

INTER-UNIVERSITY BOARD, INDIA

ANNUAL REPORT, 1940-41

THIS Annual Report of the Inter-University Board indicates the action that has been taken in regard to the various resolutions passed by the Board in previous years and it also refers to the correspondence that has taken place on certain important questions of common interest to universities. Reference may be made in this review to some of the outstanding matters contained in the Report.

The question of providing separate courses of study for women candidates in the universities had been recommended by Resolution XII of the Board at its Waltair Session. But from a glance at the replies received from the various universities in this connection it would appear that opinion is somewhat sharply divided. Some universities evidently consider it undesirable to make any difference between men and women in regard to the degree courses. Some others seem to think that differences may be made in the diploma courses only. Still others express no opinion at all. Only two or three are altogether in favour of the proposal. Again, a few would content themselves with the inclusion of only one or two subjects which may be of special interest to women, but would go no farther.

It is difficult to understand why there should be so much difference of opinion when once it is conceded that men and women have different rôles to fulfil in life and that they therefore require differential training. But it is probably feared that the subjects proposed for women may not be of a sufficiently intellectual character for being included in university courses on terms of equality with the other subjects. It must be remembered, however, that much depends upon the manner in which these subjects are dealt with in the classroom. Another objection may come from the women themselves who may look upon their special subjects as inferior to the usual academic studies in point of the mental discipline which they provide. This difficulty may be avoided, to some extent, by offering free choice to the women. If this is done, it is likely that the inferiority complex may disappear in course of time. Whatever the difficulties may be, there

is no reason why universities should hesitate to take a step which is obviously in the right direction.

A second important question relates to the forming of a film library suitable for university purposes. The value of cinema films in all stages of education is being increasingly recognized in these days. In U.S.A. educational films have been carefully and extensively developed in recent years; and, but for the war a similar expansion would also have taken place in Europe. India is a poor country, and the setting up of a film library for university use must therefore be a co-operative enterprise. It is therefore gratifying to note that almost all the universities in the country have expressed their willingness to take part in the venture.

The resolution inviting the co-operation of Indian universities in the work of adult education in this country has evoked a variety of replies, mostly unfavourable. The problem in India is not on a par with what is described as the problem of adult education in the advanced countries of the West. There, it is a question of giving further education to those who have already had elementary schooling; whereas here in India it is a question of promoting literacy among those who never went to school. The appropriateness of universities undertaking this latter task must remain an open question. If, on the other hand, the co-operation of the universities is requested for what corresponds to the University Extension Movement in England, then the matter certainly deserves support.

Lastly, the proposal for exchange of professors as between universities has been regarded favourably in most quarters; but some universities have expressed doubt as to its practicability. It is to be hoped, however, that the practical difficulties will soon be overcome and a workable scheme will soon be put through. There is no doubt that exchange among university staff will let in some fresh air into lecture halls whose atmosphere often tends to deteriorate for want of renewal.

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