# some thoughts on planning in India



H. C. GANGULI

# *Some Thoughts on Planning in India*

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*Industrial Productivity and Motivation*

*Structure and Processes of Organization*

# *Some Thoughts on*
# PLANNING IN INDIA

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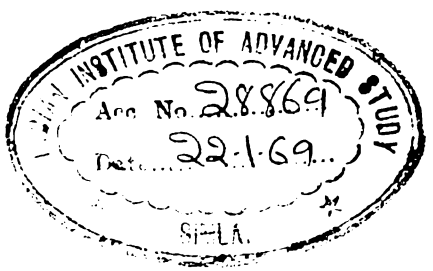




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# *Preface*

THE present material was read at a meeting of the Delhi University Teachers' Association in September 1966 and is essentially a plea to look at our national problems in a straightforward manner, unencumbered by metaphysical considerations. In the last three thousand years of our national history, India has seen more ups and downs than perhaps any other nation. These events have left their mark on our psychological make-up, affected our way of looking at the world and shaped our endeavour to carve out an honourable place under the sun.

The overall programme of our national reconstruction since Independence is marked by high idealism on the one hand and by confused thinking at a practical, mundane level on the other. This Monograph draws attention to some of these con-

fusions. Examples of such confusion are: a feeling that the adoption of a single script and/or a single language at the national level will be against India's cultural interest where diversity is the central theme; a feeling that education may be left to the State Governments and that no centrally directed execution of a national education programme, particularly at the school level, is necessary or even desirable; a feeling that international action on the basis of enlightened self-interest is unethical; a feeling that fireams are basically wrong and their issue should be restricted even for purposes of sport or range practice.

China is removing her age-old psychological accretions by introducing a new and modern dogma in her national thinking; namely, Communism. One wonders if India can cleanse her mind by more natural methods and without introducing new fads like Communism. Can the sentiment of nationalism, cradled and sheltered within a general atmosphere of humanism, be developed in India and supply the motive power for our national regeneration is the moot question. That this can be and should be done is the central theme of this paper.

More specifically, I feel that the discussions on Ideology, a Centralized School System and a common alphabet for all Indian languages deserve some consideration from the authorities. In the ideological field in particular, I would like to reiterate that no country can progress on the purely materialistic ideal of achieving a higher standard of living. The present generation, at least, has to lay emphasis on need postponement and economic asceticism rather than on need fulfilment. Lastly, the suggestion that

a part cause of the failure of Indian leaders to achieve national regeneration may be a value-reality discrepancy, may have some bearing on the truth.

I have ventured a short note on the role of religion in politics and the just noticeable trend towards a Hindu revivalism. I have suggested that this is not really an attempt towards religious revival but rather, for a national revival, and the movement will become quite secular and non-parochial as soon as national policy becomes more power-oriented. As evidence, I have drawn attention to the fact that this religious revivalism is taking place only at a time when there is a widespread feeling of disappointment in the development of the country on a secular basis. Development of a powerful nation-state seems to be the chief wish; whether it is done though a secular or non-secular ideology is of secondary importance.

One note of explanation. I have not attempted in this Monograph, based primarily on a popular talk, to give detailed arguments for my various statements. I am aware of the writings and views of social scientists, historians and men of letters on these topics and if sometimes my arguments are contrary to the currently accepted ones, it is out of my conviction and reading of the situation in India. For example, most social scientists look upon the Hindu as highly xenophobic; I have called him xenophilic, largely because under the impact of a superior culture, the western culture, this is exactly what he is at the moment. However, there is no real contradiction between these two points of view. It is a question of the level of analysis. On the peripheral level, Hindus are not only xenophilic but

tend to be xenolaters as well; but deep within, like members of many other ancient races, a Hindu will remain a Hindu in spite of his different outward garb.

H. C. GANGULI

Delhi
26 June 1967

# I

PLANNING OF the type taking place in contemporary India is not merely a plan for economic development. It involves development and/or change in other fields, like education, defence, population growth, etc. It is a plan for the development of the entire Indian society, though, depending upon the exigencies of time, particular aspects of it will get precedence—like defence between 1962-65, agriculture in the Fourth Plan, and so on. If an analogy is permitted, planned development is very much like the conduct of a war—it involves directed force to change the face and fabric of a society. It is not economic planning only, but social planning also.

The element of coercion is present in all planned developments, although the exact nature of its ex-

pression may be different and elaborate attempts may be made by the authorities to hide as much of this feature as possible from the public. Execution of the kulaks and forcible collectivization of farms in the U.S.S.R., uprooting of agriculturists in the Rajasthan canal area, or the change in the way of life of the tribal population in Rourkela following the establishment of a steel plant, all involve force or coercion, since nowhere were the individuals so affected consulted. Nevertheless, within the framework of one's sense of the moral, all these actions can be justified on the ground that they are for the greatest good of the greatest number. The real problem, however, lies in how to enthuse the general population with a sense of purpose and mobilize their energy for the carrying out of the planned activities.

It is customary for social scientists to apply the term 'Resistance to Change' to situations where there is active or passive non-cooperation and indifference to planned developments. The concept, as such, refers to a characteristic found in all organized bodies. An organization, at any moment, is in a state of equilibrium. This state might be a fairly static equilibrium, as was the case in India at the height of its caste system, or a somewhat more dynamic one, as in contemporary India. Also, any organization resists change in this state of equilibrium. This is true of all organized systems whose constituent parts are composed of interlocking components, be it an industrial organization, a military set-up, an office, or a society. On the personal side as well, there is a similar tendency to continue one's old ways of thinking, desiring, acting, etc. Thus, planning involves changes in the peoples' traditional

habits, customs, thoughts and actions. It also involves changes in the structure and functions of many existing institutions, like the armed forces, industrial organizations, land and property ownership, educational and scientific institutions. Consequently, the pressure to be applied to overcome the innate tendencies of these bodies to maintain the status quo has to be considerable. The recent attempt of the Red Guards in China to force the Chinese people to change their old customs, habits, thoughts etc., is a brutal but psychologically understandable attempt to overcome the tendency of the people to continue in their older modes of functioning. The force and violence used by the Red Guards for a new 'cultural revolution' is a direct measure of the resistance to change of the Chinese people.

Sometimes, unfortunately, the picture may be much more complex than a generalized form of resistance. There may be resistance to certain aspects of the change required and complete acceptance of others. This means that the force associated with the total plan will be either too little or too great for specific areas of social (and psychological) development and this might be more difficult to correct than if the total quantum of force was less but more appropriate to the differential needs. An example from an individual situation might serve as an illustration.

The author had, staying in his outhouse, a peon from the University—a young man come from a village in eastern U.P. within the last three years. The time was that of the Indo-Pakistan war. In response to the directive of the Civil Defence authorities, arrangements for digging of trenches in the back-

yard had been made and this young person was asked to participate in the digging activities. This man said that he considered handling a spade below his dignity and he could not do it. He was a Brahmin and this was his norm in the village. However, he would be glad to supervise the digging. It was not that the man was not afraid of the air raids. Everytime the air raid siren sounded, he would come running and shaking all over and accompany the rest of the household to the trenches. Subsequently, he took to sleeping during these episodes which was perhaps an escape reaction.

This young man provides an example of resistance to change in one's attitude towards work, in spite of a considerable threat to his personal safety. On the other hand, in his last three years' stay in Delhi, he had completely changed his economic aspirations and consumption pattern. He was not satisfied with his regular University pay but would quarrel with his boss for overtime allowance every time he could not be released at 5 p.m. on the dot. The umbrella was replaced by a raincoat, walking by a cycle, although his place of work was within 500 yards of where he lived, trousers had taken the place of 'dhoties', and a transistor radio was there to soothe him in his leisure hours.

Now analyze the situation above and note that there has been no change in this man's work attitude, no desire (and perhaps no opportunity) to acquire new skills, but a complete change in his aspirations and consumption pattern. This is a delicate situation for any planner, for he will see that all that his plans have done is to raise aspirations and create new demands without changing work

attitudes to such as will lead to the realization of these aspirations and demands. Multiply the individual example given here several million-times and the difficulties facing the country in planned development no longer remain much of a mystery.

# II

DIFFICULTY IN changing one's work attitude is only one example of psychological variables retarding planned development. Take another example. Projection of demand for particular goods or services is ordinarily supposed to be a purely economic process. That this is not the case has been repeatedly proved by two points: (i) when the target for a particular commodity is set for achievement during any plan period, important and knowledgeable experts in the field invariably criticize the target as being too high from the demand point of view, and express serious apprehension that the market will not be able to absorb the product and a surplus or unemployment will result; (ii) in nearly all cases, such predictions of supplies exceeding the demand

have proved to be incorrect.

Illustrations may be given from almost any item of development—cement or steel or sugar production, or turnout of engineers, architects, medical men, etc. The author remembers the controversy over setting the target for steel production at the beginning of the Second and Third Plans. A very highly placed steel executive of the premier private steel concern in India persistently criticized the targets as being too high, compared with his estimates of projected demand. Indian newspapers, which normally should know better, loyally supported this criticism, like they support any claim for the lowering of the target for any commodity. Most experts in charge of technical education had the same feeling about the proposed engineering training capacity to be created during any plan. The surprising thing is that even when at the end of each plan the expansion was found to be inadequate for the demand generated, the experts could not adjust their sights, and adduced the same arguments when targets for the next plan were discussed.

Now analyze this situation. It would be unfair to believe that the steel executive referred to above was motivated by his fear of the growth of the steel industry in the public sector at a rate that would overshadow the private sector. It would also be unfair to assume that the men in charge of technical education were motivated by the 'guild' attitude which restricts the number of new entrants to any profession for fear of underemployment, etc. These factors may have had some influence on the thinking of these men and thus introduced a non-economic, social-psychological variable in the matter of target-

setting. What is more important, however, is that their perception of the rise in demand for commodities in a planned development programme was inadequate, and their training in the mode of functioning of national economies under conventional and non-planned growth has been responsible for this. They could not grasp the idea of the accelerated demand that is generated by an all-round development programme. They had little conception of the new dimensions that would arise under the impact of planning, and offset the 'normal' rise of the demand curve. Interested readers can look over the Indian newspapers of 1955-56 and 1960-61 to satisfy themselves of the complete failure of 'experts' in predicting demands. Further, even the idea that the capacity developed should not exceed the demand, is not necessarily correct. It is in the national interest that the capacity developed should slightly exceed the actual demand at any moment, at least in basic commodities like steel, heavy machine building, fertilizer, engineering and medical skill, etc. This may cause some individual hardship but is good for the country, as it gives it some room for manouvering and some flexibility of approach.

An analogous example from Germany comes to mind. During the period 1933-38 when Hitler was gearing Germany towards a war economy, it was Dr. Schacht who made it possible. Schacht did it along purely unconventional and, according to some, unethical lines. As a German Army publication wrote on January 22, 1937: "The Defence Force owes it to Schacht's skill and great ability that, in defiance of all currency difficulties, it has been able to grow up to its present strength from an army

of 100,000 men." Again, to quote Shirer: "His (Schacht's) creation of credit in a country that had little liquid capital and almost no financial resources was the work of a genius, or—as some said —of a master manipulator." Ability to go for the unconventional in response to a special situation, after throwing overboard one's conventional training, requires an intellectual flexibility and responsiveness to the environment of the highest order. This is a personality factor rather than a learnt economic skill.

Another anecdote, which however may not be true, refers to this same point of non-rigidity in perception and facility in deciding on non-conventional activity steps in response to a novel situation. During the Chinese invasion, when the author was working with the Indian Air Force, a story was going around the Air Headquarters. It seems that the issue of rifles to the Army from the ordinance factories was being hindered by inadequate production facilities, not of the barrel or action parts of the weapon, but of the stock. It was an American adviser who seems to have suggested that the weapons be issued fitted with only rough stocks without waiting for their proper finish. Whether this story is true or not is really immaterial. But the point that it makes is that set habits of perceptions etc., may be a handicap in fast developing situations. People with high perceptual rigidity very often have low survival potential.

# III

SUCCESSFUL PLANNING requires taking into account the psychological characteristics of the leaders, of the general public which is the referrent of such planning, and the total socio-economic environment within which the plan is to function. In development planning of small organizations usually in charge of one key-man, the planning reflects the personal qualities of this man. Some go in for development of many detailed sub-departments; others pick out a few key functions and seek to provide a structural basis for these, assuming that once these key services are provided the rest will be generated out of these. The development of the machine tools and heavy machine building industry in India is based on the second argument above and is an example

of Mr. Nehru's farsightedness in national planning. Some plans concentrate on consolidating what they have got; others diversify as much as possible, bringing within their folds as many new lines of work as possible. Some planners are cautious, not planning for anything unless they are assured beforehand of the resources needed; others go ahead with planning for what they need, while foraging for resources as they proceed. It requires vision, foresight, and a clear image of what the organization or the country is to be at the end of the plan, to plan effectively. Indeed, vision and foresight are needed even in the formation of this image. Secondly, it requires considerable administrative skill and ingenuity to execute the plan and approximate the vision. In a national context, it is usually the political leaders who provide the first, and the civil servants who provide the second. Politicians are often perceived to be redundant at best by technical people—educationists, industrialists, soldiers, etc. Indeed, nothing can be further from the truth. It is necessary to be able to see things in an overall way, from a broad point of view and on the basis of an understanding of the interaction between different facets of national and international life. A proper vision of the country can be based only on such a broader appreciation of things, and this is the essential function of the political leader. The same considerations apply to and justify the defence set-up also, where the armed forces are placed under the control of a civilian minister, for deployment of armed forces has implications far beyond the immediate military objectives.

Next to the personality of the planner, the most important factor is the personal characteristics of the common people who have to work out the plan and are at the same time the beneficiaries of the development programme. Some of the most well-laid-out plans may misfire if the psychological characteristics of the people are overlooked and not because the plan is otherwise faulty. An example from the realm of planning by the Delhi Municipal Corporation may be pertinent. The Municipal Corporation, in its effort to beautify a particular residential colony in North Delhi, decided to set up four beautiful water fountains round the lake which is the colony's pride. The fountains have been installed; but even during the proces of construction, these have been converted by the urchins into a swimming pool in daytime, and by poor residents into a washing place in the morning and evening. In no time, the barbed wire fence which had been standing for so many months has been removed and the green surrounds trampled underfoot. The planners had not taken into account: (i) the lack of washing facilities for the poor; (ii) the existence of a large number of pre-adolescents subject to no parental control; (iii) the lack of a sense of beauty in the majority of the residents; and (iv) their indifference to public property and absence of fear of the law. An experiment which would have been successful in Switzerland or Germany failed in India because of the psycho-social characteristics of the referrent group.

It is not uncommon to find in India magnificent buildings marred by poorly maintained gardens and weedy, unkempt lawns. The architect does not take

into account the great weakness in the Indian towards regular maintenance work. Gardening and working on the lawn do not seem as yet to be a part of Indian culture. The answer seems to be to educate the people and in the meanwhile provide for as little daily maintenance work on gardens etc., as possible in architectural planning.

Another factor is the total social milieu, if it can be regarded separately for the purpose of this analysis. There is some evidence that workers from countries like Portugal etc., when they go to the north, to Germany for example, learn the industrial jobs as quickly as the natives, whereas in their own country learning these very jobs is not very easy. What is happening here is not exactly known; of course, much of the learning needed for industrial work takes place 'incidentally' in an industrial culture. More particularly, appropriate values and attitudes for certain types of work are imbibed quickly through the various mechanisms of social learning, and this might be a factor; economic and psychological insecurity might be providing the driving force. However, whatever the mechanism, there is no doubt that the overall climate, social, psychological etc., makes a difference.

# IV

IN PLANNING for a nation, it is not so much the psychology of individual citizens that matters as their modal psychology. This is very often called the national character. A brief enquiry into certain features of the Indian national character may not be out of place here. The Hindu, and we will concentrate our attention on him as the Muslim community is still in a process of adjustment to the new India following the creation of Pakistan, has been called the 'mild Hindu'. This image of the Hindu is fairly well-established amongst the Westerners. In a recent study conducted by this author under the aegis of the UNESCO, the typical Indian, as perceived by 192 Indian leaders in the intellectual, political, administrative, business and military fields, is seen to

be tolerant, simple, honest, friendly and forgiving on the one hand and submissive, unpunctual and talkative on the other. There was also a strong consensus amongst the respondents that Indians are not aggressive, hostile, suspicious, punctual or atheistic. Religiousness and the quality of tolerance as important characteristics of Indians have been widely noted and commented upon by sociologists and social scientists in the West.

Of the many traits and attitudes that are part of the Indian psychological make-up, a few will be taken up here as of direct relevance to national planning in particular and government administration in general. One such quality is a high tolerance of ambiguous situations. Ambiguous situations create tension and anxiety and individuals as well as nations differ in their degree of tolerance of this phenomenon. In a person with high tolerance of ambiguity, little systematic and purposive planning will be there to resolve the situation; on the other hand, very low tolerance of ambiguity would mean that the person is continuously busy trying to resolve the situations as they develop from moment to moment and this may hamper more purposive and organized behaviour. This phenomenon is to some extent related to a person's time perspective also. A short time perspective leads to action based on an immediate situation; a very long time perspective, almost a sense of eternity as is present in India, may lead to near complete inactivity.

India sems to be a case of high tolerance of ambiguity, high tolerance of tension and long time perspective.

The result of this quality is that India's attempts

to solve issues are not within practical time limits. This psychological quality seems to be partly responsible for our continued tolerance of the Kashmir situation. Kashmir is not completely merged with the rest of the country; tension over this area with our neighbouring state is continuously tolerated and there is always a fond hope that time will solve the situation. This attitude seems to lead to a considerable loss of purposive, forceful and directed action. Of course, on the positive side it must be mentioned that high tension tolerance has a great survival value. India is known for its ability to survive and there is a distinct possibility that a society like that of the U.S.A. would collapse at a tension level much lower than India's. This high tension tolerance is true, by and large, of individual Indians also.

The other disadvantage of a very long time perspective is that the proposed line of action loses its motivating power. The time perspective of the recent Education Commission's Report, for example, is about twenty years, a dangerously long perspective in a fast moving world. Economic uplift is the central point in the Indian national plans and at the present rate of growth of population, it may take about 200 years for India to reach the standard of living of contemporary western Europe. The result is widespread frustration and general indifference on the part of the population towards achievement of the plan targets.

Another feature of the Indian national character is its inability to perceive hostile intensions in others. The concept of an enemy is incongruous to Indians. Whether it is India's overwhelming desire

to have friends and its great fear of social inacceptability or something deeper is difficult to understand. But it has a whole set of defence mechanisms, particularly the mechanisms of repression, denial, and rationalization to convince itself that it has only friends and no enemies and ascribes the reason for this happy state of affairs to its own moral and ethical standards and principle of tolerance. Nirad C. Chaudhuri has made biting comments on the manner in which Britain and the Britishers came to be regarded as the best friends of India almost overnight, immediately on her gaining independence in 1947, when by any standards, he said, the relation between India and U.K. could at best have been one of cold tolerance. Examples like this can be adduced from the entire length of Indian history.

The above statement should be qualified in two ways. Once external circumstances force the idea of an enemy on the Indian mind, the generalized non-analytic approach of Indians tends to tar the enemy completely black and they find it difficult to see anything to admire or appreciate in him. The classic example of this may be found, in ancient times, in the attitude of the Pandavas towards Duryodhan and his regime, although on a more objective analysis it will be difficult to overlook the extreme dynamism of Duryodhan's regime and the rapid growth of the Indian society during that period. In the UNESCO study referred to above, a large list of emotions, positive and negative, was prepared and subjects were asked to indicate the basic emotions they feel towards countries, among them China and Pakistan. Not even 10 per cent of the Indian elite subjects expressed their admiration for China,

in spite of her considerable achievements in the economic, military and diplomatic fields.

The second aspect of India's relations with her enemy is her inability to take risks. John Foster Dulles, undoubtedly one of the post-war world's greatest statesmen, developed the concept of 'Brinkmanship', the practice of which requires the utmost political skill and thorough information about the enemy's and one's own strengths and weaknesses. It is true that the choice of the term Brinkmanship is perhaps unfortunate but this does not detract anything from its basic value. Unfortunately, this concept has been roundly condemned in India without any serious study on the grounds of ethics and morality, in spite of the fact that diplomatic practices of most countries follow this very principle. The fate of Dulles *vis-a-vis* Indian political thought has been the same as that of Kautilya—one of studied indifference accompanied by a feeling of righteous indignation.

Innate psychological difficulty to perceive hostility in the environment, tendency to act on the all-or-none principle and inability to take sustained and calculated risks lead to compromise attempts for immediate gain. The entire process is justified on grounds of tolerance and high ethical standards.

Although the characteristics noted just now are more relevant to political rather than economic activity in the country, their economic implications are nevertheless there. The absence of an enemy from the national psychology makes the task of mobilizing the energies of the people for the development plans considerably difficult. It must be remembered that we are now talking of the concept of a hostile

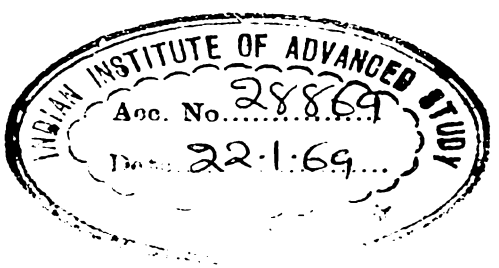
power in the psychological make-up of the Indian people and not the actual existence or non-existence of such an enemy in the actual world. The point is that India is incapable of accepting in her mind the existence of a real enemy. This leads to very serious difficulties in the formation of a strong in-group as against a hypothetical but psychologically real out-group.

Amongst the many effects of this make-up, one is what may be called the 'Somnath mentality'. Somnath was a very famous temple in western India, known for its vast accumulation of precious metals and stones. It has been sacked by marauders from across the north west frontier of India more than once. What is surprising is that the trustees of Somnath did not learn any lesson from its looting, but repeated their building activities without providing for its defence. There is some similarity between this and India's concentration of her heavy industries in the Bengal-Bihar coal belt which is within easy reach of medium-range bombers of hostile powers. One would have thought that after the India-Pakistan and India-China wars, at least the new steel mill now being set up at Bokaro would be shifted down south. None of the public figures or newspapers which discuss critically the location of every new industrial unit considered the defence side of the matter. It is quite possible that after thoughtful consideration, the decision of locating the mill might have been the same; but unfortunately, the point never came up for consideration before the public. The 'Somnath mentality', the dangerous lack of defence consciousness, persists over the centuries.

India is known for her traditionalism, for her other-worldliness and for her tolerance. Its tolerance can perhaps be related to its highly individualistic make-up. Talcott Parson says: "In the first place, there is a fundamental religious relativity (in India). There is no way of life alone religiously acceptable, and no one exclusively valid approach to the divine. In this religious sense India presents probably the most radically individualistic situation known to history." Whereas tolerance and openness to ideas from other cultures are deisrable and enriching factors, there is a danger that it will not enable India to develop her own point of view in the intellectual, political and economic world. Important commissions are set up by the Government for determining national policies in many areas; very often, a substantial proportion of the members of such bodies and even secretaries are nationals of other countries. Highly qualified technical experts from other countries are necessary and not undesirable; but one wonders if policy-making at the highest level has also to be done with the help of foreign experts. Excessive tolerance, as was pointed out to the author by an American Professor of Psychology who has been an Adviser to Indian students in his University, might lead to a degree of desensitization to and poor descrimination of what is good and worthwhile and what is not. In this respect, India and China seem to be at two opposite poles—one standing for an extreme degree of openness, and the other for an extreme degree of hostility to foreign cultural influences. The author is making this statement in spite of the fact that Hindus are generally regarded by social scientists to

be xenophobic on the whole. The Hindu has many contradictory elements in his character and his openness to foreign cultural influences seems to be another example of the same. Extremes of xenophilia or xenophobia are equally undesirable. Gandhiji had said that he would like to keep his windows open to foreign winds but would refuse to be blown off his feet by these. He did not mention, however, what every sensible householder knows, that in times of storm it may be desirable to close the doors and windows lest the inmates are so blown off.

Before we conclude, a brief reference to some important psychological incongruencies or gaps in planning in India will be made. The author apologizes for pointing out gaps only, but wants it to be known that in his personal view the Planning Commission is doing a tremendously good job. It is trying to pull up the Indian society practically by its bootstraps, as the Americans put it so succinctly. If the author points out its deficiencies, it is because of his feeling that the planning is capable of improvement and not because he thinks that planning in India today is redundant or without expertise.



# V

*Ideology.* Psychologically one of the most important tasks of a government attempting to bring about large-scale social change is to enthuse the people for its programme. This problem of motivation is well-known to revolutionaries and politicians who set up eminently desirable ideals and slogans to represent their programmes. France's 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', U.S.S.R.'s 'Workers of All Nations Unite', Germany's 'Deutschland Uberalles', pre-war Japan's 'Dai Dai Nippon', India's 'Vande Mataram' are expressions of ideologies which have moved large masses of people to almost superhuman endeavour and sacrifice.

In the last fifteen years, the period covered by the three Indian Plans, economic betterment and im-

provement of the standard of living have been the basic ideal placed by the Government before the people. People are expected to work and make the development programmes successful, for, to put it simply but not inaccurately, this will enable the average citizen to add so many ounces of cereals to his daily meals, so many yards of cloth to his annual wear, replace walking by cycling, and so on. Better food, better housing, better education and more consumer goods are the incentives offered in return for people's support for the plans which are designed to change the face of the country, the perceptions of the people and their age-old traditions and customs.

It seems that the impact the plans will have and are having on the Indian people is not very well understood by the administration, for otherwise they would have noted that a love for economic gain at a distant future is not a sufficient drive to make people change their age-old way of life in a short time. Even in the sphere of industrial work the hypothesis that man works for wages, the so called 'Rabble Hypothesis', has been discredited long back as invalid. The situation is complicated by the fact that no Government of India can in the next ten years make any substantial improvement in the economic life of the people, so much steeped in poverty are we. To concentrate the attention of a hungry people, therefore, on the possibility of food and clothing and other comforts, which however are not to be available now, might be raising a Frankenstein that may be difficult to control.

Of course, the country has to plan for more food and consumer goods, better education facilities etc.

—in fact for all the material goods of life. But the attainment of these should never be relegated to the place of an ideal. An effective ideal must be something above and beyond the individual's own material welfare, like, for instance, nationalism or national strength. Material well-being should be a by-product of activities directed towards such an ideal. Material well-being can never be an effective *summum bonum* of life, for Indians or for any other people. Karl Marx did attempt an economic interpretation of history but the communist ideal of a classless proletarian society is not defined purely in economic terms.

This ideal of nationalism or patriotism is not spelled out and placed before the Indian people. The emphasis should have been on economic asceticism and austerity rather than on consumption, on postponement of need fulfilment rather than their immediate satisfaction, although successful planning would have inevitably led to economic betterment and need satisfaction. What is being suggested here is that the ideal should be something beyond the individual's own immediate good, and economic development should aim at achieving that ideal. Such an ideal only can motivate the people to massive work and, in the process of this, achieve economic well-being as a by-product, without ever aiming at it directly or pursuing it deliberately.

To put things in their proper perspective, it must be mentioned that the Indian leaders' preoccupation with material welfare emanates from a deep sense of humanism and a sympathy for the deprived which have characterized Indian culture through the ages. Buddha's saying that not all the waters

in the oceans can compare with the tears that have been shed by humanity and Gandhi's stated wish to be able to wipe the tear from the eyes of every Indian are expressions of this humanism. Buddha indicated the life of the monk and the goal of Nirvana as the path to the conquest of suffering. Nehru, the great disciple of Gandhi, took the other path, of gearing the entire national economy towards the removal of the economic handicaps of the people. Each person was thus working out of a sense of humanism and directly for a reduction of human suffering. However, the author believes that the effects of each course of action have been or are likely to be disastrous for the Indian society. Buddhism, to put it briefly, led to the development of an extreme form of other-worldliness whose effects on Indian society have not been altogether healthy and are being enquired into only now by social scientists. On the other hand, Nehru's economic ideas, born out of the same humanism, are in danger of giving rise to a crass and vulgar materialism, a denial of all the things that India has stood for in the past.

The ideal before the nation has to be decided and determined so that it is in consonance with India's genius. One wonders if this ideal may be expressed in terms of the 'Dharma' in the sense explained by President Radhakrishnan. The major difficulty here, it seems, would be in integrating non-Hindu Indian thoughts and ideals within this concept. The Indian problem is, on the one hand, due to religion being a central feature of Indian life and society and, on the other, to the fact that there is more than one religion professed by Indians. De-emphasizing religion and reducing its importance in the Indian na-

tional and corporate life is one possible solution. But then the nation is likely to lose the integrative influence of Hinduism which has kept India united throughout the ages. However, this might not be an irreperable loss if, simultaneously, a new integration is achieved through a centralized national programme of education, a point discussed below. Whatever it may be, the defining of an adequate and comprehensive ideal is a challenge to Indian intellectuals and political thinkers. The ideal must be powerful enough to draw all Indians within its fold and at the same time generate activities that will raise this society from the morass of stark poverty and other-worldliness on the one hand and vulgar materialism on the other. Only by working for such an ideal can India learn to live. The author is not at all sure if, and to what extent, religion can be removed from the central position it occupies in the mind of the Indian, be he a Hindu, Muslim or Christian. Indeed, the recent trends seem to be in just the opposite direction—there is some tendency towards a religious revivalism. Assuming that there is a come-back of Hinduism as a force in Indian national life, what happens to Indians belonging to other faiths? Do they allow themselves to be dominated by Hinduism or do they close their ranks and form themselves into equally hard groups, thereby bringing about a profound psychological division of the country? The author has pondered much on this problem and feels that there is a possibility that things may not come to this pass. A deliberate development of an assertive form of nationalism, a fostering of national pride, is perhaps being aimed at. The motive force behind the recent

trend of Hindu revivalism seems to be not so much a parochial desire to assert the supremacy of one form of worship, as for example, took place in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries, but a desire for national power, a revolt against 'humbleness'. The movement seems to be an expression of a resurgent India, vaguely conscious of its power and position in the comity of nations, a position which it feels it is not allowed to take by its own leaders and by other countries friendly to it. If this expression is through religion, this is because it cannot as yet capture the seat of the Government, and religious expression comes easiest to Indians. If this analysis is correct, the religious revivalism is no more than a sort of pseudo-revivalism, religion being only its present garb; the basic drive of the movement is power, and its ultimate goal the reshaping of national policy along tougher lines, both internally and externally. In such a case, non-Hindu Indians will have nothing to fear, for the religious colouring of the movement will disappear as soon as national policy becomes sufficiently power-oriented.

Thus the religious revival trend is a disguised expression of the desire for national revival; all its factional colours will be lost once the disguise is removed and 'religionism' merges into 'nationalism' once more, as it will inevitably do, if this analysis is correct. There was a high wind of nationalism immediately after the Indian independence; it petered out within about 5 to 7 years. This very dynamic urge is seeking a substitute satisfaction, this time through religion, and finally, it will merge once more (so we expect) into a full-blown secular

nationalism of the type that has been dreamt of by Vivekananda and Subhas Chandra Bose. If India can remain true to her ideals through this development process, she should step next, very naturally, into the Tagore-Gandhi-Nehru type of internationalism and humanism without much difficulty.

# VI

*Attitude Towards Work.* It has been said by Max Weber and others that India devalued the world so radically that there was no possible motive with her for remaking the world in the name of an 'ideal'. And Buddhism carried the above Brahminic point of view to its logical conclusion. It represented the contemplative type par excellence and could not serve as the basis of a rational economic ethic. In contrast, it is said, one of the major factors in the development of capitalism in Europe was the Protestant faith and its ethic of work. The Protestant emphasis on personal asceticism and dedication to work provided the economic ethic for capitalism and this value element has been a major independent variable differentiating countries that developed

the capitalistic bureaucratic potentialities from countries that did not do so (like India and China) although their material conditions at that time were equally favourable and good.

One would of course be somewhat hesitant about accepting Weber's rather sweeping generalizations whole-heartedly. However, it is certainly true that Indians do tend to be somewhat other-worldly, tend to believe in fate slightly more than other people, and do not always believe that in hard work lies the foundation of prosperity. Today there is less overt reference to fate, but attitude towards work has not improved as much as is desirable. 'Fate' has been replaced by 'knowing the proper persons'. In a recent study by the UNESCO, however, things looked slightly better—as many as one-fifth of the Indian subjects expressed their faith in hard work as a means to improve the standard of living.

In this same context of attitude towards work, the problem of corruption versus efficiency in administrators may be mentioned. Very often it is said that corruption in high places is the major factor responsible for poor execution of the plans. The author submits, with all diffidence, that this may not be quite true. In the author's opinion, corruption in India may not be much more than in many other countries e.g., the U.S.A. The bogey of corruption may have been overworked in the Indian context.

Interestingly enough, however, none of the newspapers or responsible persons have raised the question of so many honest and sincere but thoroughly incompetent and inefficient persons occupying high positions in this country. Efficiency and competence,

it would seem, are not the requirements for high assignments; only sincerity and honesty are. In the author's UNESCO study referred to above, the desirable traits in a leader as mentioned by one-fifth or more of the Indian respondents were (in order of importance): honesty, dynamism, strong and forceful personality, and practical mindedness.

This situation certainly shows India's peculiar attitude towards work; character, meaning thereby the absence of inordinate lust for women and money, is everything; but not knowledge and skill for the job, not efficiency and hard work. One may of course ask what type of honesty is it for a person to occupy a position for which he has no skill and competence? This question however is rarely asked. One wonders sometimes that if there is a choice between an honest and inefficient person, and a dishonest but efficient man, what would be the proper choice. Who is the more dangerous person? The author is convinced that under a democratic set-up where activities of the government departments and officials are under constant surveillance, a dishonest man cannot last long. But an incompetent person, if honest, can continue in the job indefinitely; he will never be in the news, never in the limelight. In such a case can it not be said that the latter type of person is more dangerous to the country and causes more damage? Perhaps the two qualities of efficiency and sincerity of motives should not be regarded as mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, much greater emphasis on work and efficiency in our value system is desirable, including a greater faith in what can be achieved by hard work.

# VII

*National Integration.* An oft-repeated caution to the Indian people by Indian politicians and other public leaders is on their supposed lack of integration and unity. If there is unity amongst the people, it is said, the country will overcome all obstacles, including that of economic backwardness, ignorance, lack of education, and so on.

Perhaps one of the most serious misunderstandings of the Indian people by its leaders is on this point. This author believes that there is no real disunity among the Indian people. If the different States quarrel amongst themselves over sharing of the benefits of multi-State projects like river-valley projects, or over the exact delineation of boundaries between States, this is not a sign of disunity or their

lack of loyalty to the country. People do and will quarrel over minor things, but this is totally without prejudice to their unity against an external enemy. Loyalty to the interests of one's own State is not repugnant to loyalty to the country. The two loyalties can be compared to concentric circles; the large circle includes the smaller one without in any way coming into conflict with it. Thus a better way to look at this situation is in terms of concentric loyalties rather than conflicting loyalties. The behaviour of the Indian people at the time of the Chinese invasion or Indo-Pakistan war is evidence enough of the larger loyalty Indians have for their country. Indeed, the National Integration Council, which was set up by the Government of India to suggest ways for promoting national integration, was perhaps the first casualty of the Chinese invasion. It is said that the Council, after the Chinese war, did not feel it was necessary to meet again.

However, this does not mean that no purposive action need be taken to enhance the sense of unity and nationhood amongst Indians. Such action is needed and should be taken and in this, educational planning is of the utmost importance. The author has two points to suggest in this connection: (*a*) a centralized or unified school system upto the higher secondary school level for the entire country; (*b*) a common script or alphabetical system for all Indian languages. These points are elaborated below.

So far the great unifying force for Indians has been their religion. Hinduism has united India from the North to the South and from the East to the West. Hinduism gave the sense of Indianness to millions of inhabitants of this peninsula, a collective

consciousness which was assiduously and deliberately developed. Note, for example, the placement of the four 'Matha' or monasteries by the great Sankaracharya in the four corners of the country—Badrinath, Rameswaram, Dwarka and Puri. The widely prevalent system of pilgrimage to these and other places of worship gave people knowledge, through travel, of Indians in other parts of the country, all accepting in some way or other, the suzerainty of the Vedas. Hinduism, a way of life, gave to the millions a sense of Indianness, if such a term is permissible.

The fact that religion was the basis of Indian unity is further corroborated by the negative evidence that as soon as another religion came to be prominent in this country, a religion which could not be assimilated within the folds of Hinduism, it promptly led to the division of the country into two nations, India and Pakistan. The links of common language and script (Punjabi Hindus, like Punjabi Muslims, knew the Urdu script more than the Deva Nagri and Bengali Muslims, like Bengali Hindus, the Bengali script rather than the Urdu), of dress and food were not sufficiently integrative to prevent a division between Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims and Punjabi Hindus and Punjabi Muslims. No amount of denial and intellectual abhorrence on the basis of 20th century ideas of secularism can refute the stark fact that even now the greatest unifying force in both India and Pakistan i.e., in the entire undivided India, is religion.

However, the story is going to be different in India from now on. As in all modern states, secularism has to be developed and is being developed. This is

modern India's intellectual conviction, based upon the fact that a modern man can no longer look upon a particular religion as the basis for national life. The trend towards secularism cannot and should not be checked. The sentiment of nationalism, of India as a modern, secular nation, is gradually developing.

Indianness means a certain common set of perceptions, values, attitudes and interests. It means a certain way of looking at things and a readiness to react to situations in certain ways. It also involves common goals and shared belief in the worthwhileness of different actions. On all these will be based that higher loyalty to the country and associated emotions which collectively go under the name of nationalism. However, this process of development of a common base in perceptions, attitudes, values and loyalties in the five hundred million Indians has to be deliberately fostered, no less deliberately than our fore-fathers did in the days of the Rig Veda. But whereas they did so through development of a way of life known as Hinduism, we have to do so in modern India through a common educational system covering the entire school-going population in the country. In other words, the role played by Hinduism in developing the sense of Indianness in the past has to be taken over by the educational system in modern India. The education system can fulfil this role adequately only if there is a certain unity of content in it. This is, in essence, the argument for a centralized school system.

By a unified school system is meant a school system which has a common curriculum, a common set to text-books (translated into regional languages

as desirable), a common programme of instructions and a common schedule of examinations, including the question papers. All schools in the country shall adopt these, irrespective of region, medium of instruction and socio-economic background of the student population. Such a system, when introduced, will have the following advantages:

(i) National Integration: The young people, who have passed through an identical education system based on the same text-books and courses of instruction, will tend to think alike and will be much nearer to each other in their thinking than can be achieved in any other way. The concept of 'unity in diversity' which is very often quoted in support of the variegated school systems existing today, is really a most illogical and self-contradictory concept. It is time that for some years to come we seek unity rather than diversity. The National Integration Committee set up by the Government has not suggested any practical device for increasing the sense of national unity; it has only underlined its importance. A unified school system is the only operational method by which national unity can be achieved.

(ii) Cost: A standardized plan for school buildings, set of text-books and laboratory instruments will be of great advantage in that these can be produced on a very large scale within the country. Such mass production will be possible because the number of different items under each heading like text-books, laboratory equipment etc., will be limited and used over the entire country. Even standard parts of the school building may be prefabricated in factories, thus reducing cost and ensuring quick installation and minimum standards of lighting,

ventilation, etc.

(iii) Academic Standards: The unified school system will vastly improve our academic standards and remove some of the evils that are keeping these standards down. For example, text-books are written by inexperienced teachers and students are forced to read them because the authors happen to be their own teachers; students are thereby prevented from coming into contact with the written products of great teachers and great minds. Further, the curricula and courses of instruction of this system, having been decided by the best minds in India, will certainly be much better than the untidy affairs we find today in different Boards of Education. Also, a unified examination will enable all students to be judged on the basis of the same standard and the unfortunate differences in standards in school examination systems in different States will be removed.

(iv) Organization: Expansion of the education system at the school level is dependent on the organizational resources available and cost. On the organizational side, a united system will help rapid installation of schools in all possible centres. It is visualized that under such a system everything will be standardized, from the text-books to the student-teacher ratio. The organization and requirements of the school-unit will thus be laid down. All that will be required is to replicate this in different centres in the country, thus saving great organizational headache. Cost will be standardized and planning can be made in advance. Because of these standards, the local authorities can be given the responsibility for starting these school-units as per requirements.

The only possible argument against such a cen-

tralized system is that it will lead to intellectual regimentation and a reduction in the diversity of Indian culture. The first is not a very appropriate argument, for when we speak of intellectual regimentation, the intellectual level referred to is at a much higher level than is attained at the Higher Secondary level. Such a centralized system, if applied at the University level, may possibly lead to an intellectual sameness and stifling of the many rich but diverse trends in the pupils. Applied to a school population, this only means that they will start with a common base on which diversification can develop profitably. Diversification without a common and adequate base is meaningless and will also lead to problems of communication. A centralized system will lead to the development of common basic skills, attitudes and perceptions, and it will be easier for this population to grasp and appreciate the higher and deviant thoughts of some of their own members who have advanced much beyond this level.

The argument based on 'unity in diversity' is more easily disposed of. Firstly, the term unity in diversity is a metaphysical myth. The two terms really should refer to different levels—unity at the lower and diversity at the higher level. At the same level these cannot coexist in practice. Such a phrase is really an intellectual rationalization for extreme permissiveness and a chaotic cultural life. Secondly, history belies it. In ancient times, when India was intellectually flourishing and its national and cultural activities were functioning at a high level of effectiveness, the study of the Vedas was a compulsory feature of Indian education. But this did not prevent the rise of a thousand diverse ideas, giving

a unique richness to Indian culture. The Vedas provided the common base and gave a unique quality of Indianness to the ideas developed by ancient scholars. All that is proposed here is that the Vedas should be replaced by another more modern system that will be, like the Vedas, a compulsory discipline through which the Indian student population has to pass. If properly framed, it will bring a discipline and a quality to our school system which is sadly lacking today.

The second point is one of a common script or alphabetical system. India has a rich literature expressed in many different languages. These must be nourished and supported. At the same time, Indians belonging to other language groups must be able to savour and enjoy these. This can only be done if all Indian languages use the same alphabet. It matters little whether this script is the Deva Nagri or Latin or anything else; other factors will decide this. But a common script will break down the communication barrier between one regional language and another and, over a period of say a hundred years, these languages will converge towards each other and may ultimately lead to the development of one Indian language. It may be mentioned that China has different regional languages very much like India, but only one common written script. Without such a common alphabetical system, the accelerated rate of development of regional languages, which is bound to come about with the ever-increasing dynamism of cultural life, will harden the barriers between different language groups in India. Indian sub-cultures will be in serious danger of being separate islands, increasingly insulated from

each other, a great hinderance to the development of a national culture, and missing the richness that can come only from intellectual cross-fertilization and easy access to the ideas of one's neighbours. A very important function the English language has been performing is to enable different regional groups in India to communicate with each other. English certainly cannot remain a compulsory language for the Indian school population forever and has to be replaced sooner or later by an Indian language. However, this all-India language, even if superimposed on all Indians, will serve only the minimum function of communication of the type and quality normally needed by a tourist in a foreign country. There can be no real meeting of minds until people can have a look into the literature, newspapers etc., of other languages. This can only be achieved by letting down the 'script barrier'.

From the practical point of view also, this introduction of a comon script is the easiest way of solving our language problem. Encourage and develop each regional language, its literature etc., but through a common written medium. The secondary benefits to the printing technology and publishing industry are also likely to be substantial.

# VIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS on this paper should centre round a few general points. One of these is the author's feeling that the Indian people is much misunderstood and perhaps underrated by their own leaders. Indians are religious, perhaps in a narrow, ritualistic sense; Indians are fatalistic and likely to take a passive rather than an active role in the shaping of their environment; Indians are other-worldly and non-materialistic in nature; Indians are non-martial and have no knack for military activities. All these impressions must be somewhat true, as a large number of people have testified. However, the author is convinced that these somewhat undesirable qualities are responses of the Indian people to certain specific situations.

There have been periods when the Indian people have shown qualities quite different from this popular image. Today, for example, fatalism is not to be found in young Indians who are educated and hold adequate jobs. It is, however, to be found amongst many who are uneducated, unemployed and generally oppressed in life. Since this lack of education, unemployment, and acute economic depression have been in India for a few centuries, these traits have become common enough. Change in environmental conditions will change these qualities. Similarly with non-materialism. A typical Indian, to my mind, is as materialistic as an American. His desire for material wealth is no less intense. The fact that the two most important taboos mentioned by saints like Sri Ramakrishna have been against 'Kamini' (woman) and 'Kanchan' (gold), reflects the strength of these drives in the Indian. The terms of endearment in Bengali, for example, 'Sona' (gold), and 'Manik' (a precious stone), as against the English one of 'sweet', are indicative enough.

To be fair to Indians, however, a truly ascetic core and a belief in a power beyond and above himself is there in every Indian. The ideal of a Sannyasin's (an ascetic's) life still haunts the minds of Indians. It is almost a romantic longing, perhaps similar in many ways to the modern American's desire for the life of the Wild West of the 18th and 19th centuries. But this ascetic's life can only follow a successful rather than a frustrated life. Search for the Divine requires a very high drive, tolerance of frustration and sacrifice of personal pleasures, qualities that are not generally possessed by a person who has not enough of these to achieve a moderate success

in his life. Both for a nation and an individual, true spirituality is usually built upon a base of adequate achievements in the mundane world.

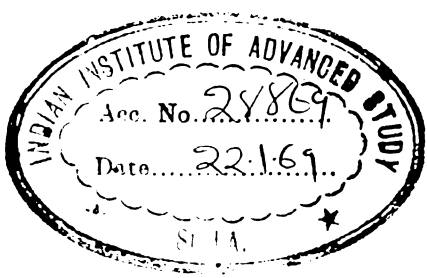
For some time to come, therefore, the Indian national endeavour should be deliberately channelized along mundane and more worldly activities to wean the people from a false and unreal pursuit of the spiritual and to prepare them for a more wholesome spirituality based on a rich and full life. The country needs to be lifted out of 'tamas' or darkness and inactivity towards a more 'rajasic' life; 'sattvic' qualities can come only then. Attempts to take a shortcut from 'tamasic' to 'sattvic' life may not prove fruitful, and indeed may have grotesque results. Such a progression through the different stages is natural. Consequently, a virile, active, manly society, having almost a pagan love for life has to be developed, something like what was found in India in the Vedic age. This would not be denying India's spiritual bias but merely provide for a more adequate foundation for her homage to the spirit. India must learn to live before she can aspire to be the spiritual leader of mankind.

The effect of such a policy would be to remove the moralistic bias in our approach to national and international problems. There should be a square facing of facts and solution of problems on an empirical and eclectic basis. A number of policies immediately to be affected come to mind. Prohibition is one of them. Add to these such other items as compulsory military training, legalization of abortions, the long-drawn out Naga or Kashmir problem. Each of these policies, as existing at the present moment, is infected in some way or other by

a so-called moral and ethical approach. Prohibition is judged not on economic and social but on ethical grounds; the problem of legalization of abortion, not solely on medical and demographic grounds; conscription, not on grounds of defence and the psychological need of the people, but on a vague feeling that pacifism is desirable *per se;* the fact that the Naga question is really a military problem just as the Kashmir question is ultimately a question of the population structure of that State is apt to be overlooked.

The unfortunate thing about India is that its problems are of an elemental type, of a nature that were being experienced in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. The present Indian leaders are highly cultured, sophisticated, and steeped in the liberal traditions of 20th century Britain, the Britain that had been trying to do its best in the first forty years of this century to hide the fact that she controlled an Empire and also the manner in which she had acquired it. There is thus a serious discrepancy—a value-reality discrepancy—in our leaders' understanding of the values that should guide the policies of a liberal democracy in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the problems that these leaders are required to solve—securing the frontiers, taking care of recalcitrant tribes in sensitive border areas, and satisfying the craving for food, education, firearms, and national pride in millions of its citizens. Imagine President Eisenhower, or Woodrow Wilson, ruling the United States in the years of the Civil War or during the years of the opening up of the West, which required the subjugation of numerous Red Indian tribes; imagine Stanley Baldwin or Cle-

ment Atlee with their values and mental make-up ruling Britain in the years of the building up of the Empire, in the days of Disraeli (or earlier), for example. One wonders how they would have fared, in spite of the hard core of toughness each one of them possessed. The predicament of the Indian politicians is exactly the same. Since, however, the problems will not change and since the whole of human history has demonstrated that certain basic problems can be solved along certain set lines only, the perspective of the Indian leaders has to be adjusted accordingly. In the popular criticism of the Indian leaders over their failure to solve the elementary problems of the country, this moral situation and their peculiar moral difficulty are very often overlooked. Indian leaders have a sincerity and faith in the moral principles they profess which one rarely comes across in politicians. All honour to them. But the question still remains: are these values and principles not too sophisticated and advanced for the simple, elemental, and almost primitive nature of the problems the country is facing today?



# Some Thoughts on PLANNING IN INDIA

H. C. GANGULI

Professor Ganguli ruthlessly exposes all the confusion both in Government circles and public opinion that is tearing India apart and, if unchecked, will finally lead to a complete breakdown of the economic and political system. He interrelates the psychology of the people with the direction and speed of the development of the country. He rejects 'new fads' like Communism, which he says will do more harm than good. Instead, like Rousseau, he looks forward to an era when problems will be solved by 'more natural methods'. He is convinced that the solution to the language problem lies in a common alphabet and standardized education for the country.

From the present state of flux must come the new order and the author shows the possible ways in which the national character can and needs to be changed in step with economic development, and the tremendous difficulties involved in such a process. The book reflects the author's essentially pragmatic ideology in a developing India.

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