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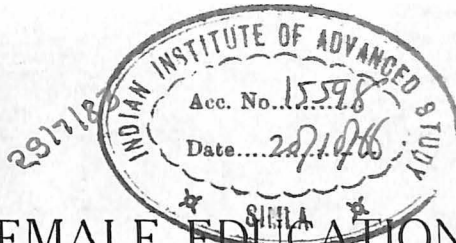
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PROGRESS OF FEMALE EDUCATION

By Mrs. TATINI DAS, M.A.,

Principal, Bethune College for Girls, Calcutta.

The progress that female education has made in India during the last quarter of a century is really amazing from various points of view. Hopeful signs are visible in almost all the aspects connected with women's education.

The number of girls receiving instruction at present is about four times the corresponding number at the beginning of the period (viz. in 1910.) This number is found to have been steadily on the increase from year to year. Thus the number which was over 8 lakhs in 1910, rose gradually from 952,923 in 1911-12, over 18 lakhs in 1922-27, to 2,492,649 in 1932.

This increase, though comparatively large in the lower stages, is also noticeable, to some extent, even in the higher stages. The number of girl students receiving higher education rose from 369 in 1912, 742 in 1917, 1933 in 1927, to 2966 in 1932.

It should also be noticed that in recent years women students are giving good accounts of themselves in different University Examinations. A number of women students have carried off laurels in some of the higher examinations in which they had to enter into open competition with men students.

The spirit of research-work is also now becoming more and more popular among women students as among those of

the other sex. A number of women students far from remaining satisfied with the highest University examinations, are



MRS. TATINI DAS

actively carrying on research work in different subjects and making attempts to win distinction in the world of scholarship. Academic training is not now the only aim of female education. Provision has been made during recent years for

physical education and drill for girls who are achieving commendable distinction in various feats of the body.

Women are taking more and keener interest now than formerly for the education of their sisters. Lack of trained and efficient women teachers, capable of teaching girl students even in the lower classes, was keenly felt about quarter of a century back.¹ But we have to suffer much less from this lack at the present day. With the progress of education among our women folk, even higher education of women can now be managed by lady teachers alone. And feminisation of the staff of institutions for girls is now rapidly progressing.

The feeling of unwillingness that was generally noticed among ladies to be engaged in service, and something of the sort of a social stigma attaching to it, has now almost disappeared. This is due to two causes: firstly, to the economic stress of modern times, which not infrequently compels women to work along with men if they want to ameliorate the condition of their families; secondly to the social ideals which have undergone considerable changes during the period under review.

Even ladies in affluent circumstances far from considering it beneath their social position and dignity to be in service, would welcome the idea of service in the educational line and thus make good use of their time. Educated women, whether in service or not, are taking keen and often active interest in the furtherance of female education. And it is no longer difficult, as it was in 1912-17,* to enlist women members on school committees.

We have so far drawn the reader's attention to the hopeful features in the history of female education in India during the last twenty-five years. The defects and drawbacks as well as the problems that the matter has presented before us should not, however be overlooked. It is to be noted that women's education has not made as much progress as it should have done during these years. It has not been able to keep pace with the advancement of boys' education in the country. The ratio of the number of girls under instruction to the population is still far from appreciable. And of this number again, quite an insignificant fraction only passes beyond the primary stage and receives any education worth the name. This outstanding feature in the history of female education, which was noticeable two decades back**, appears to have undergone very slight improvement during all these years.

Again the appalling disproportion between the provision of educational facilities among boys and girls still persists. Sir George Anderson rightly says:² "The position is, therefore critical. The quantitative advance in the enrolment of girls will at least be maintained, it will probably be expedited. Unless, therefore, more generous financial support is given the grave defects in the education of boys will be accentuated in the education of girls."

In spite of the increase of the number of school-going girls the need of giving to the girls proper education that would help them in realising the ideals and responsibilities of life does not appear to have as yet been widely recognised.

Education of girls is still regarded in many cases only as a pass-port to marri-

1. H. Sharp—*Progress of Education in India* (1912-17)—P. 180

* Ibid—P.—167.

** Ibid—P—182,

2. *Progress of Education in India*. (1927—1932) P—169

age. Young men of higher castes in modern times being unwilling to have illiterate wives, parents have to provide for the education of their daughters until a suitable bridegroom is found and in most cases solemnisation of marriage marks the cessation of all further education of girls.

The number of good schools and colleges for girls is too few to accommodate the increasing number of students

Further the question as to whether there should be a differentiation of the courses of study for male and female students has engaged the attention of educationists from the very beginning*.

“The University regulations” wrote Mr. Hornell, a former Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, “take no account of the special educational needs of women. Surely it is a monstrous anomaly that those Indian girls, who can go



Indian Girl Students who recently went on a tour to Europe

seeking admission every year. The condition of Hostel accommodation is no less disappointing. This is a problem which deserves the best attention and sympathy of all well-wishers of female education. I have dwelt on the various aspects of the problem recently in an address delivered before a meeting of members of the Calcutta constituency of the All-India Women's Conference.

through a complete secondary curriculum but whose education must cease at the end of it should be compelled to devote the whole of their energies to preparing for an examination which ignores all their peculiar needs—an examination the sole gain of passing which is that it admits them to further courses of studies

* Progress of Education (1912-17)—P—177

which they have no prospect of attempting". The problem has been thoroughly investigated all these years by various people—men and women—and it is gratifying to note that the University of Calcutta has recently undertaken to solve it by introducing in the Matriculation curricula several subjects specially adapted to the peculiar needs of girl students. It is expected that a knowledge of these subjects will be of much use to the girls in their future lives. But it is not yet time to judge as to whether this scheme will fully meet the requirements of the case and will effectively and finally solve the problem.

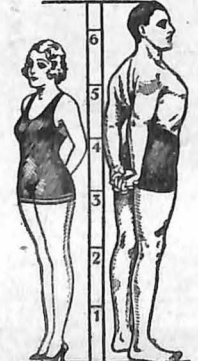
The problem of co-education which is still in its experimental stage, at least in Bengal, needs careful handling. The older and more orthodox section of the people still prefer separate institutions for girls. And evidently it is with due regard for the views of these people, that girls' sections of some of the boys' schools and colleges are being run separately though under the same management. It must be admitted that these institutions are getting more popular than those which are providing full facilities for co-education in their mixed classes. As a matter of fact though many of the Colleges have made arrangements for admitting girl students and teaching them along with the boys, very few of them have been able to secure any appreciable number of girls. Of course, the statement of Mr. Sharp*, made about twenty years ago that in Bengal no women read in men's colleges is no longer true now. But the statement can, after the lapse of so many years, be accepted only with "a very few" for "no". This rapid survey of the condition of female education in India during the last twenty-five years will, on the whole, bring before our minds' eye a picture of progress,

spotted with traces of difficulties and obstacles, that have come in our way during this period.

And we have every hope that the next twenty-five years of female education in this province will be a period of more glorious and all-round progress. To this end what is required is earnest and combined effort on the part of educated women themselves, particularly, of Bengal.

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* Op. Cit.—P. 173.

NATION-BUILDING AND THE CULTURE OF THE BODY

By THE HON'BLE RAJA SIR MANMATHA NATH RAY CHOUDHURY,

KT., M.R.A.S., F. R. S. A., F. R. C. I., M. L. C., OF SANTOSH,

President, Bengal Legislative Council & President, Indian Football Association



THE HON'BLE RAJA SIR M. N. RAY CHOUDHURY

Barring the essentially pre-historic age, when the physical progress and welfare of the human race had no scientific basis to stand upon and was more or less mingled with religion or mental education, one naturally likes to fix his eyes upon the Olympia and the Olympic Games, as constituting the first and the foremost mile-stone in the progress of physical culture on scientific lines.

In ancient world men had to depend upon their muscles for their life. This state of things continued through Palæolithic (Old stone) and Neolithic (New stone) ages. In Bronze and Iron age when societies were formed the need for superior and specialised muscular training became necessary to hold in check peoples that were subjugated. Western authorities like Pericles and Grotius support this contention. If Greece had her Hercules, India had her Bhim fighting against an odd.

The history and development of classical games are at once interesting and instructive. With the Greek, a gymnasium was a school for public games. It formed part of the social life of the early Greeks. It contained large buildings for various kinds of exercises, stadiums, baths, covered porticos for practice of various games in bad weather. It also provided halls where philosophers and men of letters delivered public lectures on physical culture. The difference in Greek and Roman methods was that, while the Greeks were the

actors, the Romans were the spectators. In Greece the professional elements played a large and ever increasing part, whereas the Romans preferred private gymnasiums which was named Palestra. For the Roman world, the circus was at once a political club, a fashionable lounge, a rendezvous of gallantry, a betting-ring and a play-ground for the militia. The Greek system never became popular in Rome. In Rome, the games at Campus Martius, the duties of camp-life, the enforced manners and other hardenings of cultured life, served to take the place of the Greek gymnastic exercises. The first public gymnasium was built there by Nero and another by Comodus.

If India had no Olympia, she had her "Olympic Games". Like Greece, India also fixed her gaze as much upon the body of man as on the glory of his intellect and spirit.

I felt a surge of emotion within me when, from a terrace of the Agra Fort, I saw the enclosed arena down below, where brave athletes and sportsmen of India performed glorious deeds of courage and heroism under the eyes of the great Moghuls. There, on that historic spot during a great sports meeting, Aurengzib, then a mere youngster, gave undoubted proof of his valour and chivalry by rushing to the rescue of an intrepid competitor, who was engaged in a deadly contest with a huge tusker. The Prince separated them with great courage and pluck and killed the infuriated brute.

We find in *Aine-Ak-bari* that on one occasion Emperor Akbar had to engage a tigress that had strayed away from the jungle in a grim fight. The Emperor was unarmed, but trained, as he was, he wrestled single-handed with the beast and struck her down with effective blows. It was a deed of great valour and marvellous skill. The same work records that the Emperor loved to control vicious elephants when their keepers failed to

manage them. Bernier rightly tells us that Elephant was unknown in Europe when it was a common game in the Moghul Court in India.

In the middle ages, the systematic training fell into neglect. Later on, with the inroad of modernism, a certain type of games and sports of yore were found to be on their last legs.

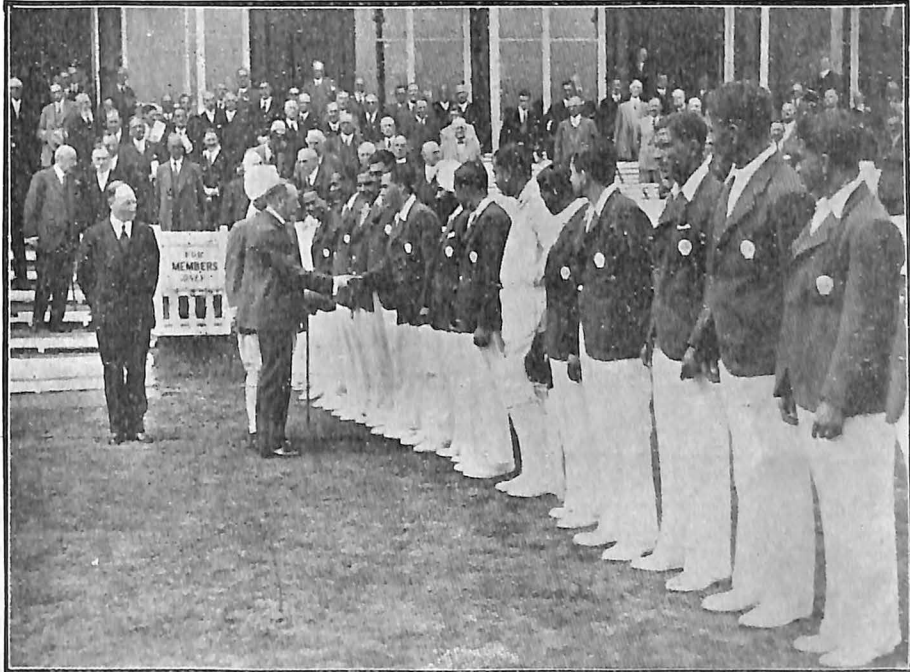
In modern age, physical training in gymnasium has been revived by Germany. It was not until the end of the 19th Century, that it was recognised in England. In Germany, the Government not only controls the practice of gymnastics but makes it compulsory for every child and adult to undergo in prescribed course of physical training. In France, physical training by gymnastics is under State control. In Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and Russia gymnastics are practised on lines that exhibit their national peculiarities. International gymnastic contests have become a feature of the revived Olympic Games. It was founded in 1881. One important feature was the foundation in 1923, of an international federation for the promotion of the educative, instead of creative branch of the art.

Mussolini has rightly observed, "Nations which neglect those physical and moral values which make the sum total of power are not destined to hand on a great civilisation to posterity." Fascist Italy is, therefore, dotted with athletic fields and gymnasium. There is not a town or village in modern Italy that has not its playing grounds and centres of physical culture. There are numerous well-equipped and up-to-date buildings and fields of sport for physical progress and welfare of the children and youth alone. Their organisation, "Opera Nazionale Ballila" is an example for all Nations. Besides, there are, in Italy, a regular net-work of after-work organisations to provide physical training

for workmen in their leisure hours. A huge staff of specialized physical training instructors are employed to build up the nation. The physical culture activities of Fascist Italy are organised on a national basis and are in charge of an Under Secretary of State for Physical Education.

In India, the State and the people must put forth their best efforts to increase

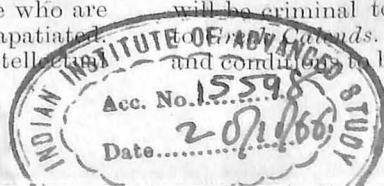
acuteness are bound to deteriorate with physical degeneration. Nobody wants our universities to produce top heavy bloodless emaciated skeletons. To-day, no student cares to enter the portals of an university to come out physically crippled, a lifeless phonographic automatum, with knowledge artificially stored up in his mind. There must be whole-hearted co-operation



H. M. The King-Emperor being introduced to the members of the Indian Cricket Team that visited England in 1932.

the facilities for games and physical exercises for the progressive welfare and well-being of our young men and women both in our urban and rural areas. Our universities and the educational institutions, which function within the radius of their influence, must recognise that the stored-up knowledge of the world and the time forces are altogether lost on those who are physically emasculated or incapacitated. Soul-force, mental vitality, or intellectual

between the State, our universities and the public if our towns and villages are to be organised for athletic training and proficiency of those who live in them. Funds must be provided with a view to evolve a complete system of physical education and athletic training in this country. Such a machinery is long over due and it will be criminal to postpone its creation and construction. We must make laws and conduct to build the nation's health.



Then again, honest efforts must be made to revive our indigenous games and sports. All that is ancient is not always worn out, far less dead. Many of our games undoubtedly manifest athletic skill of high order. Many of them certainly deserve to be revitalised and replenished. Many of them are capable of restoration and can easily be modernised, retaining the best that is in them, to suit the new environment. Lastly, many of them are too precious to be buried in oblivion, as they are characteristic of our national life and civilisation. No doubt, the universality of sports, as the synthesis of physical culture of human race, must be recognised and in that higher sense, sports and games should not be bottled up with national labels on them, or put within watertight compartments according to their origin or genesis. Nevertheless, it is the paramount duty of the Government and the people of every civilised country of the world not to

neglect its national and sports; for, if the world is to advance onward in respect of physical culture and athletic proficiency, every country, as a component part of the whole, must come forward to contribute its quota.

It is not to be forgotten that after the world-wide emasculation of manly games and sports, there was an abnormal set-back in sport in India. Her recovery was slow because the difficulties of the situation were great and many. It was during the last 25 years, during the glorious reign of our present well-beloved King-Emperor that India has again come into her own and although she is yet behind many of her competitors in the world-race for athletic supremacy, her progress has been remarkable. Our youths have now grown restive to participate in the world-race for athletic supremacy and an opening must be made for the realisation of such an ambition.



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