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Man of the Millennium Mahatama Gandhi

What I Mean by Education

By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit.

Literacy is not the end of education, nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus, every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.

I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically, as is done today, but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process.

This method does not exclude a knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by reading and writing. The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff, and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary

proposal, but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all-round economy.

Our education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hand. If I were a poet, I could write poetry on the possibilities of the five fingers. Why should you think that the mind is everything and the hands and feet nothing? Those who do not train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education, lack 'music' in their life. All their faculties are not trained.

Mere book knowledge does not interest the child so as to hold his attention fully. The brain gets weary of mere words, and the child's mind begins to wander. The hand does the things it ought not to do, the eye sees the things it ought not to see, the ear hears the things it ought not to hear, and they do not do, see, or hear, respectively, what they ought to. They are not taught to make the right choice and so their education often proves their ruin. An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer.

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JULY 31, 2001

From the Bhavan's President

Economic Policy-Making

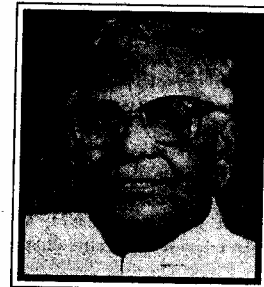
R. Venkataraman

The electorate does not know that even as people pay for the expenditure of running their household, they will have to pay for the expenditure of running their Government.

Economic policy-making in our country should be based on a thorough knowledge of the political set-up and the diverse pulls and pressures of democracy. The electorate does not know that even as people pay for the expenditure of running their household, they will have to pay for the expenditure of running their Government.

carry our country forward.

In the first 20 years no budget contained the item—surplus from current revenue. I think I was the last Finance Minister in



whose budget this item was there and it vanished after that.

I would like the Finance Minister to be bold enough to raise the taxes to meet the cost of administration.

Now, is there no scope for increasing the Income Tax? The marginal tax of 30% is the same for a person with Rs. 1.5 lakhs and the person who has got Rs. 1.5 crores. Have I not got the guts to have a greater tax in income? You can say for Rs. 1.5 lakhs to Rs. 1.5 crores it is 35%

Any Finance Minister is thus in great difficulty. In order to get himself elected, he has to make extravagant unfulfillable promises.

Therefore, our constraints are very great. We have to frame a policy which will not only get ourselves re-elected, but also

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and then later it is 40%. All over the world 40% is the norm. Here it is 30% with so many exemptions. How do you expect the Government to run the administration? How do you expect to fulfill the people's needs and desires? It is not possible and nobody has the courage to do it.

It is true, as Dr. Arjun Sengupta has said, at the time when the taxes were 70%, there was really a need for reducing the taxes. But now it is 30% taxes. There is a huge deficit of Rs.70,000 crores on the revenue account. What is the justification in not taxing, in not applying the principles of equity which is the most important principle of taxation. We are not doing it.

Then, take the estate duty. It is a universal way of system of taxing people. The advantages have been explained in textbooks. It falls between the man who is dead and the man who inherits. What do we do? We do not want to touch it.

The problem is that we have to look at it from a macro angle.

What can we do? If you cannot touch it, you have to restrict yourself to poverty not of 36% but of 90%.

In my opinion Sinha has failed to raise revenues and all his problems are because he was not able to raise the revenue. He has prepared the budget on certain assumptions. One is that there will be Rs.12000 crores from disinvestment. Last year's budget showed a disinvestment figure of Rs.10,000 crores and the performance was Rs.2500 crores. So proportionately for Rs.12000 crores, you may get Rs.2750 crores. This is based on the assumption.

Secondly, the expenditure is proposed to be cut by the reduction in the staff. You cannot reduce 2%, not even two persons in the Government.

These two assumptions are going to be the stumbling block of Sinha's efforts to reduce the expenditure. We will neither be able to reduce the expenditure nor to raise Rs.12000 crores by way of disinvestment. His budget is based on a 2 per cent

reduction in the staff every year which will amount to Rs.100 crores. With this how will he be able to manage the budget?

Then there are all charities. I want to tax charities. They are all book transfers and no charities. The greatest charity is to pay taxes. The Government has to run hospitals, schools and welfare institutions. What is a greater charity an individual will perform, when the Government with all its resources cannot?

The stock exchange is going up and up. The surcharge is removed, 5% up. The position now is that it has tumbled down to over 17% points.

Public opinion in India is controlled by the media and the press is owned by the big business barons. Whatever helps the upper class people, it becomes the public opinion of India. The voiceless man bears Rs.10,000 crores by way of excise duty increase, the man who owns the press gets a cut of Rs.5500 crores. What kind of position is this? On direct tax you get a cut of Rs.5500 crores.

On excise duty the rates go up by Rs.10000 crores.

Some years ago, one Finance Minister wanted to give concession to agriculture and he made out a scheme. The Finance Secretary told him that it will cost Rs.600 crores. Therefore, the budget cannot be sustained. He asked the Finance Secretary to bring the excise book and went on increasing the duty by 3%, 5% and so on. The result is that the wholesale price index went up by 24.1% and he lost the election. We just go on increasing the burden on the people who are poor and voiceless. Don't think that they will take it. They have a date on which they will seek their revenge and that is the day of election. An increase of 10,000 crores by way of additional levy on excise and remission of Rs.5000 crores in direct taxes. I am afraid this is not going to serve the country properly.

There is another aspect to it which affects the lower class. Now you have cut down the interest on small savings. Who

are the people who invest in small savings? They are the pensioners and old people who want certain amount of certainty and regular income. The interest on PPF has been reduced from 12 to 9.5%. On the Government instruments also, it has been cut by 1-1.5%. It will hit the poor people. There are some widows who have to live on the interest. You give up revenue from the people who can afford to pay and you cheat the people who are living on the interest which is being cut.

There is another danger. Do not think that whatever the Government does, it will be acceptable to the people. The moment the rule comes into force most of the people will withdraw the money from the small savings. If they withdraw the money from the small savings, the state will be affected because the small savings go the states.

The result of this will be that the Government will not give money and the people will not get interest. Who is benefitted?

If you want to bring down the interest, you bring it down by your own efforts, not by robbing Peter to pay Paul. This is the thing which is going to affect the future.

Then there is VRS. Everybody is talking about VRS as if it has been sent as a God's boon. Do you know what the real situation is? All youngsters who have got bright chances of being employed, they take advantage of VRS and get out. All old people like me, continue the service with a capacity a 60 year old man can give.

Actually this is what has happened in the Banking Sector. In the Bank young people of 35 years and less got all the money and they are gone. The people who are left are about the age of 50 with 10 years of service left. I am afraid the scheme has not been properly thought of.

I am afraid the budget has been conceived in an ad-hoc manner and going against all the principles, all the past practices and experiences.

Yuga Purusha How God Came into My Life

Swami Sivananda
(1887 to 1963 A.D.)

To Sainthood through Service is the story of Sivananda. Rarely has a medical man concerned with curing the ills of the body, turned into a healer of the wounds of the mind and redeemer of the vagrant soul as this saint of Rishikesh. In his Himalayan abode he has drawn to himself many an aching heart, to give it comfort and to set it on the high road to Spirituality. With an erudition of encyclopedic proportions, he combined a child-like simplicity and earned the worshipful adoration of countless men and women, old and young, in all parts of the world. From the *Forest University* that he established at Rishikesh, he has issued books and pamphlets without number, expounding every aspect of Hindu Philosophy and Religion. *The Divine Life Society*, started under his auspices, carries his message to every corner of the country and beyond.

