

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

## Chapter III

RELATIONS DOWN THE AGES

## 1. Ancient and Medieval Times

The teacher-student relationship was very close and cordial in the Rig-vedic as well as in the latter Vedic times, in the times of the Mahabharat as well as in the times of the Ramayan and in the Buddhist as well as in the Mohammedan times. The educational centres, particularly in the Vedic and the Buddhist times, were residential and both the teacher and the taught lived together to teach and to learn mainly Vedas in the Hindu centres, Buddhism (as contained in the Tripitak) in the Buddhist centres and the Koran in the Mohammedan centres of learning. This living together of students and the teachers contributed most to the closeness of relation between them.

Close Student-teacher Relation : The Hindu System of Education:

In the Vedic times as also in the times of the Epics students used to come to the teachers' home to reside with them as members of their families for a number of years<sup>1</sup> to learn Vedas and other subjects in return for their service to the teacher. Relationship existing between teacher and student was claimed to be like that existing between father and son. After the upanayan teacher became the spiritual or intellectual father while the student attained second birth and was called 'dwija' or twice-born.

Under the Hindu teachers, mostly Brahmins, curriculum included not only the study of the Vedas and other subjects but also moral and physical education. Utmost importance, on building character, was given and this necessitated the constant guidance of the teacher. The personal touch of the teacher was very important. "Unless the acharya took a real paternal interest in his pupil, he would not be able to wield a deep moral influence upon him; and, therefore, to that extent he would also be unable to mould his character properly."<sup>2</sup> The building of a 'man' out of a student required the human factor and students found this in the person of the teacher. The personal life of the teacher was more educative than anything else. Students found or expected to find in the teacher an ideal man, whom they could emulate to their maximum benefit. "Direct, personal and continuous contact with a teacher of noble character", in the words of Altekar, "naturally produces great effect on the mind of the scholar during the pliable period of childhood and adolescence."<sup>3</sup> This personal touch of the teacher dominated the whole of Brahmanical education of the Gurukula systems in the Vedic and latter times.

It was not only the moral side of life but also the intellectual side of life of the students that received sufficient attention of the educators. "..... the teacher's duty" writes P. H. Prabhu, "under the Hindu system of education was to help to cultivate the moral culture of his pupil along with his intellectual culture".<sup>4</sup>

What distinguished the ancient Hindu system of education from other systems was its individual, and not collective, attention to the students. Under this system, centres of education were single-teacher institutions where singleness of the number of teacher per institution limited the number of students. And this ensured closer relation between teacher and student. "The pupil", rightly said by Radha Kumud Mookherjee, "belongs to the teacher and not to an institution."<sup>5</sup>

In the Upanishads also, one comes across a close and cordial relationship of teacher with students. Special mention may be made of the Kena and the Katha Upanishads. The first two parts of the Kena Upanishad are in the form of a dialogue and discussion between teacher and student. Here the student was allowed to ask as many questions as he liked until he was satisfied and convinced.

The same tradition of close and cordial teacher-student relationship was found in the Mahabharat and the Ramayan. One finds in the Mahabharat an intimate relationship between Dronacharya and the Kaurav Princes and between Parsuram and Karna, in the Ramayan, between Viswasitra and sons of King Dasaratha, and in the Raghuvansa, between Vasistha and his pupils.

#### The Buddhist System of Education

Also, under the Buddhist system of education, profoundly influenced by the Hindu system, one finds more or less the same close teacher-student relationship, though in changed situation. The relationship, here,

was not as intimate as under the Hindu system, principally because of the institutional difference. The Hindu centres of education were single-teacher institutions which greatly limited the number of students while, under the Buddhist system, centres of education were of corporate nature, including many teachers and many students in each centre called Vihar or monastery.

Nonetheless, the relationship, here, was close and cordial because the method of teaching was, mostly, tutorial followed by discussion and even lectures for students failing to understand the lecture. "The old and the young mutually help one another",<sup>6</sup> said Hiuen Tsiang. Hiuen Tsiang himself learnt Yogasutra from Silabhadra, and many other works from other teachers of repute including Jaya Sena, in the same manner.

Further support may be had, to corroborate the fact that there was personal relationship between student and teacher, from what Sankalia has to say: "Even these lectures very often took the shape of personal discussion between the teacher and the student who could not follow the lecture or had some doubts regarding some topics in the lecture ....."<sup>7</sup>

#### The Mohammedan System of Education

The teacher-student relationship under the Mohammedan system of education, built upon demolishing the Hindu and Buddhist seats of learning, was also intimate. "The monitorial system"<sup>8</sup> in which the more

advanced students were associated with teachers in the work of teaching, was a special feature of Indian education and it was in use in Mohammedan as well as in Hindu centres of learning.

Thus, it is clear that intimate relationship of teacher with his students was the sine qua non of the Hindu, Buddhist and even the Mohammedan system of education in Vedic, Buddhist and Mohammedan times \_\_\_in ancient and medieval periods.

## 2

#### Set-back to the Close Relation

But, gradually, the intimate relationship of the teacher with the student, as was found in the Vedic times and latter, received a set-back because of the increasingly felt need of accommodating a greater number of students with the passage of time and the emergence of new socio-economic conditions.

Regular Institutions : In the Vedic times and still later, number of students was very small and the number of teachers, quite naturally, much smaller. The smallness of number of students in the Vedic times and latter might be attributed, inter alia, to caste, illiteracy among the parents, poverty, small population and so forth. Sons of only the upper three castes were admitted for education. Sudras were excluded. But as time passed conditions turned favourable to the spread of education

among the people and the Gurukul systems<sup>9</sup> (comparable to modern colleges and the Parishads,<sup>10</sup> composed of eminent teachers or learned Brahmins, comparable to modern universities) yielded places to regular institutions, very clearly in evidence, in the Buddhist times and latter. And such regular institutions as the universities of Takshashila in ancient India, Nalanda, Benaras, Ballavi and Vikramshilla in the medieval India, appeared.

The famous Panini, Jeevaka, the renowned court physician of Bimbisara, were students of Takshashila. There is a tradition connecting Kautilya with this University.

Nalanda, "the greatest university of the medieval world"<sup>11</sup> had, at its height of glory, one thousand teachers and ten thousand students. Dharmapala, Dipankara, Jinamitra, Shilabhadra, Prabhakaramati and others, some of the most famous scholars, were connected with Nalanda University.

Vikramshilla is said to have included one hundred and seven temples and six colleges.<sup>12</sup>

Institutional arrangements for imparting education were in evidence, also, under the Mohammedan system of education. Muktaba, lower seats of learning, attached to mosques, and Madrasahs, higher seats of learning, often attached to mosques, were found to exist catering to the needs of education and learning.

Firoz Tughluq's madrasah,<sup>13</sup> a magnificent building, covering an extensive area and having many lecture rooms, was established in 1352. There were a mosque and some hostels attached to it with quarters for the Imams and other servants of the mosque. There were many teachers of repute including Maulana Jalal-ud-din Rumi, its principal.

It is conceivable that, under the above institutional arrangements, the close teacher-student relationship as envisaged under the Brahminal system of education in Vedic times and still later, was not gradually possible because of the need — in accommodating greater number of students — of meeting the new conditions of life and time.

Yet, it must be admitted that the ancient Indian ideal of intimate student-teacher relationship did not lose its significance and value. In spite of the ~~new~~ enlargement of the educational institutions, efforts were constantly made to practise and propagate the ideal of teacher-student relationship as it was deemed to be the most important condition of teaching and learning.

## 3

### Practice, Not Theory

Let me now deal with the question as to how far the teacher-student relationship was close and cordial not in theory but in practice.

It is admittedly true that the intimate teacher-student relationship was an ideal particularly in the Hindu centres of education since the earliest Vedic times until the British take-over of them in the early 19th century with the Minute of Macaulay being approved by Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General. "One of the most characteristic of Indian educational ideals," wrote Keay "is the relation between pupil and teacher".<sup>14</sup> It was the ideal. How far was it carried into practice ?

#### ~~THE RULES OF RESPECT~~

**Rules of Respect :** If one judges the relationship from the points of view of students particularly in the background of the rules of respect due to the teacher from the student, one may envisage a clear tilt in the relationship towards the teacher. It was a relationship prominently marked by superordination and subordination.

A brief reference may be made to the rules of respect due from students to teachers to substantiate our point. "There are rules", wrote Radha Kumud Mookherjee, "regulating the behaviour of the student towards his teacher. He must always obey his teacher except when ordered to commit crimes which cause loss of caste. He must not contradict him. He must occupy a couch or seat lower than that of his teacher. When he meets his teacher after sunrise (coming for his lessons), he shall embrace his feet, and shall study, after having been called by the teacher, and not request the teacher to begin the lesson ...."<sup>15a</sup> He must approach his teacher with the same reverence as a deity."<sup>16</sup>

He was also required to beg alms daily for himself and his teacher, tend teacher's cattle, sweep the floor of the teacher or the place of sacred fire, massage the body of the teacher and a number of other similar works to please the teacher.

It is said that, in the times of the Epics, a student maintaining himself on the proceeds of his begging and not depending on the teacher was commended. He was also urged to perform all the acts desired by the teacher even at the cost of his life. This devotion should also be observed towards the wife, son and other relatives of the teacher.<sup>17</sup>

God and Mortal : A bit of reflecting over the above three passages will make it abundantly clear that the relationship between student and teacher resembled that between gods and ordinary humanbeings and surely not that between man and man or what we call human relationship. Here teacher was worshipped like a god. "The idea of the relationship," wrote Keay, "of pupil to teacher has indeed been some times so developed that it has led to the teacher, or guru, receiving divine honours from his pupil ...."<sup>18</sup>

How could there be a very close and cordial teacher-student relationship when the teacher was treated to be a god and the student to be an ordinary mortal, when the teacher was always to be obeyed and never contradicted or when the teacher was always to order and the student was always to carry out the orders unquestioningly ? It was a relationship marked by inordinate respect and obedience to the teacher by the student

and an excessive regulation of the student by the teacher.

It is very much clear that teachers — the Hindu teachers in particular — were authoritarian in their relation to the students because of a number of causes degrading much down the position of the student and exalting much high the position of the teacher. The causes may be enumerated and explained.

### Explanations

1. In the general absence of any cash-nexus between the teacher and the student, the custom requiring the students to reside with the teacher at his home for years together generated in the minds of students a feeling of excessive indebtedness towards the teachers.

2. Consciousness of this fact led the teachers to more and more regulation of the students and, in the process, becoming more and more authoritarian in their relation to the students.

3. Teachers were averse to inculcating a sense of self-respect in the minds of the students probably fearing that, that might act as boomerang. It appeared to be a conscious attempt to perpetuate their authority upon the students. Students were made aware only of their duties and never of their rights.

4. Teachers were deemed to be the go-between, between gods and men called students. This boosted up the position of the teacher and degraded that of the student further down.

5. Vedas were regarded to be the repository of all knowledge and teachers alone were thought to be able and fit to interpret and communicate the Vedas to the ordinary people including students.

No individual and original thinking was encouraged. Everything had to be justified with a reference to the Vedas thought to be the root of all knowledge. Any one doubting the authenticity of the Vedas was dubbed nihilists or atheists.<sup>19</sup>

6. The oral method of teaching, then in vogue, gave the teachers "a monopoly of the book deliberately kept unwritten"<sup>20</sup> as "education was entirely under the control of the priestly class."<sup>21</sup> It gave the teacher "a matchless prestige among the people .... Briefly, it made them [the Brahmins] into a class and a powerful one who influenced later Indian history"<sup>22</sup> ".... it became the monopoly of a special class of persons," wrote Hiron C. Chaudhury, "who could exclude and include others in this class quite arbitrarily ....".<sup>23</sup>

7. As is already referred to above, there was no cash-nexus between the teacher and the student. But this does not mean that the teachers were economically poor. Force of the custom was such that every one, on completing his studies, had to make presents to the teacher according to his ability. These presents ranged from vegetables or umbrella to fields, cattle, gold and other costly things. Majority of students were poor and naturally they could not make costly presents. But these students had to work hard at the teacher's home in begging alms, tending cattle, massaging teacher's body or even sweeping the floors. They worked all day and received instructions from their teacher at the evening. But the rich students — sons of royal families, merchants and other rich people — often paid the whole of their charges in advance<sup>24</sup> and were given preferential treatment in so far as they were not required to beg or tend the cattle or <sup>do</sup> other menial chores

for the teacher. Teachers received much costly presents from these rich boys and were thus able to have their positions further elevated. This did play no small a part in raising the status of the teacher vis-a-vis the students, particularly the poor ones.

8. The deep entrenched feeling of caste of the Hindu teachers always debarred the sudras from the portals of the temples of learning. The theory of caste was, broadly, based on the fragmentation of the humanity into different graded categories of people — some placed high and some low in the society. It was one way of heightening the position of the Brahmins (who monopolised the number of teachers) in relation to the students and the non-Brahmin people.

Thus, the past is not that rosy as we are usually wont to paint. It is human frailty that men, out of their excessive respect (bordering on blind respect) to the past, regard everything in the past as good and ideal while turning blind eyes to its faults.<sup>25</sup>

#### Teacher and Student : Good and Bad

I do not deny the fact that there were eminent and ideal teachers<sup>26</sup> with profound scholarship, honesty and integrity, love for their students as sons and a sense of humanity for the people as a whole. There were also good and bright students. Relationship between such teachers and students will always serve as an illuminating example for the teachers and the students, down the ages of Indian history. But this was not all. There was another side which was much disappointing and gloomy. There were also many unworthy teachers some

of whom even lacked in character and integrity. There were unworthy students as well. Relationship between such teachers and students can be better imagined than described.

"Unworthy pupils and teachers," wrote Radha Kumud Mookherjee, "were not unknown. Some pupils found study too painful and difficult and abstained. Sometimes the rough manners of a teacher might also repel them."<sup>27</sup>

Mookherjee also confirmed that "there was not always the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and deviations from the ideal were common or general that specific epithets were evolved."<sup>28</sup>

Historian S. C. Sarkar gives us a stunning information when he says that "the Vedic teachers were not above the charms of wealth"<sup>29</sup> and also "the temptations of the fair sex."<sup>30</sup> There is a considerable amount of evidence in both the Vedic and the Epic-puranic literature of their uncontrolled sex-relations which reacted on their wives and students.

#### Comparison With The Buddhist Teachers

In spite of the fact that Buddhist rules of respect<sup>31</sup> due from students to teachers were almost identical with the Hindu rules of respect due from students to teachers, I find the Buddhist teachers much less authoritarian and avid than the Hindu teachers in so far as :

1. Both the Buddhist teachers and the students lived in monasteries away from their homes while the Hindu teachers lived in their own homes and often with their families but the Hindu students had to live at the homes of their teachers.

2. Both of them (Buddhist teachers and students) got out together for begging alms but the Hindu teacher is never heard of going out for alms, alone or with students, but Hindu student had to beg to provide for his own food etc. as well as to help his teachers.

3. The Buddhist teachers had no material property of their own while the Hindu teachers had material property of their own — their homes, cattle, fields, gold etc.

4. Buddhist students were under no obligation to make presents to their teachers on completion of their studies while Hindu students were required by custom (an unwritten law) to make presents to their teachers to please them according to their abilities. Presents often happened to be very costly, specially when given by sons of kings, merchants and other rich people. And

5. Buddhist teachers were not inhibited by any caste-feelings while the Hindu teachers were inhibited by feelings of caste and creed.

#### Strength of The Hindu System of Education

The Hindu system of education was much more rigid and viable than the Buddhist system. The Hindu system survived the Mohammedan invasion and regained its past glory to a large extent while the Buddhist system disappeared from India following the invasion. The Hindu

system is much more pervasive and permanent than the Buddhist or the Muslim system of education in its influence upon the educational centres particularly on their teachers upto the present time.

The Muslim teachers at Maktabs, lower seats of learning, and at Madrasahs, higher seats of learning, could not be as assertive as their Hindu counterparts because of two principal reasons :

1. Maulavis at the lower seats of learning were very much dependent upon the families whose children they taught and
2. Ulamas at the higher seats of learning were also much controlled by the state.<sup>32</sup>

## II. British Times

The type of student-teacher relationship found in ancient and medieval India was not found in British India. The predominant feature of the period was the European versus the Indian or the ruler versus the ruled. Indians were to obey and Europeans to order. The colonial character was very much manifest, in every walk of life. Educational sphere could not remain free from the long arms of the colonial octopus.

### Race, The Spring-Board of Discrimination

Indian teachers were not at all much honoured people in the Indian educational centres, high or low. It was the European teacher who

counted and was much respected not because he was a scholar but because he was European or English. Indian teachers, though many of them famous scholars, were always at bay because they were Indians or 'natives'. 'Native' was a derogatory term. Racial difference was the spring board of all discrimination. Europeans were always supposed to be superior while Indians always inferior.

Gokhale wrote, for an Inter-racial Problems Conference, a paper in which he said, inter alia, "..... This attitude, this ruling race idea, prevented an appreciation of the capacity or claims of the Indian people. There was no inclination to recognise any form of equality or even near equality ...."<sup>33</sup>

An Encounter : In 1887, Sir Charles Croft, Director of Public Instruction, liked to see Asutosh Mookherjee, the "promising young mathematician about whom he had heard so much."<sup>34</sup> They met and talked for a long time. Sir Charles Croft was satisfied and offered Asutosh Mookherjee an appointment in the Presidency College. But Asutosh Mookherjee insisted on honourable terms — "the same status and pay as European members of the Education Service."<sup>35</sup> Croft was very much surprised and said: "how could he expect the status and pay of European members of the Education Service ? It was an impossible demand."<sup>36</sup>

"Those were days of racial exclusiveness and administrative partiality", writes Nripendra Chandra Banerjee (a famous teacher of his

time) in his autobiography, "when the best of Indians trained in Europe and recruited to the Educational Service, were always placed below the third rate crass Englishman or Scotchman even from Edinburgh, or Dundu or Aberdeen, not to mention Cambridge or Oxford and London in the Service Cadre, and these first-rate men got two-thirds of the salary of the average European, for no other fault than that of colour ...."<sup>37</sup>

Bose and Ray : Mention may be made of Sir J. C. Bose in Physics and Sir P. C. Ray in Chemistry of Presidency College, Calcutta, "giants of those days"<sup>38</sup> working "under great odds in the teeth of manipulated obstruction by the European members of the Educational Department who had the ears of the Lieutenant-Governor and his entourage ...."<sup>39</sup>

The vicious discrimination between teachers, under the British rule, most adversely affected students in their relation to their teachers. They were not trained or taught to honour teacher as teacher. The prejudice of race was inculcated into their young minds. They too were expected to honour the European teachers more than the Indian teachers because of the supposed racial or status difference.

Teacher and Teacher : While writing about the relationship between teacher and teacher at the Fort William College, founded in 1800 "for the better education of the Junior Civil Servants of the East India Company,"<sup>40</sup> Sisir Kumar Das said: "The European teachers controlled the

policy and the Indian teachers obeyed the orders. The British teachers in the college were not only inferior to their European counterparts, they were also inferior to their Indian colleagues, in respect of their knowledge of Indian languages. And yet the Indian Scholars were not treated at par with the European Scholars. That created a silent tension in the academic life of the college of Fort William. The relation between the European and the Indian teacher was not based on academic terms : they were not teachers belonging to two different establishments but they belonged to two categories, those of Sahibs and of Munshis. The munshis did their work well for which they were paid and often rewarded but they failed to be creative even when they had the power."<sup>41</sup>

#### Attitudes of Indian Students

The Indian students, geared up under such a background, could not be generally respectful to the teachers but they had to maintain a facade of respect to them because of the fear-complex of punishment and the prevailing subject like attitudes to the masters. The European teachers, in general, had no genuine love or sympathy for the Indian students. And the Indian students were aware of it. They were brought up in an atmosphere of neglect and indignity. Their consciousness of being treated as subjects or natives hindered them from being spontaneous in the flow of their heart-felt respect towards their teachers — European teachers in particular.

Under the English system of education,<sup>42</sup> the Indian students were gradually losing their Indianness — they were being initiated in an alien culture. This fact might have alienated them from the Indian masses and also their Indian teachers but did not bring them close to the European people and teachers. There was always a distance, this way or that way, between teachers and students.

### Bleak Prospects

Students were conscious that their future was not bright for they were being trained to be "clerks"<sup>43</sup> or to hold the lower rank of Civil Service, always to assist the European masters to rule the country — their own country. Schools or colleges were mere "factories"<sup>44</sup> for producing "a loyal second level of leadership in India".<sup>45</sup>

One of the basic aims of education, under the English rule was to raise, out of Indians, a "class of men", in the words of Macaulay, "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and intellect."<sup>46</sup> The whole British scheme of education was an exercise in mentally preparing the Indians to accept the British rule for ages. How could the students be whole heartedly respectful to the teachers who were playing important roles in perpetuating the British "cultural imperialism".<sup>47</sup>

"Imperialism", writes an Indian historian, "seeks to denigrate the subject people in their own eyes and in the estimation of others to consolidate its sway .... Education and proselytisation were the twin

methods sought to achieve this purpose. The task was facilitated by implanting in the minds of the Indians the consciousness of the emptiness of their literary and cultural heritage, the corruptness of their social system and utter superstitiousness of their religious professions ....<sup>48</sup>

It was the educational or cultural exploitation that, largely, motivated the Indian students to plunge themselves in the Independence Movement and to play the leading roles in achieving independence.

#### Situation On The Campus

The Britishers were rude and offensive everywhere,<sup>49</sup> wherever they came in contact with the Indians, from the streets to the campus and law was of no avail to Indians. "...The situation would be aggravated if any Britishers on the college staff were rude or offensive to us," in the words of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, "unfortunately such instances were not rare. Before my time on several occasions English professors had been thrashed by the students. These stories were carefully chronicled and handed down from generation to generation. During my first year in college I had some personal experiences of them but they were not of a serious nature, though these were enough to stir up bitterness."<sup>50</sup>

As is well known, in January, 1916 Mr. Oaten, English professor of Presidency College, Calcutta, "manhandled some students"<sup>51</sup> and it was followed by a successful general strike of all students with the principal having failed to take necessary steps against the professor. The matter did not end there. About a month later, the same professor was

again involved in manhandling another student. The repeated insults to the Indian students by the same professor infuriated the students and, knowing for certain that principal would not punish the professor, they beaten the professor "black and blue."<sup>52</sup>

College was closed and enquiry Committee was set up presided over by Sir Asutosh Mookherjee, former Vice-Chancellor and judge of the High Court. Subhas Chandra Bose was one of those representing the students' case. He was asked whether he considered the assault on Oaten justified. "My reply was that", in the words of Bose, "though the assault was not justified, the students had acted under great provocation. And I then proceeded to narrate seriatim the misdeeds of the Britishers in Presidency College during the last few years ...."<sup>53</sup>

The Indian students' violent reactions to the offensive behaviour of their European teachers give us enough to estimate the surging hostile mentality of the Indian students towards the European teachers who almost hated the Indian students.

#### Images Of Indian Teachers

Indian teachers were under a heavy load of rules and regulations.<sup>54</sup> They could seldom assert themselves. Their images suffered a further diminution when they failed to take part in the Swadeshi or Independence Movement under fear of punishment.

They also suffered from social isolation.<sup>55</sup> European intellec-

tuals or educated persons seldom associated themselves with their Indian counterparts. Educated Indians were few and they were hardly "considered fit to conduct English schools or colleges."<sup>56</sup> Schools or colleges were headed by Europeans. Until 1882 education in British India was meant for the rich, city-based westernised Indians. Thus there were deliberate efforts not to build up respectful images of Indian teachers.

### Student-teacher Relationship

In general, student-teacher relationship was not warm. European teachers<sup>57</sup> could not love the Indian students while the European students could not respect the Indian teachers. Relation of students with their teachers of Presidency College and Fort William College respectively well illustrates it.

"The relation between the students and the Munshis [ Indian teachers ] was also partly determined by this tension [ tension as referred to above, between European and Indian teachers ]. The students, at least many of them, hardly had any respect for these Munshis and quite a few of them misbehaved with them."<sup>58</sup>

### Instances Of Misbehaviour

Three instances<sup>59</sup> may be cited where students of Fort William College insulted and even beaten their Indian teachers on flimsy grounds and when the insulted teachers prayed for justice, students' offensive behaviour was only condemned without any punishment in the form of expulsion etc. :

1. In 1806, ~~an~~ English, a student, chastised Munshi Nazarullah with a horse-whip after forcibly taking away the chair on which the teacher was seated.
2. In 1810, Ananda Chandra Sharma, a Munshi in Sanskrit-Bengali establishment, was beaten by a student called Kennedy for, allegedly being unable to give a meaning of a word. In fact, the meaning given by the teacher did not conform to the wrong meaning given in Foster's dictionary.
3. In the following year, Munshi Ghulam Husen was struck on the shoulder with a whip by a student named Collins because the student was vexed by the long and tedious explanation given by the teacher. In a statement Collin wrote "he was not aware that these people [Indian teachers] were entitled to be considered as gentlemen."<sup>60</sup>

#### Respected European Teachers

It has to be noted in this connection that all the European teachers were not haughty and arrogant. There were a few European teachers whom the Indian students respected and relation with them and their students was harmonious.

Reference may be made to Mc Cann,<sup>61</sup> one of the teachers of Mathematics in Presidency College, who died in June, 1884. Asutosh Mookherjee, with the help of his fellow students, collected sufficient funds which enabled the Memorial Committee to put up a tablet in the college library in honour of his memory and to hand over to the

university the balance of collection which was sufficient for the award of an annual medal in his name to the graduate of the Presidency College who would obtain the highest marks in the University B. A. Examination in Mathematics. It was a sufficient evidence of the students' respect to the teacher and the teacher's love for the students.

Let me cite another example in which a student (and then colleague) had appreciated the love of his European teacher for the Indian students including himself. Professor H. M. Percival had a soft corner for Nripendra Chandra Banerjee. It was on professor Percival's recommendation that Banerjee was appointed as a teacher in Presidency College soon after his passing M. A. from the same college. "It was his recommendation that," writes Banerjee, "of course, had put me there, but my revered professor was never demonstrative, and had had a heart of gold."<sup>62</sup>

Even Netaji Bose had high praise for professor H. R. James, then principal of the Presidency College, and was found much helpless in the 'Datan Affair'.

#### From Exploitation To Explosion

But the number of such teachers as referred to above was small, too small to stem the general tide of haughty, arrogant and authoritarian attitudes of teachers — European teachers. Indian students under the rude and offensive European teachers could not, naturally, feel

satisfied. Their discontents were smouldering under a cover. They could not respect the teachers because of the teachers' ~~was~~ discriminatory and discourteous behaviour. Yet they had to maintain a show of respect because of the prevailing conditions of society and state.

The long-continued exploitation of the students found expression in the Indian Independence Movements dragged on from 1905 to 1946. The important years of the student Movements were 1920 (Non-Co-operation Movement), 1930 (Civil Disobedience Movement) and 1942<sup>63</sup> (quit India Movement) under the national leaders like Gandhiji, Nehru, Netaji Bose and others. After Independence was won, they had to revert to the classes<sup>64</sup> but much more conscious of their power, rights, duties and self-prestige than ever before.

### III. Latter Times (Post-independent India)

In the Post-independent India teacher-student relationship started on a new plane — without any racially superior people dominating or dictating a racially inferior people. Nonetheless, there was no basic change to the tone of relationship because there was, immediately after Independence, no new set of values emerging. Values ingrained in the Indians under the Europeans for more than a century still began to work and affect the attitudes of teachers towards their students. The authoritarian and conservative outlooks of the teachers continued.<sup>65</sup> They were not immediately aware that they were dealing with the changed

students—students who had successfully battled against the Britishers in winning freedom for them and their country, that present students were much more conscious of their power, self-respect, rights and duties, that they should not be dealt with in the same manner as they were dealt with by the European teachers, in the changed perspective and, to deal with them in the same way would prove perilous.

### Present Background

But this happened. Students soon started reacting, sometimes violently, against their teachers and the whole educational authority. In a foreword dated 23th August, 1954 to Humayun Kabir's book, Student Unrest — Causes and Cures,<sup>66</sup> Jawahar Lal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of the Indian Republic, cautioned the people concerned against the student indiscipline while narrating a few ugly incidents including those in which teachers, invigilators and others were humiliated and even beaten by students. Student indiscipline thus started from as early as 1952-53 in Independent India. It assumed alarming proportions in the 1960s<sup>67</sup> and 1970s.

"According to the Government of India, 570 strikes or demonstrations took place in various colleges and universities during the period 1963-68. The average number of strikes for the years 1963 and 1964 was 100 each for 1965 and 1966. Student unrest spread like an epidemic throughout the country. The trouble shook nearly all the states of India during the sixties. Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra

Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Gujrat were specially affected by it.<sup>68</sup>

In 1970s the agitation in Lucknow University against the voluntary membership of students union and that of Aligarh Muslim University against the Amendment of the Act are two important events on which much has been written. The nexalite activities in West Bengal are also worth mentioning. The declaration of the state of emergency in the country has a magic effect as since May, 1975 few minor events took place in campuses of the universities of India.<sup>69</sup> But since the assumption of power at the centre by the Janata government in the wake of withdrawal of the state of emergency by the out-going Congress government, campuses, again, started to be restive. Glancing over the dailies will prove the truth of it.

An official report, in early 1978, showed a sharp rise in student unrest since the end of the Emergency. It "showed that, as against 7,520 incidents' in 1977, there were 5,838 in the first eight months of this year [1978] and that the violent ones were 1,146 and 1,050 respectively. Many more incidents, most of them violent, have occurred ...."<sup>70</sup>

The imperial power left India in 1947 but the imperial temperament used to obedience and compliance continued to rule educational centres. Teachers used to unquestioning obedience during the British

period expected the same conduct from their students even after the end of the British era in India. It encouraged conformity to the views of the teachers and discouraged independent thinking.<sup>71</sup>

Students' expectation of sympathetic and humane behaviour from their teachers in Independent India suffered a rude shock. And this again led them to treat their Indian teachers as much in the same way as they treated their European teachers before Independence.

What is clear is that teachers changed — from Europeans into Indians — but the treatments students received at the hands of the teachers before and after Independence continued to remain more or less the same.

## 2

### Other Aspects of The Background

This was but one aspect of the teachers becoming unpopular with their students, and students behaving improperly here and there. There are other aspects playing under the surface to erode the control of the teachers over their students. Their responsibility, father-like images, heard of in ancient India, are at stake.

**Weaker Position :** Teachers in India are traditionally poor.

Poverty of the teachers in ancient India did not cost them much because of their exalted social position in the then society. Most important of the causes was the oral instruction and the non-availability of books etc. But the position of majority of teachers in the modern India has been much weak because their roles consist in transmitting, possibly with individual interpretations, something already available in books, journals etc. They are not giving something entirely novel to their students. What they are doing is to help students to locate the facts scattered here and there -- the sources whence they themselves have collected and compiled the facts for presentation to students and, in the process, enlarging the horizons of their own knowledge as well as that of their students. Teacher of the present times (as, of course, of any time) is also a student -- a senior student. It boils down to the fact that difference between teacher and student in the present is much narrowed. Under the changed perspective it is expected that ~~teacher~~ teacher should admit the truth that he is not on a high pedestal. Both the teacher and the student are gathering facts from more or less the same sources. A teacher who manages to remain blissfully forgetful of the truth invites danger. And this happens these days. Teachers try to create an artificial distance between them and their students, often in an effort to cover up their own weakness from their students. And this artificial distance constitutes the potent danger throwing the campuses topsy-turvy.

This weak position coupled with the economic poverty of the present teachers has brought them much down in the esteem of their students. Poverty has many evil manifestations and all of them impinge upon the teachers and they have to stoop to many things under its weight, all the way, lowering them in the eyes of their students.

**Private Management :** Private management of educational institutions regarded the teacher-employees and others as its servants. "The financial difficulties apart," in the words Kishore Gandhi, "the teachers working in affiliated colleges run by private managements constantly suffer from a set of socio-psychological problems. While running the college, the members on the Governing Bodies are hardly inspired by lofty ideals and tend to look upon the teachers as their servants. The managements are manned mostly by non-academic elements, such as land lords, industrialists, traders and other denominational forces. To them, educational institutions are nothing except spring-boards for social power and prestige, if not profit alone. Nepotism, victimization and unfair practices in the matter of appointments, promotions and terminations constitute a common feature in their practice."<sup>72</sup>

**Old Habits :** It has to be noted in this connection that the influence of the traditional poverty on the present teachers will take time to go. Though recently, since 1973, teachers of the college and university are placed on an unprecedentedly better scale of pay,<sup>73</sup>

yet their earlier tendencies to pay more attention to earning money (for making both ends meet) than intellectually building their students and themselves (to be of better service to their students and society) linger on.

Phenomenon of Numbers : The phenomenal increase in the number of students since the middle of the nineteenth century has created a distance between students and their teachers. This distance is gradually widening. Students are hardly able to have informal talks with their teachers out of the class room. Added to this problem, is the problem of accommodation of students as well as teachers at the educational institutions. At the college, teachers are to teach, move and stay, always, in a crowd. Personal side of life remains under suffocation. While lecturing (lecture method mostly unaccompanied by discussion in groups is a further deterrent to the close teacher-student relationship) in the class-room, there is a crowd attended with troubles usually connected with it; while moving along the corridor, there is crowd of students and others mingled with students (as there might not be common room facilities or inadequate accommodations in the common room) and while waiting, between classes, at the staff room meant for the teachers, there is also crowd.

For all the hours at the college, a teacher is hardly allowed to be with himself, to think quietly over things, or to meet his students and talk to them unhindered. This crammed existence is found to be much repulsive both to teachers and students. Neither teachers nor students

find it encouraging to stay on in the college. This leads to the fact that teachers leave for their residences as soon as their classes are over unless otherwise required to prolong their stay at the college and students feel much drawn to movies etc. during the college-hours. A human touch is missing.

Examination-Oriented Teaching : Examination-oriented teaching pushes students still farther from their teachers. Under the present method of teaching, teachers are non-stop speakers while students are non-stop listeners. It is a one-way traffic. There is no genuine exchange of minds between teacher and student. Examination-oriented teaching motivates students more to examinations than to teachers. Examinations, externally conducted, negative any control of the teachers over the students. They care for examination and not for teachers. For passing examinations students may better rely on notes etc. found in the market than on teachers or what teachers have to say. Thus, the externally conducted examinations wherein teachers have no hands add a further dimension to the communication-gap between teachers and students.

No Moral Values : Modern teachers do not, usually, seek to generate moral values in their students. Teaching of the subject needs be interspersed with inculcating doses of moral values in the young minds of students. Before one is a student or a teacher, one is required to be a man — a good man, without which the entire value-system

propelling a nation may collapse to an utter chaos and crisis. "Politicization"<sup>74</sup> of teachers and "parochialization"<sup>75</sup> of students have further aggravated the problem of teacher-student relationship.

## 3

On The Part of Students

There are, also, some reasons on the part of students, that have helped create a distance between teachers and students.

Most important of them is the fact that majority of students are still being trained to be clerks. They are in college or university without any prior planning, nor as a result of pursuing their continuous interests in studies, with many even lacking in intellectual capacities for carrying on higher studies beyond school. But still they are hanging on for they find no other way of spending time. Such students, much directionless as they are, feel much frustrated and are easily drawn into the vortex of troubles let loose by the interested persons including students, teachers and even outsiders representing some political party. As they find no use for their free time, having lost interest in studies, they engage themselves, on the slightest instigation, into troubles including ransacking principal's or Vice-Chancellor's chamber, beating and humiliating teachers and others, disrupting examinations etc. Such students naturally can not have respect for their teachers and relation between them can be anything but close and cordial.

Home Situations : *Prima Facie*, students are responsible for the unquiet campuses. But there are a series of reasons at work, under the surface, which bring the students to behave in an indisciplined manner.

Conditions at home are primarily responsible for turning students indisciplined at educational institutions. Often, it is found that indisciplined students (whose number is never big) were not properly guided at home *ab initio*. Useful values were not sought to be inculcated in them by their parents or other elders. Indisciplined at home, they can not be disciplined at educational institutions. Initially, they may remain calm watching the situations at the institutions. But no sooner do they find situations helpful to indisciplinate than they rise up along with a few others of the like nature.

Their interest in studies may be lost because of many reasons. They might not have quiet study corners at the crowded homes. They might be hard pressed to earn and learn at the same time. They might have to help parents in supporting a good number of brothers and sisters. Mentally exhausted and physically tired, one can hardly find an eager and willing mind to prosecute studies. Hence the loss of interest in studies and frayed temperament.

Failing to respect teachers may again be traced to the conduct of the parents and other elders at home. They might not be trained to respect superiors or they might have developed a prejudice towards the elders as a reaction to authoritarian and hard treatments at home and

unsympathetic behaviour, devoid of any personal touch, at educational institutions.

If the students, with a disturbed background at home, could find kind and affectionate teachers at educational institutions, they might prefer educational institutions to homes, they might try their best, their disturbed home background notwithstanding, to regain interest in studies, respect for the elders including teachers and, above all, they might gain an opportunity of being mentally stabilised and an opportunity of an affectionate recognition. It is a problem of recognition, earnest and warm, of their worth, at home, at educational institution, in society and everywhere. Denied of it, they run madly helter skelter, throwing anything, found on their way, to the winds.

It is a fact that, often, they do not ~~find~~ find affectionate parents, affectionate teachers and affectionate other elders including social and political leaders. They come across chaotic situations at home, lack of proper atmosphere at educational institutions, indecent behaviour at the legislatures and everywhere. This worsens their already hardened attitudes to the elders in general.

Different Picture : It is found that, at the prestigious, well-financed technical institutions, students are the least troublesome.<sup>76</sup> Reason is simple. Students, here, have an assured future while those at the liberal arts colleges are most troublesome for their future is uncertain.

It is also found that even in the Arts colleges where standards of instruction are high and which maintain a corporate spirit, students are less troublesome.<sup>77</sup> Missionary colleges are the least troubled places because of a high standard of instruction and a satisfactory teacher-student relationship.

#### Notes and References

1. Usual period of study was twelve years but it could exceed the usual time length depending on the intention of the student. After student life, one is expected to enter the next stage of life e.g. life of a house-holder but there might be cases where the students were found unwilling to enter the life of a house-holder. In those cases, they might continue their student life for an indefinite period.
2. Prabhu, P. H. Hindu Social Organisation (1961), P. 118 .
3. Altekar, A. S. Education in Ancient India (1948), P. 32 .
4. Prabhu, P. H. op. cit. P. 129 .
5. Mockherjee, Radha Kusud. Ancient Indian Education (1960) P. xxvii .
6. Quoted in Sankalia, H. D. The Nalanda University (1972), P. 171 .
7. Ibid. P. 172 .
8. Keay, F. E. Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times (1954), P. 110.
9. Dasu, Anathnath. University Education in India — Past and Present (1944), P. 2-3 .
10. Ibid.

11. Ibid. P. 10 .
12. Keay, F. E. op. cit. P. 151 .
13. Srivastava, A. L. Medieval Indian Culture (1964), P. 101 .
14. Kea, F. E. op. cit. P. 190 .
15. Mookherjee, Radha Kumud. op. cit. P. 188 .
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid. P. 331 .
18. Keay, F. E. op. cit. P. 190-191 .
19. Chaudhury, Nirad C. The Intellectual in India (1967)  
(Tracts for the times : one) P. 46-49 .
20. Kosambi, D. D. An Introduction to the Study of Indian History  
(1975), P. 86-87 .
21. Apte, V. N. "Social and Economic Conditions" in Mazumdar, R. C. (ed.)  
The History and Culture of the Indian People,  
Vol. 1 (1965), P. 520 .
22. Kosambi, D. D. op. cit.
23. Chaudhury, Nirad C. op. cit.
24. There is a Jatak story to the effect that King Brahmadatta of Benares sent his son Prince Brahmadatta to Takkasila, with, among other things, a thousand pieces of money for the teacher as fee to be paid in advance. The teacher accepted the fee in advance and taught him with due care. (vide Mookherjee, Radha Kumud. "Social and Economic Conditions" in Mazumdar, R. C. (ed.) The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II (1965) P. 592 .
25. "Among the many myths that afflict contemporary thinking .... none is more persistent than the one that maintains that in the good old days ..... faculty and students had intimate personal contacts ....." It is "perhaps the humantendency to assume that if things are presently bad, they were once better ...." — Jencks and Riesman. The Academic Revolution (1972), P. 35 .
26. vide Sarmah, Jogeswar. The Philosophy of Education in the Upanishads (1978), P. 109-122
27. Mookherjee, Radha Kumud. op. cit. P. 236-237 .

28. Ibid. (for the specific epithets, vide Mookherjee, Radha Kumud. "Social and Economic Conditions" in Mazumdar, R. C. (ed.) op. cit. Vol. II, P. 583 .)
29. Sarkar, S. C. Educational Ideas And Institutions in Ancient India (1976), P. 30-31 .
30. Ibid.
31. For Buddhist Rules of respect, vide Ghoshal, U. N. "Social and Economic Conditions" in Mazumdar, R. C. (ed.) op. cit. Vol. III, P. 584-585.
32. Srivastava, A. L. op. cit. P. 102.
33. Quoted in Sinha, Narendra Krishna. Asutosh Mookherjee (1966) (A Biographical Study), P. 142-143 .
34. Ibid. P. 8 .
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. P. 9 .
37. Banerjee, Nripendra Chandra. At The Cross-Roads : The Autobiography of Nripendra Chandra Banerjee (Mastermahasaya) 1885-1949, (1974) P. 39 .
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Srivastava, B. C. The Genesis of Campus Violence (1974), P. 1 .
41. Das, Sisir Kumar. Sahiba and Munchis : An Account of the College of Fourt William (1978) P. 106 .
42. The English system of education began (in India) from 1813 and positively from 1835 when Macaulay's famous Minute was approved by William Bentick, the then Governor-General. Wood's Despatch or Education Despatch of 1854 based on the Minute of 1835 signalled the opening of affiliating and non-teaching universities on the model of the London University, at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The whole of the 19th century was a speedy replacement of the indigenous educational institutions by the English medium educational institutions to usher in an era of English Culture in place of the Indian Culture. But with the start of 20th century anti-climax followed with Indians having been dissatisfied with the alien culture and education.

43. Parikh, G. D. General Education And Indian Universities (1959), P. 121 .
44. Ibid.
45. Albatch, Philip G. "Higher Education And Modernization : The Indian case" in Gupta, Giri Raj (ed.) Main Currents in Indian Sociology (1976), P. 204 .
46. Quoted in Parikh, G. D. op. cit. P. 120 .
47. Gupta, Giri Raj. ed. Main Currents In Indian Sociology (1976), P. 206 .
48. Prasad, Bisheshwar. Bondage And Freedom : A History of Modern India, Vol.1, 1707-1858, (1977), P. 391 .
49. "..... Save and except the sensitive and those of a philanthropic bent of mind, the English in general demonstrated a surprising indifference towards everything 'native', and regarded the inhabitants as 'just a lot of animals'. With this perversity of attitude went manifestations of 'conscious superiority' and a contempt for the black man as well as 'a constant swagger to put him in his place'. Even men of the eminence of Alexander Duff or of Lord Macaulay were not free from this prejudice. John Stuart Mill wrote in 1865 of 'the scornful overbearings of the conquering nation' and said that the majority of the ruling race in India 'think the people of the country mere dirt under their feet; it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretension.' This, throughout the century, continued to be the dominant attitude. Even as late as 1905, Lord Curzon made a slanderous attack on the character of the people of India and their literature in his Convocation address to the Calcutta University graduates, which was violently resented by the articulate section of the educated community through public meetings and news paper editorials." -- Poddar, Arabinda. Renaissance In Bengal : Search for Identity (1977), P. 2
50. Gopal, Madan. (compiled and edited). Life And Times of Subhas Chandra Bose (as told in his own words) 1978, P. 53-54 .
51. Ibid. P. 55 .
52. Ibid. P. 57 .
53. Ibid. P. 58 .
54. Shils, Edward. "The Academic Profession in India." in Sing and Albatch (ed.) The Higher Learning in India (1974), P. 214 .

55. Ibid. P. 232 .
56. Naik and Nurullah. A Students' History of Education in India (1800-1973), 1974, P. xii .
57. Attitudes of even the fathers were discriminatory to the Indian students. Fathers preferred Anglo-Indian to Indian students — vide, Roy, Amarendra Nath. Students' Fight For Freedom (1967), P. 42-43 .
58. Das, Sisir Kumar. op. cit. P. 107 .
59. Ibid. P. 107-109 .
60. Ibid. P. 109 .
61. Sinha, Narendra Krishna. op. cit. P. 6 .
62. Banerjee, Wripendra Chandra, op. cit. P. 71 .
63. "The most militant and highly organized period of the Indian student movement came during the 1942 'quit India' struggle" — Albatch, P. G. "Student Politics and Higher Education in India" in Albatch (ed.) The Student Revolution : A Global Analysis (1970), P. 105 .
64. "When it suits the politician" writes Subhas C. Kashyap, "he issues clarion calls of service to the student community but once his work is done and he is settled in positions of power, he orders them back to books and preaches them lessons of discipline. The youth all over the world are the guineapigs who are sacrificed in experimental or real trial of strength — whether there are wars between nations or fights between political parties and factions. The invariable survivors and beneficiaries are the old, the inevitable sufferers, the young. After the necessary blood of youth is spilled, the old call the peace and are once again settled as rulers and legislators". — Quoted in Aikara, Jacob. Ideological Orientation of Student Activism (1977), P. 54-55.
65. "The authoritarian character of the existing system of education is also an important factor in the growth of student unrest and indiscipline. This is a reflection of the authoritarian temper of our society where difference of opinion with an elder is often regarded as disrespect for him. The students .... are generally passive recipients of orders from above. Instead of being a democratic community, the school is often a rigidly stratified society where authority at each level demands unquestioning obedience from those below ....." — Kabir, Humayun. Student Unrest : Causes and Cure (1958), P. 10 .

66. Kabir, Humayun. op. cit.
67. Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66 (1966), P. 297.
68. Jafar, S. M. Student Unrest in India (1977), P. xiv.
69. Ibid.
70. Quoted from "Unruly Students" [editorial] in The Statesman (Calcutta) dated 11/12/78
71. (a) Parikh, G. D. op. cit. P. 123 .  
 (b) Gopal, M. H. An Introduction to Research Procedure in Social Sciences (1970) P. 238 .
72. (a) Gandhi, Kishore. Issues And Choices in Higher Education (1977) P. 104 .  
 (b) Ram, Susan. "Flight of teachers of private colleges" in Economic And Political Weekly, xiii (38), P. 1619-1621, 1978.  
 (c) Attitudes of Private College Management towards its teachers, among its employees, may be evident from the following remark by L. N. Birla, President of the Birla College of Science and Education : "We picked up some teachers who have created problems since the college was founded in 1968." The remark was vehemently resented.  
 "Teachers Walk Out of Function", The Statesman (Calcutta) 1.9.78.  
 (d) Satyasadhan Chakravarty, General Secretary, West Bengal College and University Teachers' Association, while welcoming the take-over of the College (as referred to), hoped that "the College would reinstate two teachers who had been dismissed about a year ago." "Take over of Birla College Welcomed", The Statesman (Calcutta) 2.9.78.
73. The West Bengal (Payment of Salaries) Act, 1978.
74. Ray, Anil Baran. Students And Politics in India (1977) P. 34
75. Ibid.
76. Albatch, Philip G. "Student Politics : Historical Perspective and the Changing Scene" in Singh and Albatch (ed.) The Higher Learning in India (1974) P. 160 .
77. Ibid.