

**VILLAGE EDUCATION IN
INDIA: THE REPORT OF A
COMMISSION OF
INQUIRY**

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Village education in India: the report of a commission of inquiry by Various

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VARIOUS

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VILLAGE EDUCATION IN INDIA

THE REPORT OF A COMMISSION
OF INQUIRY

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1920



P R E F A C E

THE origin and purpose of the Commission whose Report is presented in this volume are explained in the first paragraph of the Introduction. The Report was written in India, where the Commission were in direct touch with Indian workers, missionaries, the Government, and leaders of public life in India, and was completed in June of the present year.

The Chairman of the Commission was the Rev. A. G. Fraser, Principal of Trinity College, Kandy. Prior to his appointment as Principal of this College in 1904, Mr. Fraser had been a missionary in Uganda. He had at different times undertaken special studies of educational methods and experiments in the United States and other countries. In 1917 and 1918 he served as a chaplain in France. He had as his colleagues throughout the whole tour of the Commission the Rev. Professor D. J. Fleming, Ph.D., formerly a teacher in the Forman Christian College, Lahore, and now professor in the Union Theological College, New York; and Miss M. M. Allan, Principal of Homerton College, Cambridge, one of the largest training colleges for teachers in England, who had served on two departmental committees appointed by the Board of Education and also on two Local Education Authorities, and brought to the work of this Commission many years of professional experience. Special efforts were made to secure an Indian member to undertake the entire tour,

and when the Commission was first projected two Indian members consented to join it. But when the plan was revived in 1919, they were no longer available, and efforts to find a substitute were unsuccessful. But Mr. Kanakaryan Tiruselvam Paul, the General Secretary of the Indian National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations, was happily able to be with the Commission in the United States, and again in the preparation of its Report. The Commission was also joined on its arrival in India by the Rev. J. H. Maclean, a missionary of the United Free Church of Scotland in South India. The Commission received special help from many individuals, acknowledgement of which is made in the note on p. viii.

The Report may be safely left to speak for itself, but a word of thanks and appreciation to the members of the Commission may be permitted. It will be the judgment, I think, of most readers of the Report that it is worthy of the subject with which it deals. The Commission have given proof that they possess the most fundamental qualification for their task, the gift of imagination. Ruskin has said that the greatest thing any human being can do in the world is to see something and to help others to see it. Whatever view may be taken of the conclusions at which the Commission have arrived, it will not be questioned by readers of the Report that they have seen clearly, and have told us simply, directly, and with admirable conciseness what they have seen. They have used to excellent purpose the wealth of experience on which they were able to draw. They have given us no dry-as-dust report, but a living presentation of the real life and needs of India to-day. What they have written cannot fail to illuminate at many points the work of missionaries in Indian villages,

and invest it with a new richness of meaning. It will also come, I believe, to many in India and in the West as a ringing call to new endeavour and greater sacrifice for Christ and for the people of India.

The Calcutta University Commission, presided over by Sir Michael Sadler and including distinguished representatives of the Hindu and Mohammedan communities, in their recent Report bear the following testimony to the educational work of Christian missions :

'We should fail in our duty if we did not record the deep impression made upon us, during our visits to colleges and schools in all parts of Bengal, by the self-devotion of the men and women who, in obedience to the call of their faith, are bearing part in the higher education of the Presidency. Their insight and practical experience are of the utmost value to the whole educational system; their example, a source of much strength; their aspirations, an enrichment of its ideals. What they and their foregoers have accomplished in the field of education has been an inestimable boon to the country.' (Vol. iv, p. 456.)

The present volume puts it beyond doubt that the day of opportunity is still with us, and that in the sphere of education the present generation may do for India in the name of Christ a work as great as that of their predecessors, if Christian people in India and in the West have the imagination to see, and the courage and faith to enter, the open door here set before them.

J. H. OLDHAM

August, 1920

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE itinerary of the Commission, including the conferences held in each area, was arranged by the National Missionary Council and its local representatives. The members of the Commission cannot be too grateful for the care with which all arrangements were made for them.

To mention by name all those who have helped us, government officers, Indian gentlemen, generous hosts and missionary workers, would be impossible. Here we can only tender our very cordial thanks, whilst retaining a most grateful memory of each individually. At the same time our special thanks are due to H.E. the Viceroy, who graciously invited the Chairman to Simla and gave the Commission the benefit of his counsel; to the Hon. H. Sharp, Commissioner of Education, who placed every facility in his power at our disposal; to the Hon. V. S. Srinavasa Sastri, who worked with us over the Report for three days, travelling far to do so; to Miss K. M. Bose, who gave us her services for six weeks on the Report and assisted in the writing of it; to Dr. A. Lankester, who placed at our disposal invaluable material for our health chapter, and to whom we owe much in the compiling of it; to Dr. S. K. Datta, who travelled with us in the Punjab; to the Indian Y.M.C.A. for the loan of valuable workers, and for generous financial assistance; to the All-India Christian Conference for their initiative and generous interest in the work of the Commission as shown by their sending two representatives, Professor S. K. Roy and ex-Principal J. P. Cotelingam, to consider and discuss with us the findings of the Commission; to Mr. Mason Olcott and Mr. S. C. L. Nasir, who accompanied the Commission throughout its tour, and rendered invaluable assistance in the secretarial work.

A. G. F.

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