulsion could not be made effective merely by passing an Act making compulsion universal.

Such a course would be unwise and impracticable, but the difficulties must be faced and effective compulsion extended as rapidly as possible.

17. In Provinces where compulsion is in force, the age limits are usually 6 to 11. The Committee agree that this higher age limit must be increased to 14. Protagonists of the Wardha Scheme prefer that if for compulsory education, any lesser period than seven years has to be taken, the higher age limits of 14 should remain and whatever period is fixed should be reckoned downward from the age of 14 rather than upward from the age of 6. In other words, compulsion from 9 years to 14 years is preferable to compulsion from 6 years to 11 years. They argue that in the present circumstances education in the early years is of little worth, causes wastage and stagnation and is therefore a waste of money and that the years of adolescence offer greater educative possibilities than the age of childhood, By retaining the higher age limit, civic and social responsibilities, permanent literacy and craft skill and interest can be better developed.

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18. The Committee whilst recommending that the age for compulsion should be 6 to 14 were not unaware of the financial and other difficulties, particularly that of the supply of suitable teachers, and feel that the approach to universal compulsory education from 6 to 14 will depend on the financial and other resources of the different provinces. A number of members prefer the compulsory period to begin from the age of 6 and gradually work up to 14.

19. Stoppages of Education.-All schools under the Wardha Scheme are Basic schools and therefore no difference in nomenclature between "Primary" and "Secondary" classes or stages is made. Primary and Secondary education, however, form two well-defined stages each with its own scope, aims and methods. The clear distinction in aims and methods between these stages must be kept in view. This question is discussed at length in the Hadow Report. The Central Advisory Board of Education at its first meeting held in 1935, recommended a revised school organisation consisting of a primary stage of four years, a Lower Secondary stage of four years and a Higher Secondary stage of three years. The writers of the Wood-Abbott Report "wholeheartedly commend the general layout of this proposed reconstruction". Indeed every province makes the distinction between Primary and Secondary or Middle education though the dividing line is at the end of the fourth class in some Provinces and at the end of the fifth in others. The Committee, however, felt that it was unnecessary to make any recommendation in this connection as the question would need consideration at greater length when the co-ordination of the final form of the Wardha Scheme with higher education is taken up. It was agreed unanimously that transfer to Anglo-vernacular and other schools should be permitted after the completion of the fifth class or about the age of 11.

20. Medium of Instruction.-The Wardha Scheme lays down that the medium of instruction shall be the mother-tongue, that is, the vernacular of the pupils. The Wood-Abbott Report makes the same recommendation and few will be found to disagree. The Committee unanimously approve, though they are aware that in certain provinces a difficulty might arise as more than one vernacular may be spoken. In making this recommendation the Committee wish to emphasise that the term "vernacular" connotes the "literary" language and not a dialect.

21. Hindustani.-The object of including Hindustani as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum is, according to the Zakir Husain Committee, to ensure that all the children educated in the "Basic" schools may have a reasonable acquaintance with a common "lingua franca". That Committee has accordingly recommended that in Hindustani-speaking areas this language should be the mother-tongue but the students as well as the teachers will be required to learn both the scripts so that they may read books written in Urdu as well as in Hindi, and that in non-Hindustani speaking areas, where the provincial language will be the mother-tongue, the study of Hindustani should be compulsory during the 5th and 6th years of school life but the children will have the choice of learning either one or other script. Thus teachers who have to deal with children of both types must know both the scripts. The Committee recognise the desirability of a common language for India which should be Hindustani with both the Urdu and Hindi scripts, though some members believe that the adoption of one common script, the

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Roman, would considerably simplify teaching procedure and tend to unity among different communities. There is the danger that undue influence might be brought to force children to read in the script other than that of their choice, especially when the number of such children is small. The Committee desire to emphasise that full option should be given to children to choose the script and that provision should be made for teaching them in that script.

22. English.-Discussion on the question whether English should be taught in the "Basic" schools revealed considerable difference of opinion. Some members of the Committee feel that English should have no place in these schools which are primarily meant for rural areas. The study of English in such schools is educationally unsound. The time taken in its study is out of all proportion to the advantage gained and tends to prevent the formation of a firm foundation of education.

23. On the other hand, some members of the Committee believe that a good grounding in English is essential for higher studies and so long as English remains the medium of instruction in colleges and retains its importance in all phases of Indian life, the study of English must be started at an age earlier than 14. The Wood-Abbott Report, with its emphasis on teaching through the vernacular, admits that "the study of English, at least as an optional subject, may have to be included in the curriculum of some of the Lower Secondary schools where there is a public demand for it".

The Committee, however, agree that the demand for English will be met by the possibility of transfer after the 5th class or about the age of 11 to schools where English is taught and that English should not be included in the curriculum of "Basic" Wardha Schools.

24. Craft and Manual Activities.-The fundamental principle of the Wardha Scheme is education through productive craft activity. Perhaps the word "creative" would be preferred to "productive" by educationalists as the word "Productive" may be and has been read to imply that economic production outweighs educative development. We emphasise that the Wardha Scheme stresses the educative value of craft work. That saleable material will be produced in the higher classes of the Basic schools is no objection to the scheme. Indeed unless saleable material is produced the

educative possibilities have not been satisfactorily exploited. The income from the sale of such material might well be applied to the upkeep of the school.

25. It is unnecessary to discuss the educative principle of learning by doing. All recent literature emphasises this principle and all schools with any pretence to be up-to-date have adopted it. Indeed the education of children through hand work in its various forms is one of the outstanding features of modern education. The Committee unanimously agree with the principle of educating children through purposeful creative activities which should gradually develop into productive work.

26. To prescribe one basic craft in the lowest classes of a school which children of the age of about 6 may join is educationally unwise. The activities in these classes arise from the child's interests and desires and should not be forced on him by the adult. Any activity which appeals to a child's interest is suitable so long as it "makes a demand on a boy's skill, judgment, sense of observation and power of calculation and combines all or some of these in

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a constructive effort to achieve an end which he himself wishes to achieve". As, the Wood-Abbott Report says, "it is not so much the thing made or done as the integration" required in the making or doing, which is of educational value" Dr. Zakir Husain himself emphasises this point in his appendix to "The Activity School," when he says, "It is not the attainment of skill but the process of acquiring it that is educative," As the child becomes older his interests change. Many of them become less transitory and can be satisfied through one basic craft in which the pupils should reach a high degree of skill. Such crafts as agriculture, weaving, woodwork, metal work provide facilities for educational development, appeal to the growing child's sense of making and doing something, increase his self-respect since the product of his labour has a market value and tend to remove the false idea that manual work is objectionable.

The Committee therefore are of opinion that in the lower classes (to the age of about 10 plus) there should be no single Basic craft but that the various forms of activity should serve as a preparation for, and develop into, a productive Basic craft in the higher classes.

27. It naturally follows that in all Basic schools, indeed in all Primary classes, various kinds of material for handwork must be available: Unless sufficient material is provided, the school cannot be a centre of activity.

28. The Teacher.-The most important condition for the success of any educational scheme is the teacher. Revised methods may be proposed, new procedure suggested or a different Organisation adopted, yet these will be ineffective and fruitless unless the teachers are able to appreciate and understand the theory leading to the changes and are competent to carry them out to that the desired intention may result. As Dr. Zakir Husain writes in his report, "It is essential that these teachers should have an understanding of the new educational and social ideology inspiring the scheme combined with enthusiasm for working it out".

29. The teacher must therefore be competent to teach the standard of the Matriculation in the usual school subjects, must be expert in methods of teaching these subjects through craft activities and must be skilled in the processes and technique of certain Basic crafts. Without such teachers the Wardha schools cannot succeed and teachers of the type required are practically non-existent at present. To attempt to introduce the scheme over any wide area would invite failure.

30. The pace at which the schools can be established will depend almost entirely on the supply of trained teachers competent to implement the scheme. Hence the Committee agree with the recommendation in the Zakir Hussain Report that a reasonably large area should be selected for the experiment and an educational survey of that area should be carried out by the Education department. Immediate steps should then be taken to train the required number of teachers in the existing normal schools which should be reorganised and restaffed to suit the new system of training. In the meantime all normal schools should be so reorganised and schools should be gradually converted to activity schools as suitable teachers become available. The provision of suitable teachers will be accelerated when pupils having passed through the Wardha schools seek training as teachers, or such pupils will have absorbed the spirit of the teaching and will be skilled in some Basic craft.

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31. At present the usual qualification for a teacher in a Primary school is a pass in the Vernacular Middle school examination (held after completing an eight-year course) followed by one or sometimes two years training in a normal school. Many Primary teachers do not possess even these qualifications, whilst a small percentage have passed the Matriculation. This qualification, however, is for Primary school purposes little if any better than the Vernacular Middle qualification as the gain in English often does not compensate for the loss in other ways. Obviously teachers with these qualifications cannot be expected successfully to teach satisfactorily up to a standard as advanced as their own.

32. The Wardha Scheme rightly emphasises the importance of the teacher and in order to start the scheme proposes a short emergency course of one year for specially selected teachers. The complete training course, however is to cover a period of three years.

33. Before admission to the training college, the candidate must have passed the Matriculation examination or have had at least two years experience after passing the Vernacular Final or equivalent examination. The Committee agree that as the success of the scheme mainly depends upon the teachers it is imperative to prepare competent teachers. Some of the members, however, are apprehensive whether sufficient candidates will be forthcoming to undergo a three years training in return for the exiguous salary a Primary teacher now receives.

34. Even after the three years course of training, these teachers will hardly be competent to carry out satisfactorily the work in the highest classes of the "Basic" schools. The Zakir Husain Committee contemplated the necessity of employing in the higher classes, teachers with better academic qualifications on a higher pay and with this view, the Committee entirely agrees.

35. The Committee recommend that effort should be made to increase the supply of competent women teachers. Both the Zakir Husain and the Wood-Abbott Report point out the need of women teachers especially in the lower classes. This point was discussed at some length in the Report on the Curriculum of Girls Primary Schools (Central Advisory Board of Education, 1937) and the Committee wish to emphasise the conclusions stated therein in regard to the need of women teachers and the spheres of possible recruitment. Several members of the Committee pointed out that the present low salaries in some Provinces would not attract a suitable type of recruit and that the teachers social status in the villages was as a rule low. This was not surprising as his salary is frequently lower than that of a menial servant. The Committee endorse the recommendation of the Zakir Hussain Committee that the salary, of a trained Primary school teacher should be Rs. 25 if possible, but in no case less than Rs. 20 per mensem. Efforts should also be made to raise the status of the teachers by giving him on public, semi-public and other occasions the respect his profession deserves.

36. "Cultural Subjects".-The Committee discussed whether or not it was possible to teach through the Basic craft all subjects to the standard anticipated. There was general agreement that in the lowest classes education can be satisfactorily carried out through activities. In this connection the work at Moga and other schools was cited. But as the child advances in age and

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reaches the higher classes, opportunities for centering his cultural work and intellectual progress on the Basic crafts become less frequent. Much of the academic work even in the highest class can be correlated with the Basic craft, but all aspects of the "cultural" subjects cannot so be treated not even by stretching correlation beyond its legitimate limits. Formal instruction will there fore be necessary to teach certain elements of cultural subjects which cannot naturally be coordinated with the Basic craft. Dr. Zakir Husain agrees that "the school has to provide for the attainment..... of some passive knowledge. I say this lest we forget that.....not all knowledge comes through our own active experience but through the accumulated experience of generations long past" (The Activity School-Ferriere).

37. Curriculum.-The subjects forming the curriculum and the syllabuses of individual subjects were seriously criticised from different points of view. Amongst the points discussed were the length of time allotted to the Basic craft, the political tone of parts of the syllabus in Social Studies, the omission of algebra and major-games, the ambitious nature of some of the subjects of study, the lack of suitable text-books, and other matters of lesser importance.

38. Dr. Zakir Husain pointed out that the proposed syllabuses were merely tentative and their interpretation depended on the teacher and on the provision of suitable text-books. Experience would show what changes were necessary and the syllabuses would be modified accordingly. The syllabuses published with the Wardha Scheme do little more than indicate the nature of the work of the Wardha schools. Necessary details will be incorporated after experience. Indeed the Wardha Scheme advises the appointment in every Province of "academic assistants" whose main duty will be to keep the curriculum under constant examination in the light of educational, local and other demands. Details will also be worked out in the normal schools and training colleges whilst the preparation of suitable text-books will be immediately taken in hand.

With this explanation the Committee noted that the curriculum and syllabuses of the Wardha Basic schools are not rigid but will be changed as experience necessitates.

39. Religious Education.-The absence of all religious teaching from the curriculum was adversely commented on and this question showed fundamental differences of opinion. On the one hand it was contended that if the State makes education compulsory for all, then the State must make provision for religious education. Muslim members pointed out that religious instruction is an essential part of general education and any scheme of compulsory education which excludes religious instruction will be resented by that community.

40. Dr. Zakir Husain had already pointed out that the Wardha Scheme makes provision for the teaching of the principles-common to all religions in the hope of developing mutual respect and toleration. In Gandhiji's words:-

"We have left out the teaching of religions from the Wardha Scheme of education, because we are afraid that religions, as they are taught and practised to-day, lead to conflict rather than unity. But on the other hand, I hold

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that the truths that are common to all, religions can and should be taught to all children. These truths cannot be taught through words or through books. The children can learn these truths only through the daily life of the teacher. If the teacher himself lives up to the tenets of truth and justice, then alone can the children learn that truth and justice are the basis of all religions."

41. The majority of members felt that religious teaching was best left to the parents or to the communities concerned. but that the State should permit religious instruction to be given in the school building, out of school hours. After considerable discussion the Committee agreed, that the Government should provide facilities for religious teaching as at present, but was not unanimous whether or not such teaching should be given in or out of school hours. The question of the inclusion of religious instruction in the curriculum is discussed in the Report of the Women's Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education on the curriculum of Girls Primary Schools, (1937). The majority of the members are in agreement with the views expressed in para. 11 of that report. Dr. Sir Zia-ud-Din Ahmad and Khan Fazal Muhammad Khan, however, desired that religious instruction should be a school subject. The syllabus of studies for Muslim Theology should be prepared by Muslims, taught by Muslims and the State should provide all facilities.

42. Examinations.-The Wardha Scheme of education makes no provision for external examinations but emphasises the need of efficient and helpful supervision as contrasted with mere inspection.

43. In regard to examinations the Committee would go even further than the Wardha Scheme anticipates. The Zakir Husain Report states that "the purpose of the examination can be served by an administrative check of the work of the schools in a prescribed area, by a sample measurement of the attainment of selected groups of students conducted by the Inspectors of the

Education Board". The Committee feels that even this sample measurement is open to objection and might be omitted. The standard of work in school should be maintained by the inspecting staff and by local exhibitions of work. Promotion from grade to grade should rest entirely with the school on the result of an internal test. The papers and work of the pupils and the results of the test should be reviewed by the inspecting officer at the time of his visit. At the end of the school course the school itself can grant a leaving certificate after a final internal examination, stating merely that the pupil has satisfactorily completed the course of the Basic school. The certificate may be countersigned by the supervisory or inspecting officer after he has reviewed the pupil's work in the final test, if an additional check is considered necessary. For pupils who leave the Basic schools for other schools about the age of 11 plus after having completed the first five classes, a similar leaving certificate will suffice. Admission to, these schools should be controlled by their Headmasters who may prescribe any form of test they consider suitable for their purpose.

44. Finance.-The Committee did not consider, the question of finance as this was outside their terms of reference. They wish, however, to point out that "activity" schools will cost more to run in the beginning than the present type of school and that the rate at which compulsion proceeds and the age to which it is applied are primarily financial questions, the consideration of which must be left to the Provinces.

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45. Conclusions.-The following is a summary of the main conclusions reached at the meeting of the Committee:-

(1) The scheme of "Basic" education should first be introduced in rural areas.

(2) The age range for compulsion should be 6 to 14 years, but children can be admitted to the "Basic" school at the age of 5.

(3) Diversion of students from the "Basic" school to other kinds of school should be allowed after the 5th class or about the age of 11 plus.

(4) The medium of instruction should be the vernacular of the pupils.

(5) A common language for India is desirable. This should be Hindustani with both the Urdu and Hindi Scripts. Option should be given to children to choose the script and provision should be made for teaching them in that script, Every teacher should know both scripts, viz., Urdu and Hindi. Some members of the Committee suggest that the adoption of Roman script might prove a solution to the language difficulty and greatly minimise the work of both scholar and teacher.

(6) The Wardha Scheme of Basic education is in full agreement with the recommendations made in the Wood-Abbott Report so far as the principle of learning by doing is concerned. This activity should be of many kinds in the, lower classes and later, should lead to a Basic craft the produce from which should be saleable and the proceeds applied to the upkeep of the school.

(7) Certain elements of cultural subjects, which cannot be correlated with the Basic craft, must be taught independently.

(8) The training of teachers should be reorganised and their status raised.

(9) No teacher should receive less than Rs. 20 per mensem.

(10) Efforts should be made to recruit more women teachers and to persuade girls of good education to take up teaching.

(11) Basic schools should be started only when suitable trained teachers are available.

(12) The curriculum will need revision in the light of experience.

(13) English should not be introduced as an optional subject in Basic schools.

(14) The State should provide facilities as at present for every community to give religious teaching, when so desired but not At the cost of the state.

(15) No external examinations need be held. At the end of the Basic school course a leaving certificate based on an internal examination should be given.

(16) Pupils wishing to join other schools at the end of the 5th class (age 11 +) should also be granted a leaving certificate.

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(17) Promotion from class to class will be determined by the school, though the results of the internal examinations should be subject to the supervisor's inspection.

B. G. KHER (Chairman)

AMRIT KAUR

W.H. F. ARMSTRONG

GERTRUDE C. GRIGG

HANSA MEHTA

FAZAL MUHAMMAD KHAN

SYED MAHMUD

S.P. MOOKERJEE

J.E. PARKINSON

R. S. SHUKLA

ZIA-UD-DIN AHMAD

on account of his illness, Dr. Zakir Husain has not been able to sign the Report. He has, however, approved it.

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THE WARDHA SCHEME OF EDUCATION

The Wardha Scheme of Education derives its name from the education conference of National Workers held at Wardha under the president ship of Mahatma Gandhi. The scheme is also known as Nai Talim/Basic Education/Buniyadi Talim (Shiksha)/Basic Shiksha.

The scheme is the outcome of the philosophy of Gandhiji. It was given definite shape by the Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain who later on become the President of India.

ORIGIN OF THE SCHEME

Ghandiji found the main defects of the system of education as, “I am fully convinced that present system of education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. They would pickup evil habits. English has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many.” He further said, “let us now cry a halt and concentrate on educating the child properly through manual work not as a side activity but as a prime means of intellectual activity.”

The scheme was the outcome of sound thinking of Ghandiji. Perhaps Gandhiji is the only freedom fighter in the world who initiated and strengthened several constructive programmes for the economic, educational and social development of the people. He

considered education as an effective instrument of national reconstruction.

Ghandiji emphasized self-sufficient aspect of education along with other aspects. In fact he wanted India to be self-sufficient in every walk of national life.

In July 1937, Ghandiji wrote in the Harijan, "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit... Literacy itself is not education, I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition begin that the state takes over the manufacture of these schools."

Conference of National Workers

The same year, in October, a conference of National workers was called at Wardha under the presidentship of Mahatma Gandhi and, after considering his idea, passed the following resolutions.

- 1) That in the opinion of this Conference, free and compulsory education be provided for seven 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 around some productive form of manual work, and that all other abilities to be developed or training should be given, 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 the system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

Appointment of a Committee

The conference appointed a committee of distinguished educationists under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to prepare a detailed syllabus. Among others who serve on the

committee, Prof. K.G. Saiyidain's name is prominent. The report of the committee published in March 1938, has come to be known as the Wardha Scheme of Education. It was approved by Mahatma Gandhi and was placed before the Indian National Congress at its Haripura Session held in March 1938. The Congress accepted the scheme.

WARDA SCHEME OF EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

The fundamental features of the scheme which was evolved in due course are as follows:

- 1) A school of say 5 ½ hours could roughly be divided on the following basis:

Physical activities...	20 minutes
Mother Tongue...	20 minutes
Social Studies & General Science	60 minutes
Art	40 minutes
Arithmetic	20 minutes
Craft work including study of correlated subjects...	2 ½
hours	

Thus the craft work will have 2 ½ hours instead of 3 hrs & 20 min.

- 2) Free and compulsory education to be given for 8 years (from 6 to 14 years) in two stages, instead of 7 to 14. the jounior stage covering 5 years and the senior 3 years.
- 3) The medium of instructions is to be the mother tongue.
- 4) Education is to centre round some form of productive work. The social and physical environment to be used for correlation in addition to craft.
- 5) The self-supporting aspect is not to be over-emphasized. The sale-preceeds of he finished goods should be able to help the school to cover some part of its expenditure.
- 6) External examinations are to be abolished. The day-to-day work of the student is to be the determining factor.

- 7) Text books to be avoided as far as possible.
- 8) Cleanliness and health, citizenship, play and recreation are to be given sufficient importance.

EVALUATION OF THE WARDHA SCHEME OF EDUCATION

Merits of Wardha Scheme

I. *Craft Work in School*: 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. It is useful on account of the following:

- 1) Psychologically, it is desirable, because it relieves the child from the tyranny of a purely academic and theoretical instruction against which its active nature is always making a healthy protest. It balances the intellectual and practical elements of experience, and may be made an instrument of educating the body and the mind in coordination.
- 2) Socially considered, the introduction of such practical productive work in education, to be participated in by all the children of the nation, will tend to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike for both. It will also cultivate in the only possible way a true sense of dignity of labor and of human solidarity – an ethical and moral gain of incalculable significance.
- 3) Economically considered, carried out intelligently and efficiently, the scheme will increase the productive capacity of our workers and will also enable them to utilize their leisure advantageously.
- 4) From the strictly educational point of view greater concreteness and reality can be given to the knowledge acquired by children by making some significant craft the basis of education. Knowledge

will thus become related to life, and its various aspects will be correlated with one another.

II. *Activity Curriculum*: In order to work out an effective and natural coordination of the various subjects and to make the syllabus a means of adjusting the child intelligently and actively to his environment, the Wardha Scheme laid stress on three centres, intrinsically inter-connected, as the foci for the curriculum, i.e. the Physical Environment, the Social Environment, and Craft Work, which is their natural meeting point since it utilizes the resources of the former for the purpose of the latter.

The Wardha Scheme of Education attempted to draft an 'activity curriculum', which implies that our school must be places of work, experimentation and discovery, not of passive absorption of information imparted at second hand. It stressed this principle by advocating that all teaching should be carried on through concrete life situations relating to craft or to social and physical environment, so that whatever a child learns becomes assimilated into his growing activities.

III. *Learning by Doing*: Learning by doing sums up the educational methods of basic education. It is absolutely wrong to think that true education is acquired from books alone. There are other methods and sources which are more helpful in acquiring true knowledge. 'Chalk' and 'Talk' lessons are also not very useful. All educationists have condemned bookish knowledge. Ghandiji believed that school must be a 'doing things'. In basic system of education children acquire the knowledge of the formal school subjects as a bye-product of purposeful activities.

IV. *Social Activities and Community Life*: the corner-stone of Basic education lies in the activities and the community life of school. Apart from craft, productive activities and occupations find an important place in the curriculum of a basic

school. Living together and doing together is the soul of any progressive system of education and basic system fully incorporates this in its curriculum and methods of teaching.

V. *Self-Sufficiency*: Gandhiji felt that the educational system as introduced by the foreigners in India was expensive and it was very difficult for a poor country like India to spread education if it follows that system. So Gandhiji went a step further and declared that New Education must not only be worked centered but must also be self-supporting.

“...You have to start with the conviction that looking to the need of the villages of India our rural education ought to be made self-supporting if it is to be compulsory. This education ought to be for the kind of insurance against unemployment.

Not only from economic point of view, must this education be self-sufficient, but also from social and moral point of view. This means that at the end of the period of basic education the individual should become self-reliant and self-supporting.”

VI. *Modification of the Views of Mahatma Gandhi on Self-sufficiency*: Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee pointed out the danger of overdoing of craft work and warned that oral work, drawing and expression work should not be lost sight of. The educative aspect is more important than the economic aspect. It thus shifted the emphasis from complete support to partial self-support. It was felt that with the earnings through sale of craft products, uniform for the students or mid-day meal or purchase of some necessary equipment may be made.

Free and Compulsory Education: Seven years free and compulsory education is one of the fundamentals of his scheme and this cardinal principle has been emphasized due to two reasons:

- (i) India is a democratic country and success of democracy depends upon the enlightened citizens. Our great leaders like Gokhale

worked for the introduction of compulsory education for long time. In his historic speech, Gokhale said that if elementary education was to spread in India, it must be made compulsory and if it was to be compulsory it must be free.

(ii) Gandhiji dream of classless society, free of exploitation -- economic and social—can be realized only if everyone is educated.

VII. Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction: It is now universally recognized that the young child can learn with great facility if the medium of instruction is its mother tongue. Gandhiji asserted that no education is possible through foreign medium and all elementary education must be imparted through the medium of mother tongue.

VIII. Education through Correlation: Correlation is one of the important feature and crux of basic education. In this scheme of education, Gandhiji wished to give knowledge as a compact whole. The modern educationist also advocated this. The basic education is therefore, an effort to correlate the life of the child with his immediate physical and social environment. It is an effort to make knowledge easier and at the same time more meaningful.

IX. Integrated knowledge: Basic education treats knowledge as an integrated whole. Curriculum is build around three integrally related centers: (i) Physical environment, (ii) Social environment, and (iii) Craft work.

X. Relationship with Life: A basic school must become an active environment where teaching is not cut off from the life of the miniature community of the school and community itself. Education is to be directed to the need of life. It is not to pursue an idea which has no relation with or is totally isolated from the real situations of life.

XI. Training in Citizenship: Basic education aims at developing ideas of mutual understanding and habits of cooperative and mutually helpful living among the students through its various practical and constructive programs the new education aims at giving the citizens of future a keen sense of personal warmth, dignity and efficiency. It is likely to strengthen in them the desire of self-improvement and social service in a cooperative community.

XII. Greater freedom for the teacher and the taught: In basic education, discipline does not mean order and external restraint but an intelligent use of freedom. The teacher gets many opportunity to make experiments, think for himself and put his idea and plan to practice.

XIII. Basic education is not a class education: the ultimate objective of basic education is to create a social order in which there is no unnatural divisions between 'have' and 'have-nots' and every one is assure of a living wage and the right to freedom.

XIV. Basic education in rural as well as in urban areas: It is wrong to assume that basic education is intended to be imparted in rural areas only. "In fact, in one sense there is greater need for basic education in urban areas than in rural areas. In rural areas the children who participate in the life of the farm or allied occupation of their families have certain types of further education. In performing their jobs the children come in to direct contact with actual life and with the experience they get forms the basis of further education. On the other hand in large towns and big industrial cities the children miss the opportunity for rich experiences and direct contact with life", observed Dr. K.L. Shrimali.

Significance of the word 'Basisc'

One. The word 'Basic' is derived from the word 'Base' which means the bottom or the foundation of a thing upon which the whole things rests or is made.

Two. It is basic because it is based on ancient Indian culture.

Three. It is basic because it lays down the minimum educational standards which every Indian child is entitled to receive without any distinction of caste and creed.

Four. It is basic because it is closely related to the basic needs and interests of the child.

Five. It is basic because it make use of native potentialities of the child.

Six. It is basic because it is intimately related to the basic occupations of the community.

Seven. It is basic because it is for the common man of the country, who is the foundation and backbone of our national life.

Eight. It is basic because it comes first in time, i.e., it is the primary period of one's education.

Criticism of Basic Education

- 1) *Unsound Psychological Foundations of Wardha Scheme of Education:* "The delicate but inexorable laws governing the development of the tender mind of the child have been completely ignored. The child is treated just as a policeman or a soldier, merely as a unit in a homogeneous mass. His individuality is ignored. He is viewed merely as a means to an end—the end being earning capacity and citizenship of sorts." P.S. Naidu
"play is the only means by which creative energy can be released. Enlightened and informed educational opinion all over the civilized world is dedicatedly against forcing the child to learn a craft before he is twelve plus. It is nothing short of cruelty to make the child earn

an anna or half an anna per hour during the stage when he ought to be playing and enjoying himself.” *P.S.Naidu*

“There are three aspect of human nature—cognitive, affective and co native. The Wardha Scheme emphasizes the last aspect piously hoping that the student will wily-nilly get trained in the first through his training in the last. The middle aspect is completely ignored.”

P.S. Naidu

2) *Undue Emphasis on Craft as the Only Basis of Correlation:* “ It is impossible to establish any natural association between craft and all the subjects of cultural value which any sane system of education should cover through its curriculum. Teaching should be concrete and should be based on the child’s active experience in his environment. But it is absurd to hang all knowledge from the peg of single craft.” *P.S. Naidu*

3) *No Place for Religious Education:* “Education suited to our national genius should have definite religious basis, with contempt of worldly pursuits in its core. Craft-centered education is decidedly alien to our ancient ideals.” *P.S. Naidu*

4) *Basic Education not Suited in an Age of Industrialization:* As ours is a system of education which claims to produce an integrated individual, the emphasis is out of place in a community which has its face turned towards developing its economy to the full. So far Basic education fails to relate to the economic policy of state. But if this point is ignored, we shall find ourselves burdened with an educational system which turns out misfits even more rapidly than the one with which we are so dissatisfied.” *S. Natarajan*

“With rapid industrialization of India, knowledge of science and mathamatics may become more desirable than skill in handicrafts.”

Editorial, *Educational Review*

5) *Ruinous Competition:* “This scheme will hit the professional artisans hard by creating ruinous competitions.” *P.S. Naidu*

- 6) *Deficient Working of Basic Schools*: “There is some loss in mechanical arithmetic and spelling; lack of sufficient intensive and respective drill.” *J. Lahri*
- 7) *Neglect of the child*: “ In a hurry to pay more attention to craft, it has neglected the child.” *Anath Nath Basu*
- “Basic education is looked upon more as a social and economic duty than as a joyful adventure.” *Anath Nath Basu*
- “Craft is only a slogan, a fiction, which is practiced on commercial occasions for the benefits of visitors.” *R.K. Singh*
- 8) *Faulty Time-Table*: “ In a basic school only two-third or half the normal time is given to academic education, the rest being taken up by crafts. And further, since on the time-table academic subjects generally come after the craft work, mostly agriculture, students are sometime too tired to take to academic work kindly.”
R.K. Singh
- 9) *No Dexterity in Any Craft*: “Students spend one-third or half the time for craft work without acquiring any dexterity worth speaking of in any craft.” *R.K. Singh*