

Medium of instruction

By M. J. Audi

The decision of the High Court that the teachers in private primary schools should be paid like their counterparts in the Government schools has highlighted a very important issue. The issue is not whether the Government of Goa should or should not give grants to private primary schools. The issue is what should be the medium of instruction in the primary schools in India regardless of their management. It may be the will of Providence that on this matter Goa should lead India.

Good fortune

Language is a vital attribute of the nation. It is India's good fortune that it has an excellent language universally admired for the best literature and several regional languages. It is India's misfortune that despite forty years of freedom, it pathetically clings to the language of its last colonial master and thinks that without English language, it cannot survive in the modern world. At the risk of being branded as a fanatic nationalist by resourceful lobby of the brown sahibs, one must bring to the public notice the disabilities this country suffers as a slave of English language.

Everywhere in the world, primary school is the child's first point of contact with knowledge. There, nothing is more precious than the medium of instruction. It is an axiom of education that mother-tongue is the best medium of instruction. With it, the child climbs the peaks of knowledge as easily as the duck moves in water. Mother-tongue stimulates thinking. Foreign-tongue breaks the thought-processes and tortures the child. The finesse through foreign medium of instruction is as deceptive as a synthetic beauty. Foreign language as a medium of instruction at higher levels inflicts greater curses on the nation. Foreign language breeds denationalisation and de-

culturisation. It sows the seeds of alienation. It destroys creativity and originality. In 1986, the Government of India was compelled to stress that "De-culturisation, dehumanisation and alienation must be avoided at all costs" in India. (National Policy on Education — 1986, pp. 2; 20-21.)

Supreme qualities

Self-confidence and self-reliance are the supreme qualities of individuals as well as the nations. Persons holding the highest offices in any walk of life, in any profession, occupation or trade because of their fathers or godfathers are like the jackdaws in peacock's feathers. They are incapable of commanding respect. They are, in fact, ridiculed. So it is with the nations that seek glory through imitation. Looking back, our founding Fathers committed two big mistakes. First was the adoption of our Constitution in English. Second was the continuation of English language for fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution as the official language despite the adoption of Hindi in Devnagri script as the National Language of India. If there is one phrase in our Constitution which is the most detestable, it is "India that is Bharat". It is a clear confession of want of self-confidence. Will this country lose its identity or disappear from the map of world if she drops *India* and uses *Bharat*? Africans show finer sense of self-respect. Though their countries are not as well-known as ours, they do not say Zambia that is Northern Rhodesia or Namibia that is South-West Africa. India is the distortion of Hindustan which is the most appropriate name of the land. If Hindustan is allergic to the powers that be, then they should stick to *Bharat*.

The Indian worship of English language is the real achievement of English colonialism. The credit goes

neither to Robert Clive — the founder nor to Lord Dalhousie — the consolidator of empire but to Lord Macaulay who devised the British educational policy. His goal was the creation of a society "Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect". His great success could be seen from Malcolm Muggeridge's deft comment that *the last English-speaking person on the face of earth would be an Indian*. If English is such a powerful language as our Anglophiles contend, then other languages of the world should be as insignificant and as unimportant as the Indian languages. Fact of matter is that they are not. What is the reason? When any people make real contribution to art, architecture, literature, and science, humankind is compelled to recognise it. As Emerson rightly perceived: "They who made England, Italy or Greece... did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth".

Policy implementation

If the Indian genius is to bloom in its natural splendour, India's medium of instruction policy should be clearly defined and firmly implemented. India's future demands that only mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction at primary and secondary level. Only National language should be the medium of instruction at Higher-Secondary, Graduate and Post-Graduate levels. All foreign languages should be within the reach of our students at Higher-Secondary, Graduate and Post-Graduate levels. So far, India's tragedy is that it never had a Government at the Centre reputed for firmness in the implementation of decisions. As long as English language continues to rule, so long this fine and truly great country will be known to the world as *India that is Bharat that is a Land of Denationalised Degenerate Imitators*.